### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

## **National Register of Historic Places Inventory**—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

#### Name 1.

Wahpeton Hospital historic

#### N/A and/or common

#### Location 2.

720-722 Dakota Ave.

Wahpeton

street & number

city, town

#### North Dakota state

3.	Cla	ssif	ica	tion

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	public	X occupied	agriculture	museum
X_ building(s)	_X_ private	unoccupied	_X_ commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	educational	_X_ private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	∠∕/LP∖in process	yes: restricted	government	scientific
	being considered	X yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation

N/A vicinity of

38

no

code

# 4. Owner of Property

name 720 I	Dakota, A Li	mited Partner	ship	•			
street & number	c/o Normar	Triebwasser,	Suite 41	6 Black	Buildin	8 🙀	
city, town	Fargo	N/A vicir	nity of	en en el antigen de la constante de la constant	Nor state	th Dakota	58102
5. Loca	tion of L	egal Desc					
courthouse, regis	try of deeds, etc.	Register of	f Deeds, R	lichland	County	Court Hou	ıse
street & number	N/A						
city, town	Wahpeton				state No	orth Dako	ta
6. Repr	esentati	on in Exis	ting Su	rveys	)		
title Wahpeto	on National	Register surva	any this property	y been deter	mined eligib	ole? yes	_X_no
date Summer	, 1981			federal	Xstate	county _	local
depository for sur	r <b>vey records</b> Sta	te Historical	Society o	of North	Dakota		
city, town	Bis	marck, North I	Dakota 585	505	state		

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	For	NPS	use	only	
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county Richland

-congressional-district

military

N/A not for publication

\_ other:

077 code

# 7. Description

Condition					
<u>_X</u> _excellent	deteri				
good	ruins				
fair	unexc				

\_ deteriorated \_ ruins \_\_ unexposed Check one \_\_\_\_\_\_ unaltered

Check one \_\_\_\_\_ original site \_\_\_\_ moved date .

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wahpeton Hospital is a two story masonry brick-faced structure approximatly 50 by 100 feet at 720-722 Dakota Avenue in Wahpeton.

Construction on the building was begun in May, 1911.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Timothy O'Brien let the initial \$12,000 contract to Samuel Christenson, a local city contractor, who also may have been the architect.<sup>2</sup> By the time of the grand opening in October of the same year, cost had climbed to about \$20,000, a sum which included completely modern medical equipment and furnishings,<sup>3</sup> and the building could accommodate up to twenty patients at one time.<sup>4</sup>

A photograph taken just after the opening in 1911<sup>5</sup> shows a two story Classical Revival structure with a raised brick basement and red-orange face brick with red grout. Water table and window sills are dressed molded stone. The building has brick quoins composed of four courses of projecting brickwork to each quoin. Two belt courses of brick separate the first from the second story. Double-hung windows are wooden-framed one-over-one to which aluminum storm windows have been added.

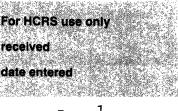
The building is topped by a very slightly bell-cast deeply-overhung hipped roof with tongue-and-groove wooden eaves and new metal gutters. The 1911 photograph shows two hip-roofed side dormers on the east and west sides, each composed of a pair of small-paned double-hung windows. Sometime after 1919 when the hospital was converted to apartments, these dormers were joined to form a continuous hip-roofed dormer with an extra pair of windows on each side of the roof (photo # 1 and 2). On the east side, a concrete block chimney anchored to the building with metal bands projects through the dormer eaves. These roof dormers are now covered with brick-patterned rolled asphalt siding.

The chief design feature is a projecting two-story front portico (photo #3) under a fully pedimented gabled roof. The pediment contains a full halfcircle fanlight. The portico consists of two engaged plain pilasters and two free-standing wooden columns with Roman Ionic capitols with egg and dart trim supporting a plain wooden frieze. Both stories of the portico have turned balustrades, although the first story had no balustrade in 1911. Some-

"New Hospital Assured." <u>Wahpeton Globe-Gazette</u> (April 27, 1911).
 <u>Ibid</u>.
 "New Hospital Opened." <u>Wahpeton Globe-Gazette</u> (October 5, 1911).
 "Hospital Well Filled." <u>Wahpeton Globe-Gazette</u> (November 16, 1911).

5 Ibid.

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Description, cont.:

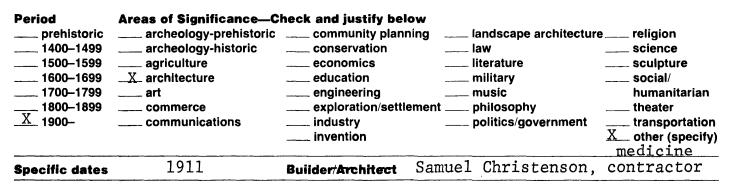
time after I. E. Lillegard purchased the building in 1940, a wrought iron porch and stair railing with an inset "L" was installed at the front entry. The original brick piers supporting the free-standing columns on the portico have also been replaced.

These exterior alterations are very minor and the building looks essentially as it did at construction. The only noticeable alteration to the front is some brick infill around the front door, which was either a double door or a door with sidelights originally.

Other minor exterior alterations include a new basement door on the east side, the removal of the original cornice on the one story brick rear porch, and a narrow two-story frame addition with six-over-one windows on the rear (photo # 2). It is covered in brick-patterned rolled asphalt and is slated to be removed.

The interior has virtually no resemblance to the original hospital arrangement. Since 1919, the building has been used as apartments and the years have taken their toll. A few six-panelled doors on the second floor and attic rooms may be original or may date from the 1919 apartment conversion. Interior spaces have suspended ceilings over the original plaster ones. All doors and trim on the first floor are new, and the central hallway appears to have been narrowed. The attic is divided into apartments or rooms with newer plaster walls and ceilings. Only some of the taller molded baseboards on the second floor, turned balusters and decorative newell posts on the stairways remain (photo #4). Most of the original remaining woodwork and stairways have been painted and antiqued. According to the manager, the current laundry room in the basement served originally as the morgue.

# 8. Significance



#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Wahpeton Hospital is the oldest remaining hospital building in the Wahpeton, N.D.-Breckenridge, Mn. area. It is associated with Dr. Timothy O'Brien, pioneer Red River Valley physician and surgeon, and his wife, Mary O'Brien, who built it in 1911 as a private enterprise in recognition of the need for a modern area hospital. Architecturally, it is the finest private building in Wahpeton, surpassed in quality and size only by such public buildings as the Leach Public Library, Richland County Court House, and Wahpeton city hall.

The Wahpeton Hospital was the second to operate in the Twin Town area, the first being another private hospital on Pembina Avenue between 4th and 5th streets in Wahpeton in 1886 operated by a Dr. Swaine and his wife.<sup>6</sup> These were the days of private hospitals and Dr. Swaine's was apparently short-lived.

By 1911, Wahpeton had no hospital and Dr. Timothy O'Brien (1861-1931) recognized the need for a modern hospital for his surgical cases. O'Brien, from Brudevall, Ontario, graduated from the medical school at McGill University in Montreal in 1883, arriving in Wahpeton in 1887 only five years after it became an organized town.<sup>7</sup> He maintained offices at several stores downtown for almost 25 years while carring on a general and surgical practice in the surrounding region. O'Brien was an old-fashigned country doctor "known to practically every person in Richland County."<sup>8</sup> As one of a handful of pioneer doctors, O'Brien became prominent in local medical circles, serving as one of the organizers of the Richland County Medical Association, attaining the office of president by 1931. He was also an active member of the Wahpeton Board of Health at the time he built his own hospital at 720-722 Dakota Ave.<sup>9</sup> In 1901, Dr. O'Brien married Mary Wilczek (1873-1981), a nurse who had received her education in Little Falls, Minnesota and Rock Island, Illinois.<sup>10</sup>

6 <u>Richland County Daily News</u>, Centennial Section #16 (february 25, 1975), p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> <u>A History of Richland County</u> (1977), p. 509.

<sup>8</sup> "Pioneer Wahpeton Doctor Passes Away..." <u>Richland</u> <u>County</u> <u>Farmer-Globe</u> (November 10, 1931), p. 1.

- <sup>9</sup> <u>Ibid</u>.; John H. Ley, <u>Wahpeton City</u> Directory, 1912-13, p. 1
- <sup>10</sup> "Twin Town Centenarian dies..." <u>Daily News</u> (June 2, 1981), p. 1.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract of Title, 720 Dakota Avenue.

Breckenridge Centennial History 1857-1957, One Hundred Years. Breckenridge Centennial Committee. Breckenridge, Mn.: Valley Printing, 1957. (con't)

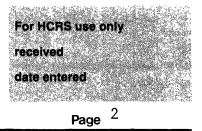
# **10. Geographical Data**

1

**Chief of Registration** 

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List all states and counties for pro			laries	
state N/A	code N/A count	y N/A	code	N/A
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<b>11. Form Prepare</b>	ed By			
name/title Dr. Norene A. Rob	erts, President			
organization Historical Rese	arch, Inc.	date Apr	il 15, 1983	
street & number 5535 Richmond	Curve	telephone	(612) 929-293	21
city or town Minneapolis		state Mini	nesota 55410	
12. State Historic	<b>Preservat</b>	ion Office	r Certific	ation
The evaluated significance of this prope	rty within the state is:			
national	state <u>X</u> local			
As the designated State Historic Preserv 665), I hereby nominate this property for according to the criteria and procedures State Historic Preservation Officer signa	inclusion in the National set forth by the National	Register and certify the		
<b>litle</b> State Historic Preser	<pre>vation Officer</pre>	(North Dakota	tate July 25,	1983
For NPS use only I hereby certify that this property is Mulorestyees		Register In the	iate 9/29	/83
* Keeper of the National Register Attest:			late.	

## **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**



Significance, cont.:

Continuation sheet

In an interview in 1975, the then 101 year-old Mrs. O'Brien recalled that the old Wahpeton Hospital was a family affair. Mary O'Brien served as "nurse, cook, anesthetist and all-around helper at the hospital," 11 while her husband served as general practitioner, surgeon, and superintendent. The O'Briens' apparently lived in the building.<sup>12</sup> This hospital served as the sole facility in town until 1919 when the couple sold the facility to H. H. Aaker of Fargo, in a transaction that involved Aaker's trade of the Lutheran Bible School property on N. Third Srteet and cash to the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital group in exchange for the old Wahpeton Hospital owned by the O'Briens. 13 With the existing physical plant of the Bible School and additional new construction and equipment, the new hospital, also named the "Wahpeton Hospital," opened on July 15, 1920. Funds were raised between 1919 and 1920 by a county-wide citizens aid group in order to establish a facility that would serve all of Richland County. The old hospital closed and Dr. O'Brien and his wife continued their practice from their office and residence at 121 6th Street, three houses north of the Post Office (now razed) until at least 1921. Mrs. O'Brien was a member of the fund-raising committee for the new hospital. Dr. O'Brien ultimately affiliated with St. Francis Hospital in Breckenridge, Minnesota across the river where he remained until his death 16

Item number

#8

Both the new 1920 Wahpeton Hospital, which replaced O'Brien's 1911 building, and the old St. Francis Hospital have been razed. The old Wahpeton Hospital stands as an elegant reminder to the pioneering career of Dr. Timothy O'Brien and the days of private medical facilities.

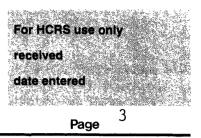
Architecturally, the red brick and white wooden accents of the old Wahpeton Hopsital are a visual focus to the west end of Dakota Avenue, the main business street in the city. Most citizens in town still remember it as the old hospital, despite its being known as the Aaker Apartments from 1920 to 1940, and as the (I.E.) Lillegard Apartments until recent years. The city has

- <sup>13</sup> "Lutheran Hospital Trade Deal Closed" Globe-Gazette, May 8, 1919, p.1
- <sup>14</sup> Fargo Forum, July 7, 1920, p. 3, col. 6.
- <sup>15</sup> Globe-Gazette, May 1, 1919, p. 5; Johnson, p. 47.
- <sup>16</sup> "Dr. Timothy O'Brien founded hospital."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> "Dr. Timothy O'Brien founded hospital" <u>Daily News</u>, Centennial Section 16 (February 25, 1975), p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ley, John H. Wahpeton City Directory, 1912-1913, pp. 47, 81, 85.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory---Nomination Form



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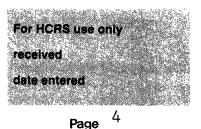
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Significance, cont.:

only three other buildings which can match it in Classical Revival design: the Leach Public Library (by Keith and Kurke, architects, 1920s); the city hall (altered substantially in the front facade south entrance); and the Richland County Court House.

The current owners are working closely with the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota on plans to convert the old hospital from 11 to 15 rental units. Their plans include removing the one story rear shed (sketch #1), reinsulation, restoring 3" lap siding to the roof dormers, and creating a lobby on the right inside the front entrance. The structure is also in need of some minor tuckpointing, especially where caulking compound has been poorly applied to some of the brickwork.

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Bibliography, cont.:

Continuation sheet

"Dr. Timothy O'Brien founded hospital." <u>Daily News</u>, Centennial Section 16, (February 25, 1975) p. 127.

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Fargo Forum, July 7, 1920, p. 3 col. 6.

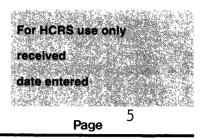
- <u>A</u> <u>History</u> of <u>Richland</u> <u>County</u>. The Richland County Historical Soicety. Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1977.
- "Hospital Well Filled." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (November 16, 1911), p.1.

Interviews:

Anderson, Sally. <u>Daily News</u>, April 6, 1983.
Engstrom, Karen. Director of Medical Records, St. Francis Hospital, Breckenridge, Mn. April 7, 1983.
Hendrickson, Elmer. Wahpeton City Assessor, March 29, April 6, 1983.
Meide, Jerry, April 5, 1983.
Mitzel, Joyce. Personnel Director, St. Francis Nursing Home, April 7, 1983.
Werre, Frances M. April 6, 1983.
Yost, William. Richland County Historical Society, March 28, 1983.

- Johnson, L.B. Breckenridge and Wahpeton City Directory, 1921-22. Wahpeton: Johnson, publisher, pp. 47, 78, 95. at Wilkin County Historical Society.
- Ley, John H. Wahpeton City Directory, 1912-13. St. Cloud, Mn.: Ley, publisher, pp. 1, 47, 81, 85. at Wilkin County Historical Society, Breckenridge.
- "Lutheran Hospital Trade Deal Closed." <u>Wahpeton</u> <u>Globe-Gazette</u>. (May 8, 1919) p. 1.
- "New Hospital Assured." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (April 27, 1911) p. 1.
- "New Hospital Opened." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (October 5, 1911) p. 1.
- "Pioneer Wahpeton Doctor Passes Away Suddenly Early Saturday Morning." Richland County Farmer Globe (November 10, 1931) p. 1.
- "Public Invited to Hospital Opening." <u>Wahpeton</u> <u>Globe-Gazette</u> (July 1, 1920) p. 1.
- Richland County Daily News, Centennial Section 16 (Febraury 25, 1975) p. 123.
- "Twin Town Centenarian dies Manday at age 107." <u>Wahpeton-Breckenridge</u> <u>Daily News</u> (June 2, 1981) p. 1.

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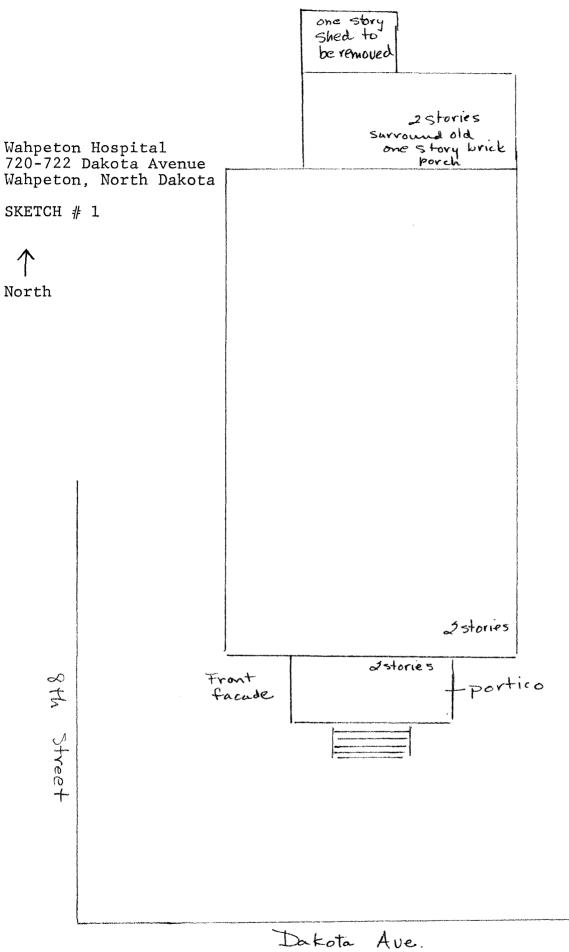
Item number #9

Bibliography, cont.:

Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (May 1, 1919) p. 5; (March 11, 1920) p. 12.

"Wahpeton Hospital Starts \$75,000 Drive." <u>Wahpeton</u> <u>Globe-Gazette</u> (March 4, 1920) p. 1.

Werre, Frances M. "Early Wahpeton History." 25 page typescript. Richland County Historical Society, April, 1975, p. 20.



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