

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97000622

Property Name: Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church

County: Johnson State: Iowa

none
Multiple Name

This property is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Linda McCulland
Signature of the Keeper

July 9, 1997
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Significance: Criterion Consideration A is, hereby, entered to correspond to the property's use as a church and ownership by a religious institution.

Beth Foster of the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on July 9, 1997.

DISTRIBUTION:

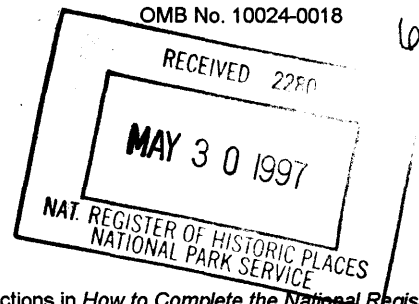
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

APR 28 1997

622

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1165 N. E. Taft Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Solon [X] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Johnson code 103 zip code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Patricia O'Brien King 5-16-97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
 - entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Linda McCellar

Date of Action

9/9/97

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Name of Property

Johnson County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)
Contributing Noncontributing
1 0 buildings
_____ _____ sites
_____ _____ structures
_____ _____ objects
1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
 STONE
roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1916

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Parkinson, R. K.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

SS. Peter and Paul Historical Foundation

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church and Cemetery
Name of Property

Johnson County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.50 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [15] [627540] [4633970]
Zone Easting Northing

2 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing

3 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

4 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Eckhardt, Ph. D.

organization Eckhardt Research date May, 26, 1996

street & number 514 N. Linn Street telephone (319) 338-3386

city or town Iowa City state Iowa zip code 52245

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name SS. Peter and Paul Historical Foundation . c/o Jean Litts

street & number 720 Ivenhoe Road telephone (319) 644-2394

city or town Mt. Vernon state Iowa zip code 52314

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

Summary

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church sits on a low hill in the midst of the gently rolling farmland north of Solon, Iowa. If you know where to look, the church spires can be seen from quite a distance. The sight of the church has always been a pleasing one to the Czech farm families living in its vicinity who's ancestors formed the SS. Peter and Paul congregation in the 1860s and constructed this, its second church.

The brick church with uneven facade towers with pyramidal roofs was built in 1916. It is a single-naved brick church with a basilica format. The church fits into the historic context, "The Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa" which is described below under significance.

Detailed Description

Built in 1916, SS. Peter and Paul has survived almost wholly unchanged from the three-quarter view drawing published in the Solon *Economy* in May, 1916,¹ (See page 3.), It measures 79 feet long by 39 feet wide. This brick church is six bays in length, and it is divided into an entrance and tower bay on the east, a four-bay nave, and a one-bay-deep chancel flanked by sacristies on the west. There is a projection of the sacristy on the north with an exterior entrance opening to the south. The main floor sits atop a partly raised basement hall with windows at ground level and is reached by means of exterior steps at the front. The bays of the side elevations with the exception of the first two, are divided by stepped buttresses with stone caps.

The facade is the standard Gothic tripartite facade with towers on each side of a central entrance bay, brick corbels in the gables, and a circular window over the central entrance. The central section is recessed about three feet. Beneath the peak of the roof is a small window or opening for ventilation. Between the entrance and the window is a large plaque containing an inscription which says in Czech "Saints Peter and Paul, pray for us."

The uneven double tower design is unusual, but one which was used fairly often in the context of the Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa discussed below. The towers are identical until they reach the level of the cornice above the second floor. At this point, the south tower, the taller of the two towers, continues on up with arched windows with shutters resting on the cornice. The top of the tower and pyramidal spire are above that. On the North side, a similar but shorter window is placed bisecting the cornice. From that shorter height the pyramidal spire rises. The spires are topped with crosses.

¹ "The Beautiful New Church," the Solon *Economy*, Solon, Iowa, May 25, 1916.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 2

The window and door openings have both round-arched and rectangular heads, usually a round arched opening above a rectangular one. When not filled with stained glass, the arched windows are divided into two lights with arched tops up to the springing of the arch. The upper portion is filled with a circular pane and spandrels. There are stone keystone at the top of the round-arched windows and horizontal keystones at the springing of the arch. This emphasis is echoed by extended horizontal cornices at the tops of the rectangular windows. There is a circular window or "rose" window above the central entrance with four keystones which radiate at the top, bottom and sides of the window.

The interior is notable for its beauty and restraint. There is a narrow narthex between the towers. A balcony stretches between the towers over the narthex and extends five feet into the nave. The nave is four bays long and appears to be wider than it is actually because of the suspended ceiling in the form of a flattened arch. The chancel opening from the nave is a Roman arch. The side altars are placed in front of two smaller blind arches, one on each side about one half as wide as the central one. The arched nave windows contain stained glass representations of standing saints many of which have Bohemian and agricultural associations. The subjects of the windows are as follows: South side of the nave, west to east, St. Barbara (patron saint of lightning), St. Patrick, St. Jerome, and St. Nicholas of Flue (Switzerland); North side of the nave, west to east, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Wenceslaus, St. John the Baptist, and St. Swithum (patron saint of drought). A ninth window in the west sacristy is of St. Anthony. St. Cecilia resides in the circular window above the entrance. The main altar is a beautiful example of wood-working with marbled painted surfaces. There are architectural members for details in the "Roman" style, columns, domes, and statuary.² The side altars are simple versions of the main altar. The main altar from the earlier church is used at the front of the nave.

Integrity

The church is in original condition with the exception of a few minor changes. The three-quarter view architectural drawing published in the Solon *Economy* in 1916³ reveals that no major changes have been made in the exterior since it was constructed. The only exterior change consists of a small projection at the center of the rear wall to allow exterior access to the basement hall. The original Roman arched main entrance has been enclosed and smaller doors installed. The interior has seen little change as well. It is lacking only some of the original decorative painting on its ceiling and walls. An altar rail was removed and the small altar from the old church installed in that location after the changes decreed by the Vatican II Ecumenical Council of 1961. The original altar remains in the chancel.

²"Artistic New Church Dedicated on Sunday," the Solon *Economy*, Solon, Iowa, July 19, 1917;

³ "Beautiful New Church," Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 3

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Photograph of the interior about 1950 from the Litts Family Archives



Architectural Rendering published in the *Solon Economy*, 1916



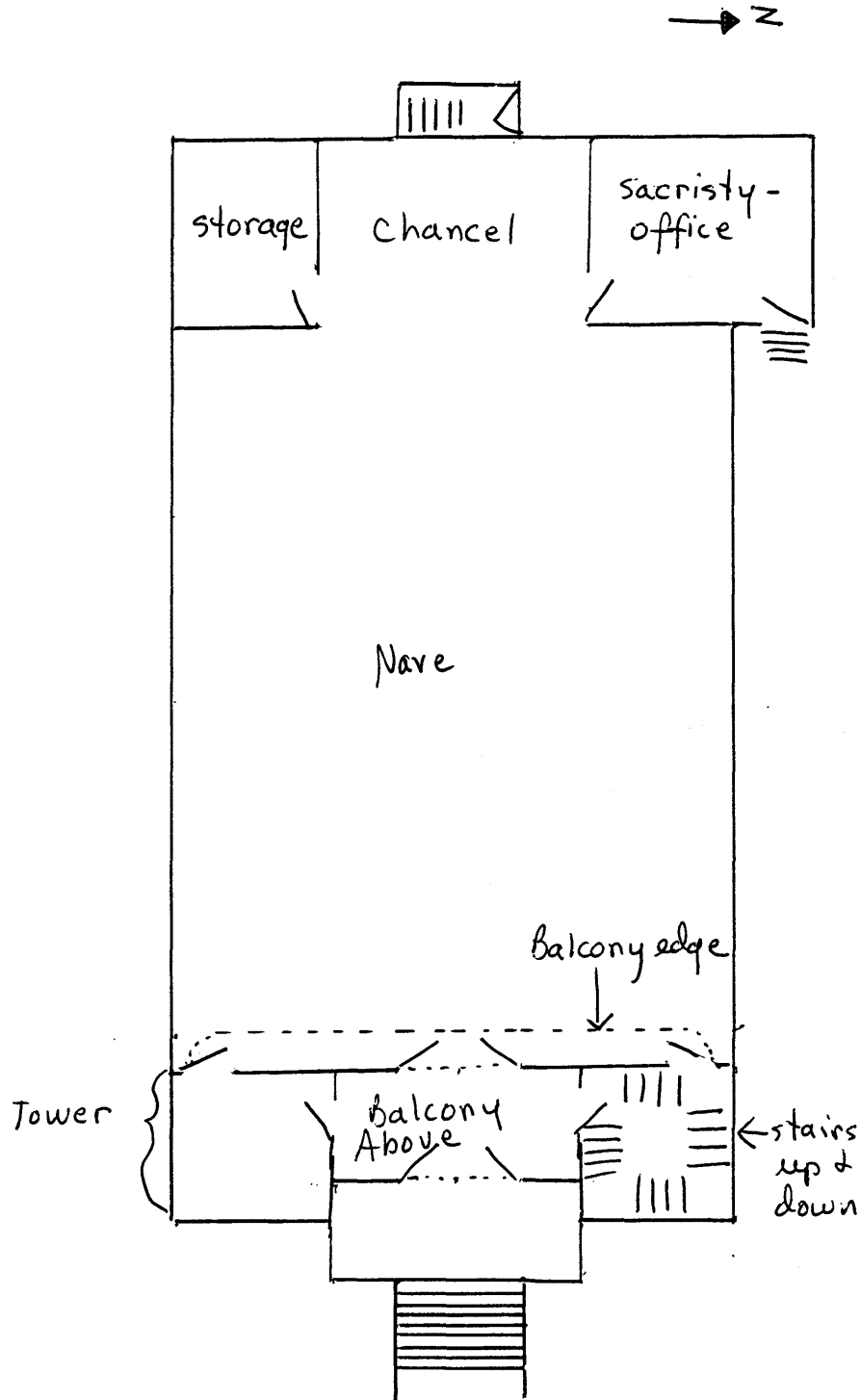
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 4

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Sketch Plan of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

This brick church, built in 1916, is locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of a type described in the following historic context, "The Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa." As such, it also satisfies Criterion A. It exhibits the "Roman" style with its round-arched windows and the twin-tower facade format with towers of different heights. The design is outstanding for a country church. The architecture of SS. Peter and Paul reflects a type developed in Iowa which reflects the German ethnicity and training of early architects in Iowa. The twin tower facade type is a minority one in this context, but not without distinguished precedent.

The SS. Peter and Paul congregation was the first Bohemian Congregation in Iowa.⁴ Even in 1916, when this church, its second church, was under construction, sermons were preached in the Czech language. The congregation continues to have a strong Bohemian or Czech ethnic character. A cemetery across the road at the side of the earlier church, continues to be used by this ethnic community.

The Architecture of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church

SS. Peter and Paul church employs a design which fits into the historic context "The Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa," see below. It combines a Gothic format with round arched and rectangular windows which reflect the academic interest in historical styles (such as the Romanesque or Renaissance Revival or perhaps even a touch of Colonial Revival style), during the early 20th century. The twin-tower format is a minor type in America, but there is a group of these in Eastern Iowa, influenced by Medieval Romanesque and Gothic forms probably brought to Iowa and the upper Midwest by immigrant architects from Europe.

SS Peter and Paul was historically described as being in the "Roman" style.⁵ Churches in this style with round arched windows with keystones are a type built in Iowa over a long period beginning in about 1880. The Roman-arched style is one of two common styles for churches, the other being pointed-arched or Gothic, and it was particularly popular for churches built in the second decade of the 20th century as was SS Peter and Paul.

⁴ Sara Gaarde, "Czechs' Iowa Ties Start at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Mt. Vernon Sun, November 23, 1978, and Joseph Hessouna, Ceske Kat. osady v Americe (Czech Catholic Settlement in America), 1865-1890 (St. Louis, Missouri: Rev. A. Petrus Houst, 1890), p. 177.

⁵ "Artistic New Church.," Ibid.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 6

Sources or precedence for the design of SS. Peter and Paul can be found in other churches in Eastern Iowa. A church contemporary with SS. Peter and Paul, Holy Ghost Church, Dubuque 1915 (A), has similar window treatment although the church itself follows a more Italian Romanesque form rather than the generic form of SS. Peter and Paul. Holy Ghost Church was designed by Guido Beck in a style he called Italian Basilica. Other churches in Iowa with similar window treatments are St. Philomena, Dubuque, 1926 (B.), and St. Ludmilla, Cedar Rapids, 1926 (C.). St. Ludmilla has similar round arched windows with two lights, a roundel at the top of the arch, and keystones as well. The architect of this church, whoever he is, might be the architect that designed SS. Peter and Paul. Some other examples of churches in this style are Holy Cross Church at Holy Cross, 1898 (D.); St. Mary, Waverly, 1913 (E.); and Immaculate Conception, N. Washington, 1923 (F.).

Twin-Tower forms

There are a great number of churches with twin towers in Eastern Iowa, and more than one-half of them have towers of unequal heights. See the following historic context for a discussion of this phenomena. SS. Peter and Paul fits into this tradition which spans the fifty years from the 1880s to the 1920s. The towers of SS. Peter and Paul follow no particular Iowan example. Church tower designs for twin-tower churches are all so different that there is no direct model for them. Comparative examples of twin-tower churches are furnished in the historic context below.

PRELIMINARY HISTORIC CONTEXT” “The Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa”

Introduction

There exists in Eastern Iowa, and perhaps extending into the neighboring states of Minnesota Wisconsin and Illinois, a church type which is distinctive and pervasive and which has its roots in German ecclesiastical architecture. This type, usually applied to Catholic churches, is sometimes employed for Protestant churches as well. Immigrant architects who were trained in Germany and Eastern Europe, such as Fridoline Heer Sr. and Guido Beck, seem to be the source of this style.

One might think that a basilica style Gothic or Romanesque church would be a restrictive project for an architect due to its many requirements of form and function, but the great variety of forms and the ingenuity of design exhibited in the Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa denies that. Rather, these are important works of architecture which explore many forms.

This context must remain preliminary until a survey of churches in Eastern Iowa is undertaken. A convenient group of churches used here as a study sample is found in Hoffmann's *The Centennial*

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

*History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.*⁶ In that work every church extant in 1937 is pictured, its construction date recorded, and sometimes an architect's name is mentioned. One hundred-sixteen churches of brick and stone construction have been selected for the sample. There are many other small frame churches, mostly in the Gothic style with a central tower or belfry, but these have not been included. From this sample, generalizations have been made as to prevalence of characteristics such as building material or style for all of Eastern Iowa's Catholic churches.

The problem of style.

The traditional style names for churches seem inadequate for describing the Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa. Most are within the definition of Gothic, but there are several kinds of Gothic: Tudor, English, Perpendicular, French, German, Italian. The Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa often choose to use specifically German or European models rather than English Gothic ones. Not only are there several types of Gothic and Romanesque, but the usual definitions of these styles take only window and door shape into account. There are other elements which determine style other than window openings. Most often, the format, the plan, the facade design, and nave walls are similar whatever the style of the windows, and these exhibit characteristics of the Gothic style. But the usual Gothic or Romanesque terms are still useful in describing the churches and were considered significant style indicators by the original builders. Therefore, a church labeled "Roman," for example, SS. Peter and Paul in the Solon, Iowa vicinity, has round-headed windows, but follows the Gothic format. The Romanesque Revival style employed within this context has little if anything to do with the Richardsonian Romanesque.

In this context, the Gothic pointed arch style is the most prevalent, but quite a number of round-arched churches exist as well. Some of these are just Gothic churches with round-arched windows, but some reflect a truly Medieval Romanesque tradition. For example, Sacred Heart in Dubuque is a Gothic church while having round arched windows and doors under pointed hoods. Holy Ghost, Dubuque, 1915, defined as an "Italian Basilica" by its architect, Guido Beck, follows a truly European Romanesque model.

General Characteristics

Roman Catholic churches and some related protestant churches in Eastern Iowa have a similarity of plan, style and execution which however varied, exhibits a shared basic concept. This church type is used from the second half of the 19th century until about 1925 and follows three general formats. One of these formats, the one used most often, appears to be almost an iconic church form which

⁶ Rev. Mathias Martin Hoffmann, *Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque*, (Dubuque: Columbia College Press, 1938). In this work, every church in the Diocese of Dubuque is pictured.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 **Page** 8

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

cries out “Catholic” and “Midwest.” This is the brick, Gothic styled church with a central facade tower.

The following are the general characteristics of the Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa.

1. Single-naved, basilica format: The churches in this context almost always follow a single format, that of a rectangular basilica form consisting of a single nave or hall above a partly raised basement with a facade tower or towers. These “hall” churches usually have no transepts or side aisles. St. Mary’s in Iowa City is an example of a church with three entrance doors on the facade, but only one nave behind that.

The nave and side aisle format is used only for extremely large churches like the St. Raphael Cathedral in Dubuque. Sometimes, there is a clerestory and lower aisle roofs and occasionally, there are transepts, or indications of a crossing on their exterior walls. This general type has its roots in Medieval and 19th century German architecture.

2. Facade format. Facades are on the gable-end with centered entrances usually with a circular window above the entrance and one or more towers. They are divided vertically, usually into three sections, a central section with the main entrance and side sections. Most examples have usually only one, centrally placed entrance. Larger churches can have three entrances, but only the largest of these has the nave and side aisle format behind the facade.

3. Towers: Almost every church in this context has a tower as part of the facade composition. There are three ways to place the tower on the facade, but by far the most common is the central tower, and it is applied to 64 of 116 churches in the study sample. A smaller number, 27, have one side tower, and 23 of the 116 total have twin towers. Sixteen of these have towers which are uneven in height. Early churches are usually central tower types with the single side tower and the twin tower designs beginning (with a couple early exceptions), around the turn of the century.

4. Exterior side walls are divided into bays with stepped buttresses with stone caps in most examples.

5. Materials: These churches are of brick or stone; brick is the more prevalent material. The churches, if brick, usually have corbeling under the eaves and other characteristic brick construction details. A surprising number of churches are constructed in stone. In the study sample, 18 of the 116 examples are built entirely of stone, and most of these are 19th century examples. The brick churches have stone trim.

6. Style: Various types of Gothic and Romanesque details are applied to the basic church forms, see “The problem of style” above. Identified by window style, there are 72 pointed arched Gothic

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 9

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

examples of 116, and 40 roman-arched types. Four examples are special exceptions. Most early churches are in the Gothic style. The earliest church with round arches in Iowa is Immaculate Conception in Fairbank, 1868. Sacred Heart of Dubuque is next in 1880. There is only a sprinkling of Roman-arched churches until about 1910, but after that, the type dominates.

Examples of Catholic Churches in Eastern Iowa and Comparative Examples from Europe

Central tower types come in all sized and styles. This type dominated Eastern Iowa. See following pages for illustrations.

1. Immaculate Conception, Fairbank, 1868
2. Our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes, 1882-1904
3. St. Boniface, New Vienna, 1895-1919
4. St. Clements, Bankston, 1900
5. St. Columbkills, Dubuque, 1904

Side tower types usually reflect a Romanesque type. They are more popular after 1900. One German and four Iowa examples are included here.

6. Evangelical Church in Altshausen, Germany, 1880
7. Immaculate Conception, Van Home, 1915
8. Immaculate Conception, Charles City, 1912
9. St. Patrick, Waukon, 1915
10. St. Benedict, Decorah, 1916-1933

Twin-tower churches exhibit many variations in style and tower design. They represent a Medieval European tradition, and their appearance in Iowa in such great numbers is probably unique in America.

11. Sacred Heart, Dubuque, 1880
12. St. Patrick, Tama, 1892-1900
13. St. Joseph, Mason City, 1901
14. St. Luke, St. Lucas, 1914
15. Sacred Heart, Oelwein, 1910
16. St. Mary, Guttenburg, 1902
17. SS. Peter and Paul, Rural Solon, 1917

The Source - German Architecture

The source of the style appears to be the Romanesque and Gothic churches of Germany where churches of this type have a long history and continued to be built into the 19th century. The type

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 10

was brought to Iowa and the midwest by German settlers, particularly by settlers who were architects. The Eastern Iowan churches vary in size, and many are large in the context of Midwestern churches or even American churches in general, but there is no comparison between the American churches and Medieval European architecture in terms of size or program of ornamentation. Rather, it is the basic form and proportion which continues on in the 19th century in the Midwest.

Examples

Examples provided in Klasen's *Gebaude Fur Kirckliche Zwecke*⁷ illustrate Medieval and 19th century churches and cathedrals. The Medieval churches were and are extant and were probably known to 19th century American architects. There appears to have been a church-building period in Germany in the late 19th century, the same time that similar churches were being constructed in America. This makes the Catholic Churches of Eastern Iowa part of that European development. The examples illustrate both Gothic and Romanesque styles and twin tower and central tower formats. The Medieval examples are all multiple-aisled, but the 19th century examples are hall churches, or single naved in plan. This type develops in an attempt to unify the church interior, making it all one space. Theses 19th century churches in Europe are smaller than Medieval ones, as are churches in America. The single nave plan is more appropriate for a smaller church and most churches in Eastern Iowa follow the single nave plan.

Twin Tower Churches

Twin Tower churches are prevalent as early as the Ottonian period and continue through the Romanesque and Gothic period after which they seem to die out as a type. They always have identical towers as do most of the churches of France. Usually, if the funds ran out, one was finished shorter, but the intention was for them to be identical. Chartres Cathedral is included because it is a famous and revered church with twin-towered of uneven height and different design. The Eastern Iowa churches are purposefully designed with towers that do not match. It is perhaps too much to trace this to Chartres Cathedral, but it serves as an important early example of this possibility which would have been known to European architects.

The twin-towered church is not popular in Germany in the 19th century, so most inspiration for architects in Iowa would have to come from Medieval examples..

18. Church in Unterzell, 799-802
19. Cloister Church in Frose, 950
20. Bamberg Cathedral, Bamberg, 1100-1274
21. Liebfrauen Church, Andernach, 1200

⁷ Ludwig Klasen, *Gebaude Fur Kirckliche Zwecke* (Keipzig, Baumgartner's Buchhandlung, 1891).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 11

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

22. St. Elisabeth, Marbury, 1235
23. Garrison Church, Stuttgart, 1885
24. Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, 1145

Single Tower Churches

Single tower churches are almost unknown in the Medieval period until Gothic times, and then they are found mostly in Germany. The “westwork” in Ottonian Medieval churches is the beginning of the emphasis of the entrance end, but early churches have many towers with no particular emphasis. Only later does a single western tower dominate the form. Ulm Cathedral is one of the earliest and most famous. Its giant, single tower, the “butter” tower, was constructed from the profits from the sale of butter. The single, dominate, central facade tower is the prevalent type in America.

25. St. Michael Fulda, 820
26. Ganderkesee Church, 1352
27. Freiburg Cathedral, 1230
28. Ulm Cathedral, 1377
29. Beckum Church, Beckum, 1885
30. Neuwied Church, Neuwied, 1882

Iowa Church Architects

The entry point for the European church type described above appears to have been Dubuque, Iowa, the center of the Catholic church in Iowa. It was the home of the Diocese of Dubuque which oversaw all of Iowa, and since 1912, the home of the Archdiocese. The type can be directly attributed to a group of important and prolific architects, trained in Germany, including Martin Heer, Fridoline Heer Sr. and Jr., and Guido Beck, who settled in Dubuque in the late 19th century. They identified themselves as church architects first and foremost.⁸ These architects are known to have constructed over 200 churches each, but as yet, only a small number of them are identified with these architects. It is hoped that after more study, we will be able to match more architects to churches. These architects designed many other types of structures as well. The skill with which the stone and brick churches were constructed can be attributed to the professional architectural training of men like Heer and Beck.

⁸ Alan M. Schroder, Directory of 19th Century Iowa Architects (Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Society, 1982, pp. 5, 23 & 24.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 12

Fridoline Heer, Sr., born in Wallenstadt, Switzerland, in 1834, arrived in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1865.⁹ Following in the footsteps of his master builder father, Heer was a thoroughly trained architect. He was educated in an apprenticeship system then common in Europe in which he spent several years traveling and working with different masters throughout Switzerland and Germany. He studied stone cutting, sculpture, and art as well as supervised construction. A few of the major buildings he designed and constructed in Iowa are the Dubuque County Courthouse, Sacred Heart church in Dubuque, and the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville.

There is some confusion between three architects with the last name Heer. Fridoline Heer Sr. and his son Fridoline Jr. worked together. Martin Heer is also recorded in the city directories, sometimes working with Guido Beck, but Beck is also recorded as part of the firm of Heer and Son during some periods.¹⁰ Martin Heer appears to be older than Fridoline Sr., and perhaps his uncle. In addition, there is a Priest with the name Heer as well in the Dubuque Diocese. More research is needed to separate the identities of these men.

Guido Beck settled in Dubuque, Iowa in 1884 or 85 and worked for a time with Heer Sr. and later with Heer and Son.¹¹ He was more of a competitor than a partner and often worked by himself. Educated in Germany as was Heer, he studied at stonecutter's school in Sigmaringen and at the Royal Technical School in Stuttgart in Germany. He is known for the Dubuque churches of St. Columbkille, Holy Ghost as well as many other examples. In the case of Beck we have a record of a man with a strong personality. Beck was known to be a difficult person with a fierce temper who often expressed regret that he had left his native land.

Architectural Integrity and The Vatican II Ecumenical Council

Many Catholic churches were changed in accord with the Vatican II Council's desire to make the church services, the Mass, more accessible. This meant removing communion rails and moving the main altars closer to the people. Many churches were completely modified inside. Earlier ornate Gothic altars were removed and more "modern" ones installed, and the churches were generally stripped of "old fashioned" details and modern Stations of the Cross and other art added. St. Patrick's and St. Wenceslaus in Iowa City are examples of that type of radical interior change. On the other hand, SS. Peter and Paul exhibit minimal change. The original alter exists, but a second alter, one which was at hand from the earlier church, was installed in front of it.

⁹ Franklin T. Oldt, Ed., History of Dubuque County (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, Reprint, 1994), pp. 596-601; Portrait and Biographical Record of Dubuque, Jones & Clayton Counties, Iowa (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1894). pp. 245-246.

¹⁰ Schroder, Ibid.

¹¹ Oldt, pp. 650-652; Portrait and Biographical Record, pp. 532-533.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 13

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Economic Growth in the Midwest, 1890 to 1920

The period 1890 to 1920 was a time of growth and prosperity in Iowa and the Midwest which made possible the building of so many fine churches. During this period, the growing numbers of immigrant farmers and businessmen were becoming successful and were able to contribute the funds to construct churches and other civic structures. German, Irish, and Bohemian Catholic settlers flooded into eastern Iowa where they constructed a great number of churches, creating the distinctive architectural heritage we have today. They wanted first, to own their piece of land, but following that, they wanted to establish their churches and thus their culture. Churches were important social and cultural centers for immigrant groups.

BACKGROUND HISTORICAL CONTEXT: BOHEMIAN SETTLEMENT IN IOWA

Saints Peter and Paul congregation was the first organized Bohemian congregation in Iowa.¹² The present church is the second church built for this congregation. Even in 1916, when this church was constructed, the congregation continued to be mostly Bohemian in its membership and ethnic focus, and sermons were preached in the Czech language by Father Bauer and subsequent priests for some time after the new church was constructed.

The first Bohemian families who would form SS. Peter and Paul's parish arrived in 1854, forming a congregation in 1861.¹³ They met in nearby school houses even before being served by a priest.¹⁴ The first church was constructed in 1865-1866, and a cemetery was established west of the church. These were located across the road from the present church. The location of its altar is marked by a stone cross monument. This church has the distinction of being the first Bohemian church in Iowa. The original cemetery remains there. It was begun when the first church was built in 1866 and continues to be used. The current congregation consists mostly of people with Bohemian or Czech ancestors some of whom descend from the founding members of SS. Peter and Paul congregation. The early and subsequent Bohemian membership of the church is recorded on its many cemetery stones with Czech surnames.

¹² "Artistic New Church...."

¹³ Hessouna, p. 177. and Gaarde, "Czechs' Iowa Ties Start at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Mt. Vernon Sun, November 23, 1978,

¹⁴ "Artistic New Church," Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 14

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Iowa Churches in the Roman style comparable to SS. Peter and Paul¹⁵

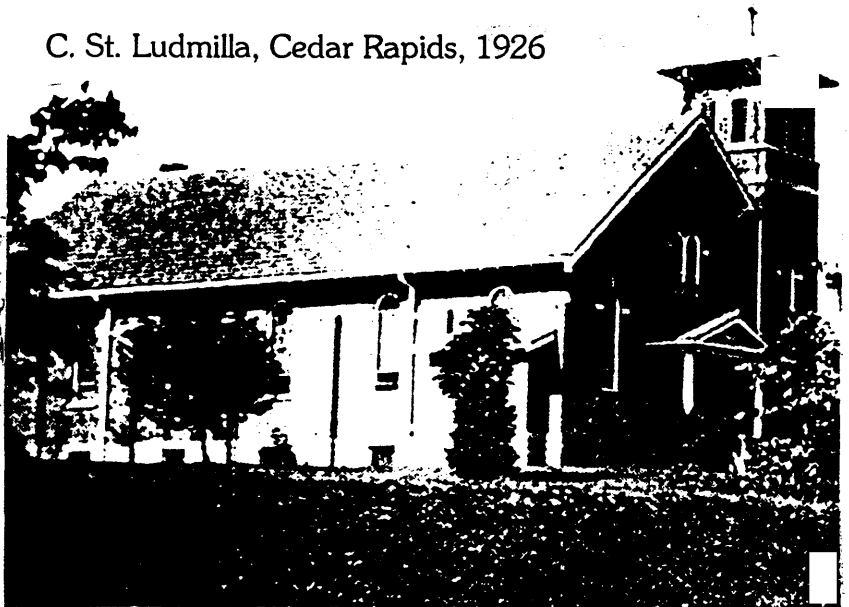


A. Holy Ghost Church , Dubuque 1915

B. St. Philomena, Dubuque, 1926



C. St. Ludmilla, Cedar Rapids, 1926



¹⁵ Photos of Iowa Churches from Hoffman, Mathias Martin. Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Dubuque, Iowa: 1938.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

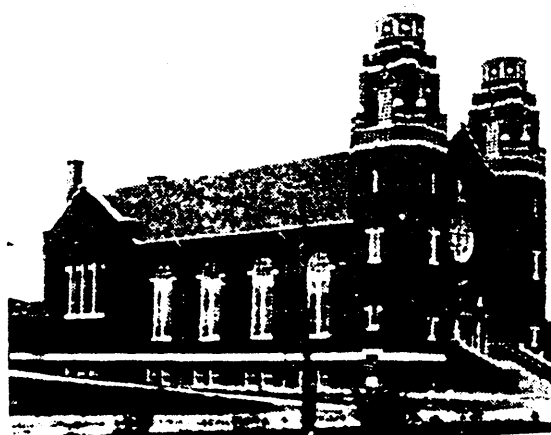
Section number 8 Page 15

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Iowa Churches in the Roman Style comparable to SS. Peter and Paul, Cont.



D. Holy Cross Church at Holy Cross, 1898



F. Immaculate Conception, N. Washington, 1923



E. St. Mary, Waverly, 1913

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 16

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Churches with Central Towers in Eastern Iowa¹⁶



1. Immaculate Conception, Fairbank, 1868



2. Our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes, 1882-1904

¹⁶ Photos of Iowa Churches from Hoffman, Mathias Martin. Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Dubuque, Iowa: 1938.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 17

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Churches with Central Towers in Eastern Iowa



3. St. Boniface, New Vienna, 1895-1919



4. St. Clements, Bankston, 1900

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 18

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson, Iowa

Churches with Central Towers in Eastern Iowa



5. St. Columbkills, Dubuque, 1904

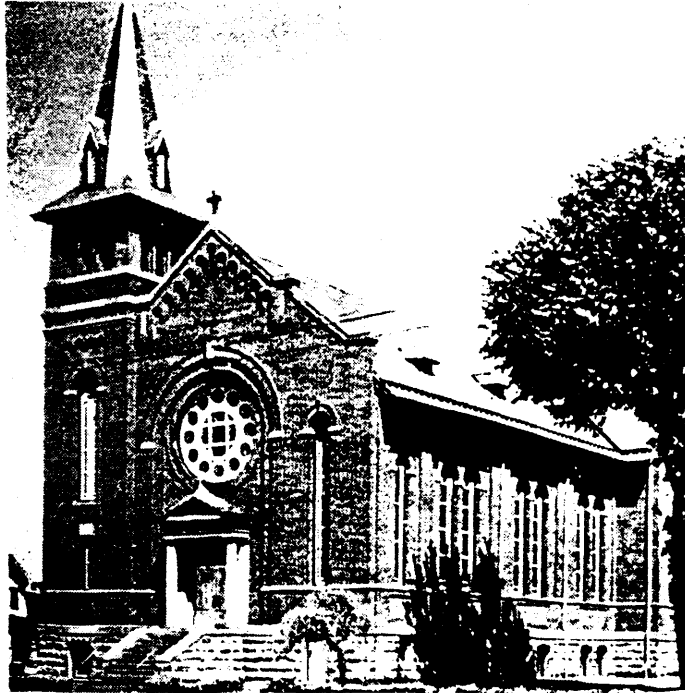
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

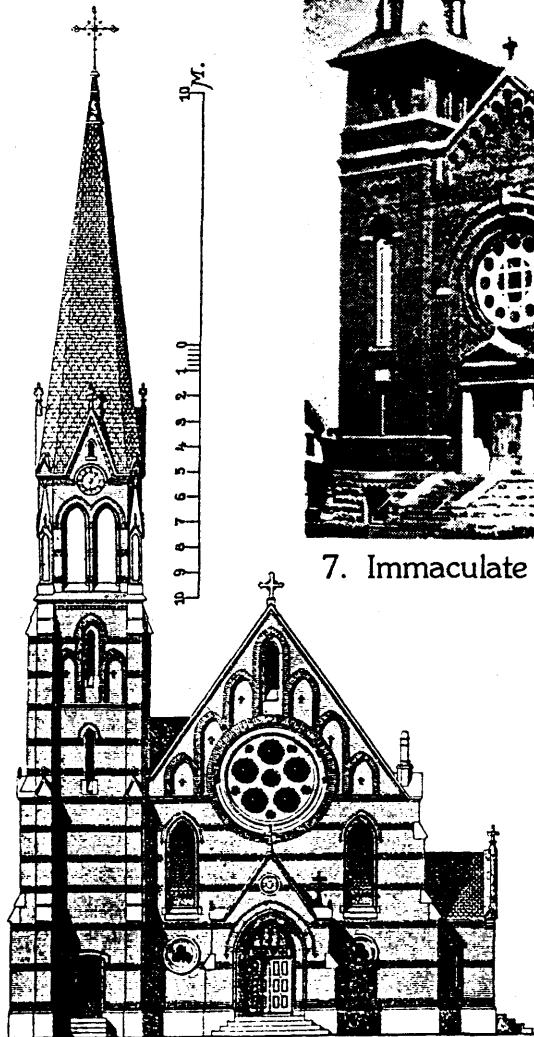
Section number 8 Page 19

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

German¹⁷ and Iowan Churches with Side Towers



7. Immaculate Conception, Van Horne, 1915



6. Evangelical Church,
Altshausen, Germany, 1880



8. Immaculate Conception,
Charles City, 1912

¹⁷ Etchings of German and French churches from Ludwig Klassen, ed. Gebäude für Kirchliche Zwecke. Leipzig, Baumgartner's Buchhandlung, 1891.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

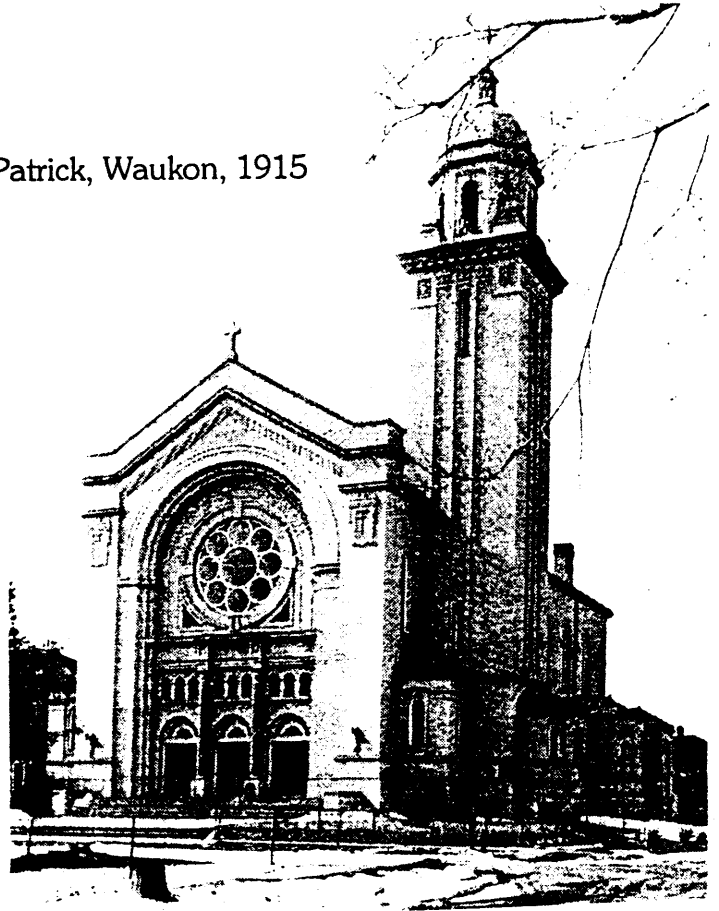
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 20

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Churches with Side Towers in Iowa

9. St. Patrick, Waukon, 1915



10. St. Benedict, Decorah, 1916-1933



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 21

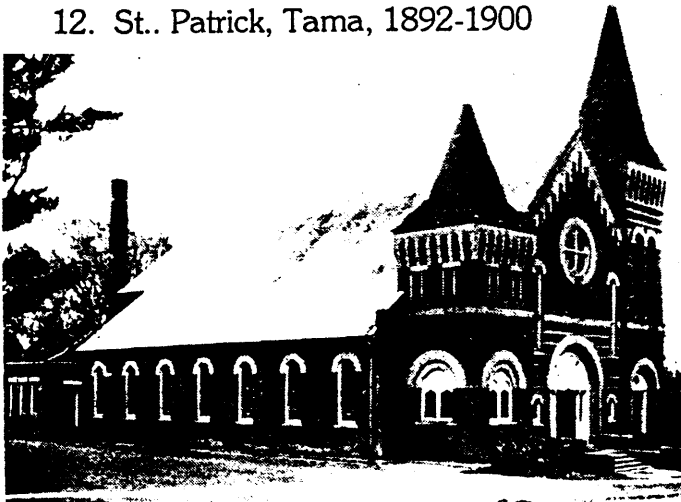
SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson, Iowa

Twin Tower Churches in Eastern Iowa

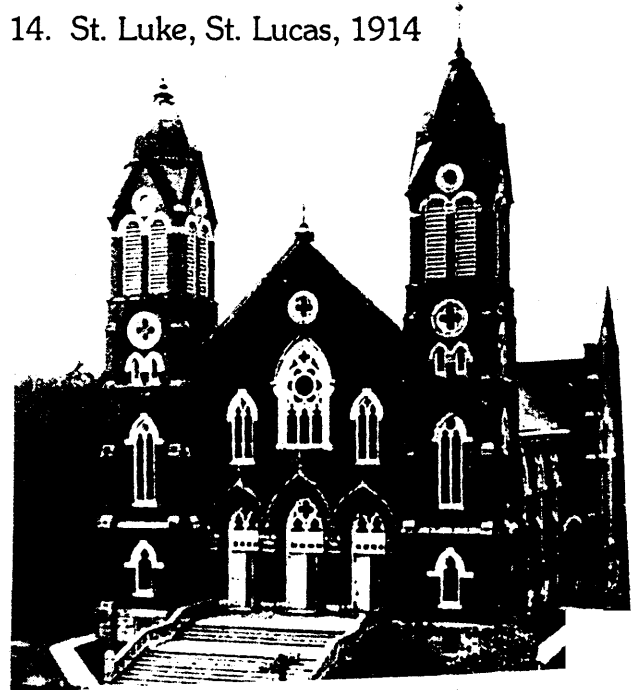


11. Sacred Heart, Dubuque, 1880

12. St. Patrick, Tama, 1892-1900



14. St. Luke, St. Lucas, 1914



13. St. Joseph, Mason City, 1901

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 22

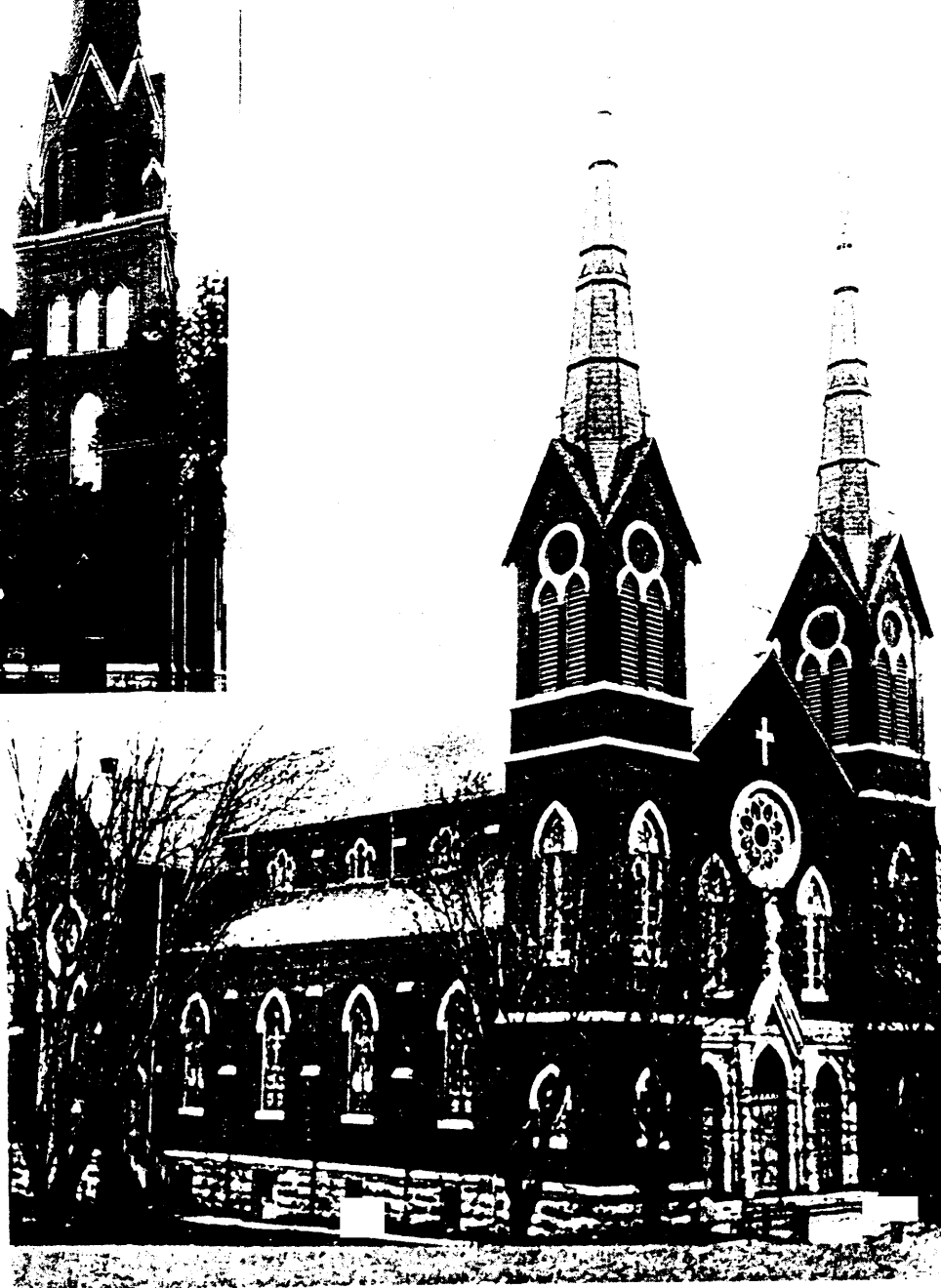
SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson, Iowa

Twin Tower Churches in Eastern Iowa



15. Sacred Heart, Oelwein, 1910

16. St. Mary, Guttenburg, 1902



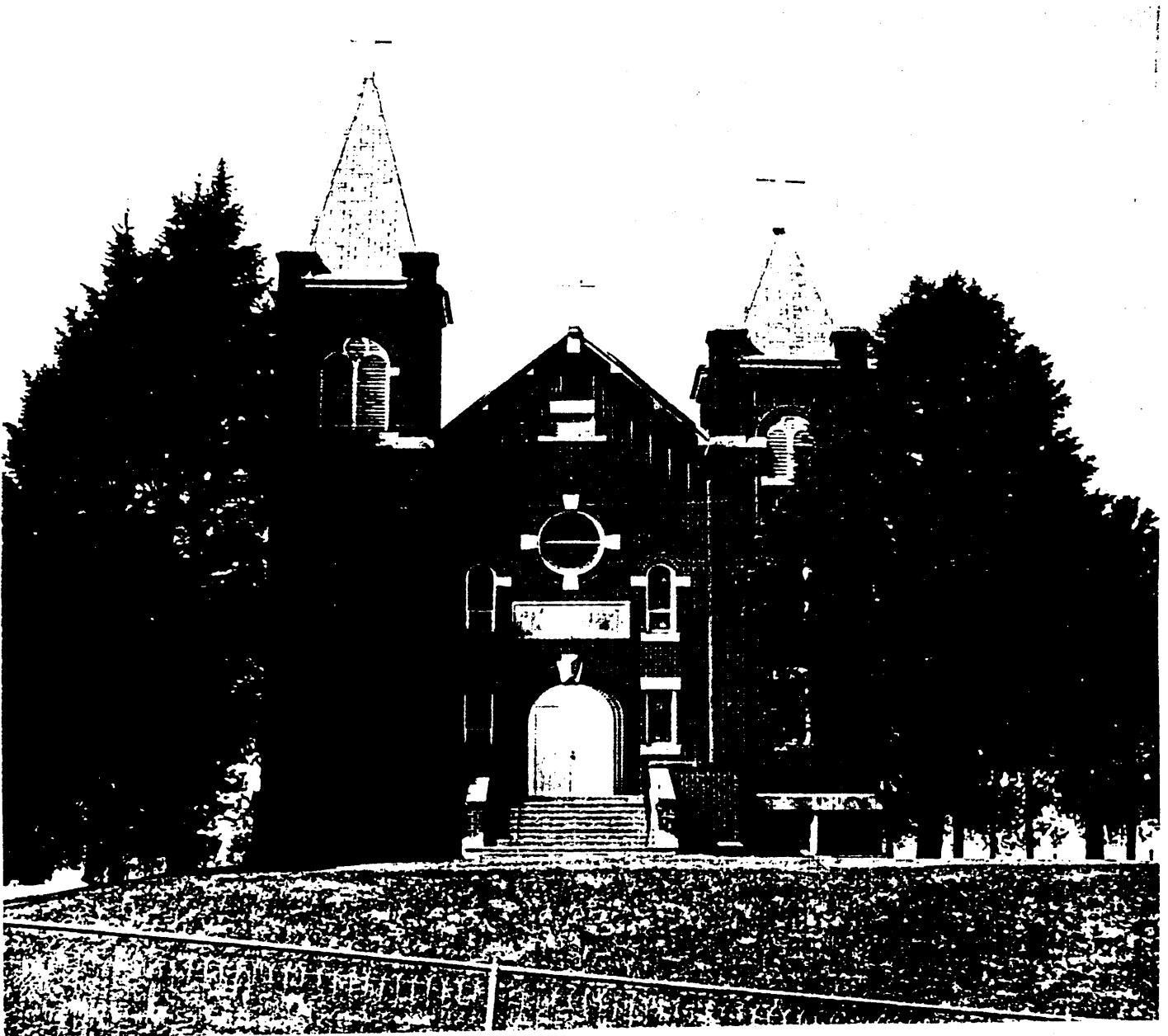
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 23

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Twin Tower Churches in Eastern Iowa



17. SS. Peter and Paul, Rural Solon, 1917

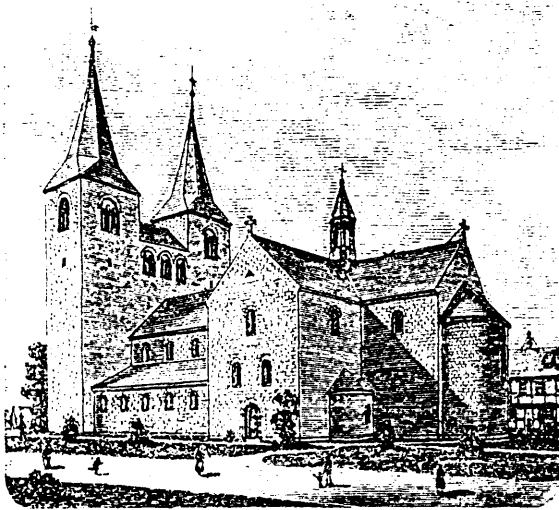
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

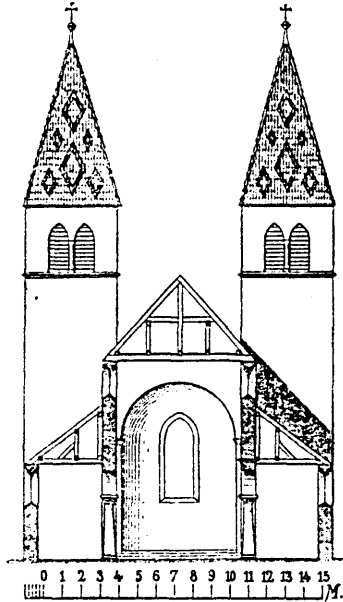
Section number 8 Page 24

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

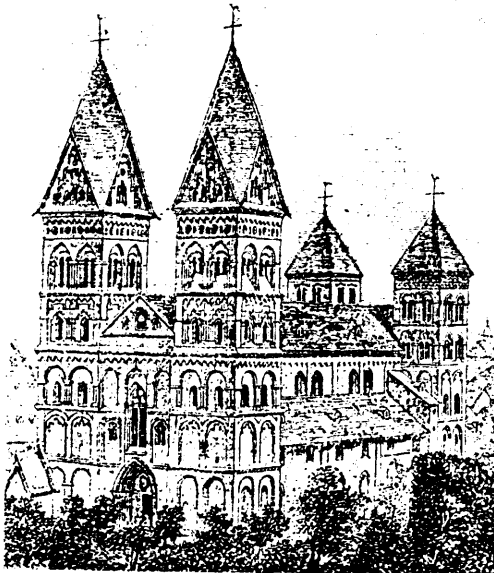
German Churches with Twin Towers¹⁸



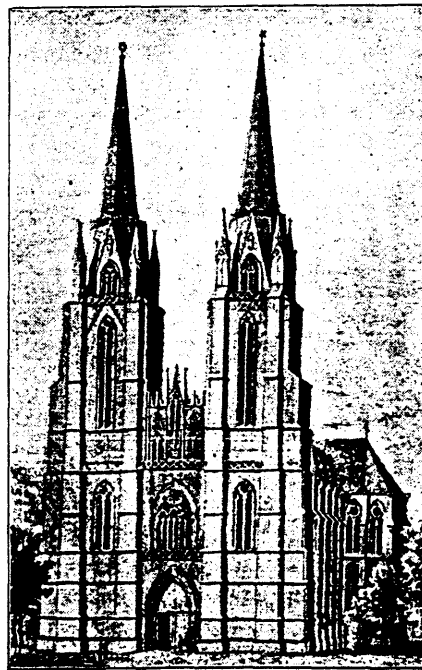
19. Cloister Church in Frose, 950



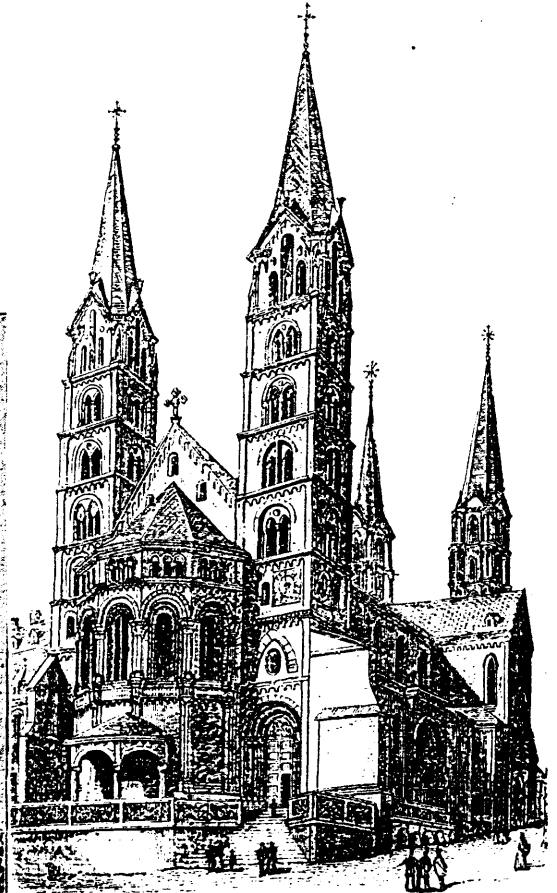
18. Church in Unterzell, 799-802



21. Liebfrauen Church,
Andernach, 1200



22. St. Elisabeth, Marbury, 1235



20. Bamberg Cathedral,
Bamberg, 1100-1274

¹⁸ Etchings of German and French churches from Klassen.

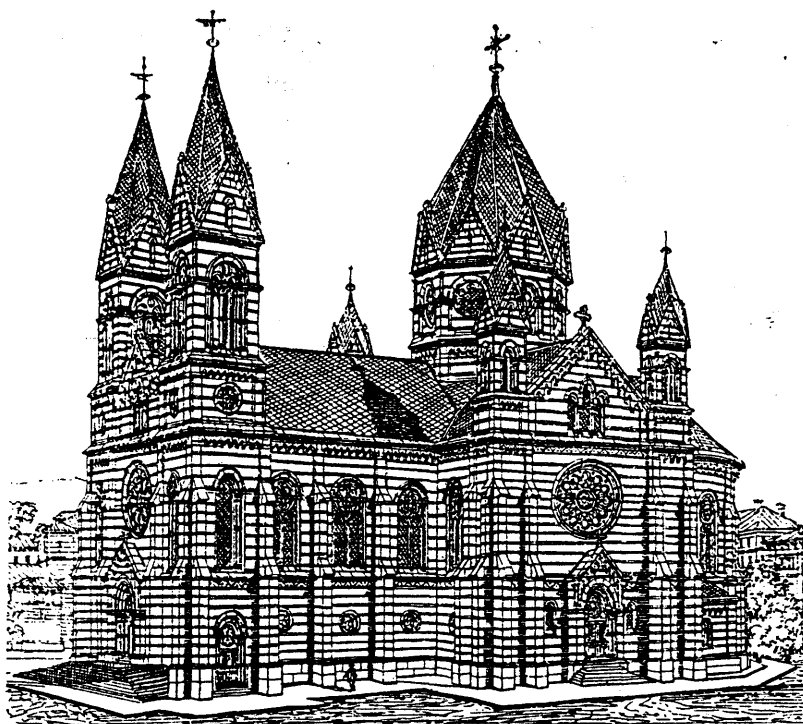
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

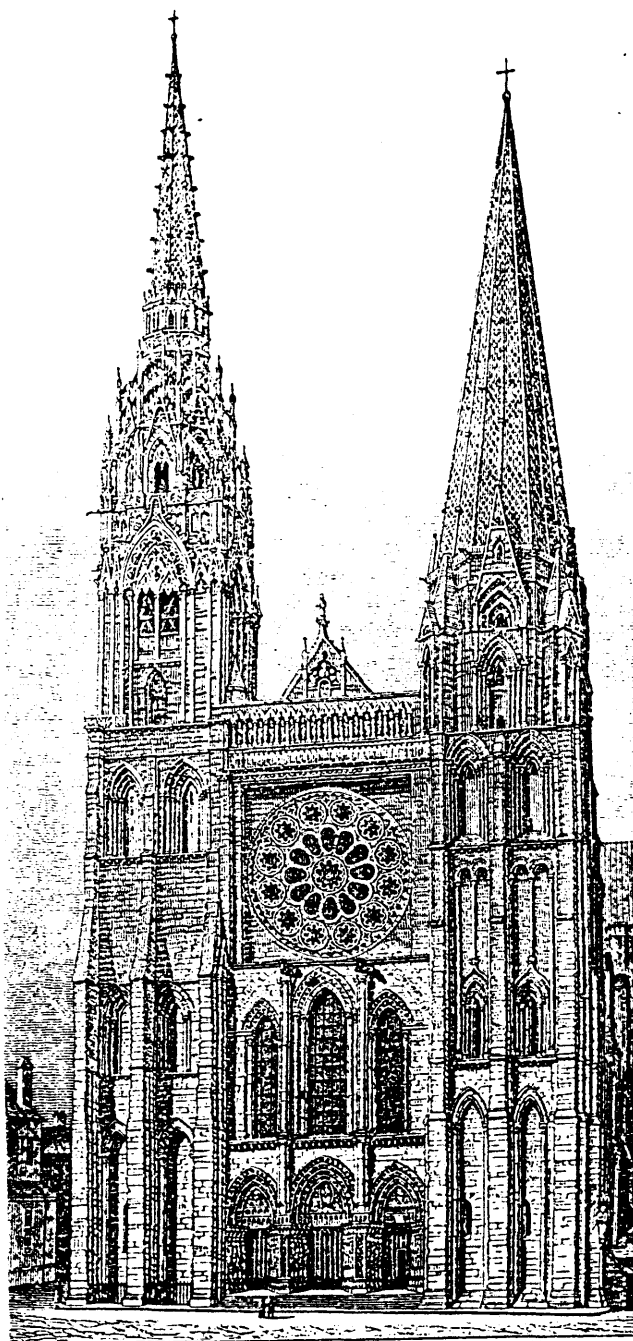
Section number 8 Page 25

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

German and French Churches with Twin Towers



23. Garrison Church, Stuttgart, 1885



24. Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, 1145

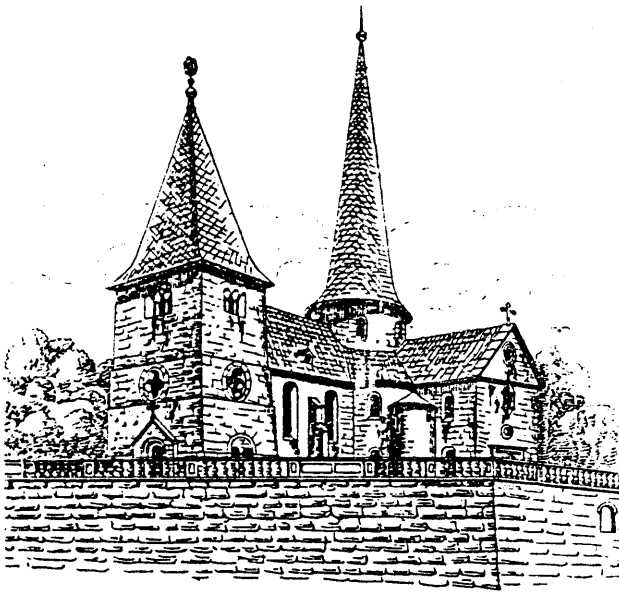
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

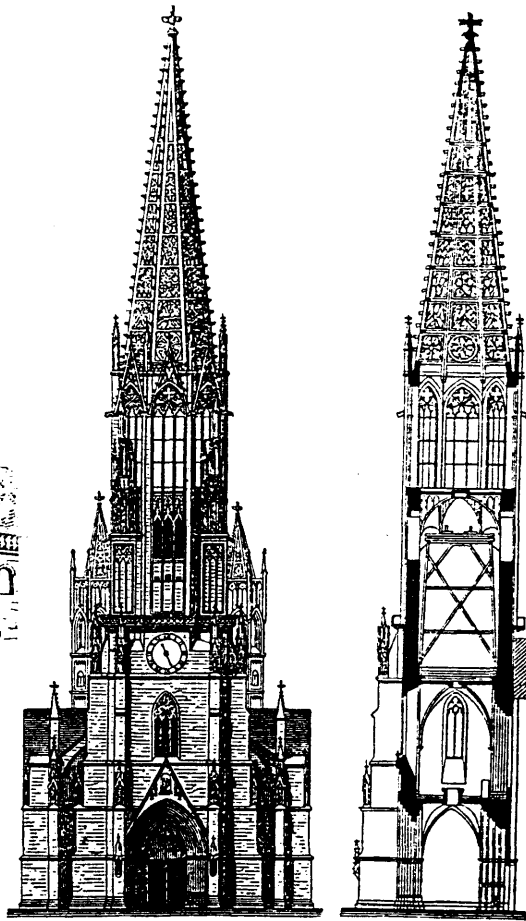
Section number 8 Page 26

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

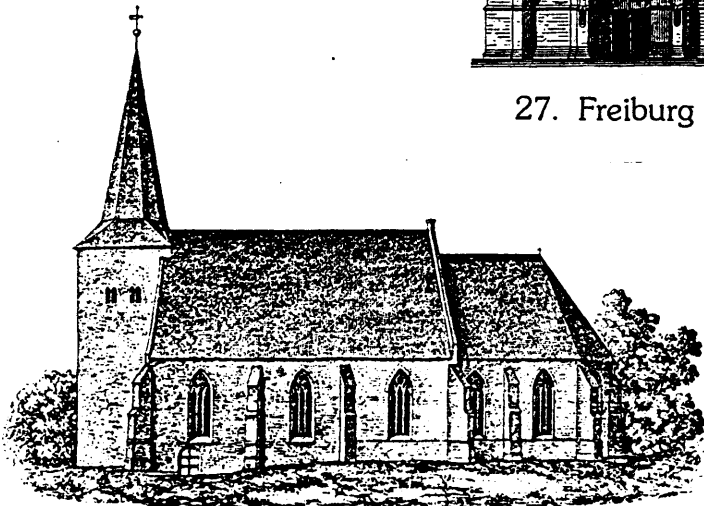
German Churches with Central Towers



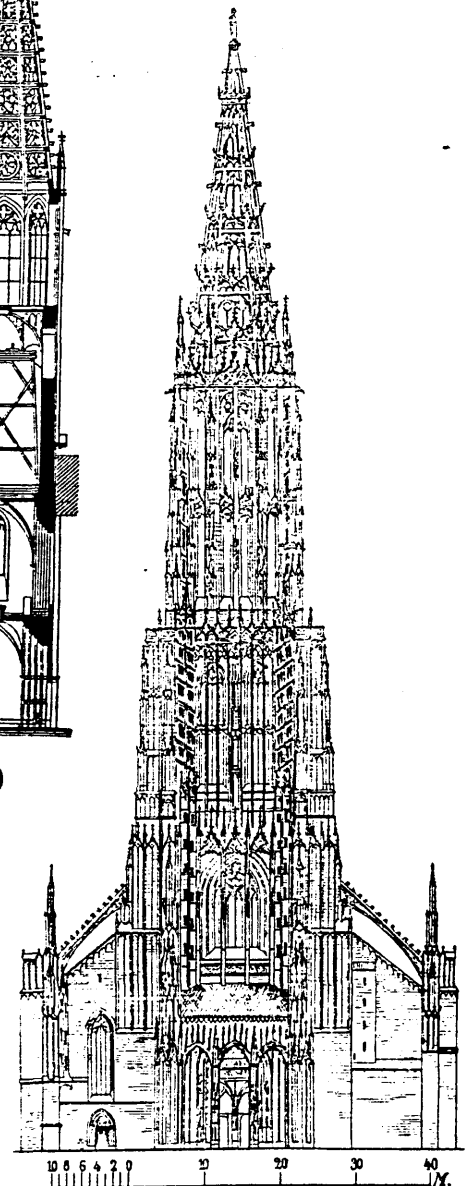
25. St. Michael Fulda, 820



27. Freiburg Cathedral, 1230



26. Ganderkesee Church, 1352



28. Ulm Cathedral, 1377

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 27

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

German Churches with Central Towers

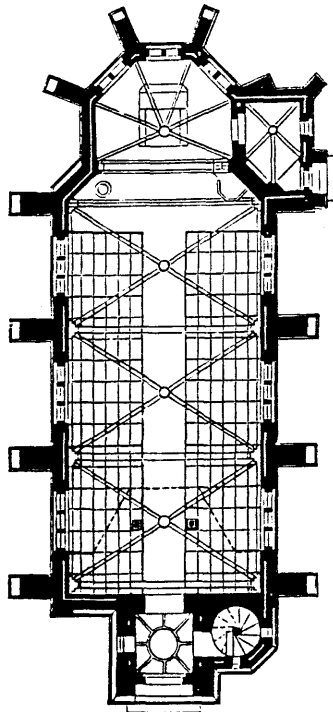
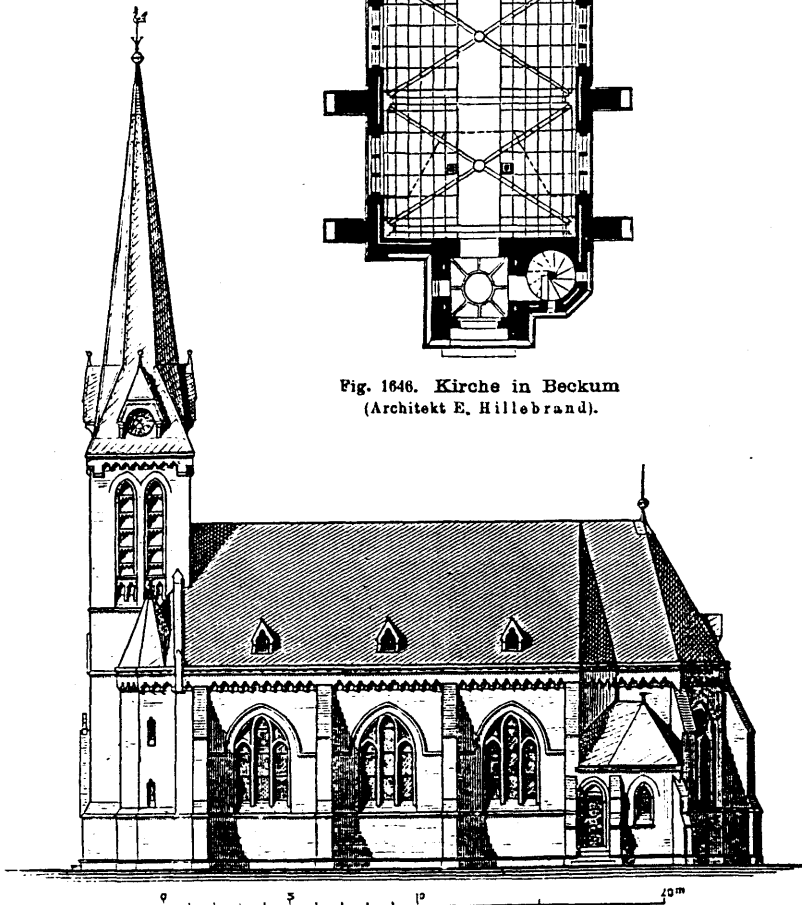
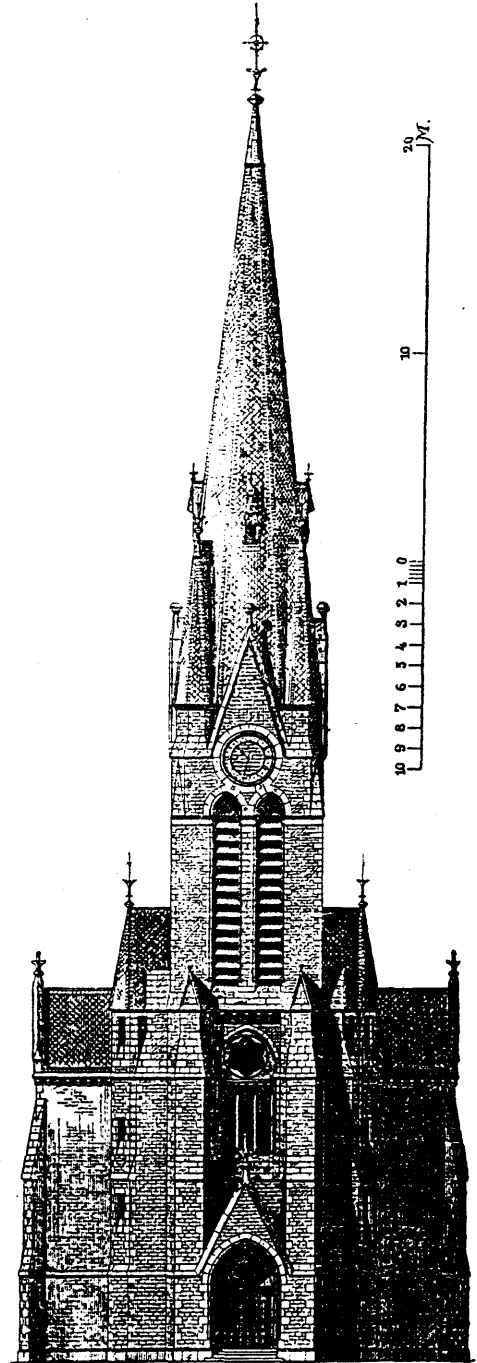


Fig. 1646. Kirche in Beckum
(Architekt E. Hillebrand).



29. Beckum Church, Beckum, 1885



30. Neuwied Church, Neuwied, 1882

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 28

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Artistic New Church Dedicated on Sunday,” the Solon Economy, Thursday, July 19, 1917.

Atlases of Johnson County, 1870, 1889, 1900, 1917, 1939.

“The Beautiful New Church,” illustration and caption, the Solon Economy, May 25, 1926.

Centennial, St. Wenceslaus Church, Iowa City, IA 1893-1993. Iowa City, Iowa: 1993.

“Church Plans special Day,” Iowa City Press Citizen, Thursday, June 11, 1936.

Gaarde, Sara. “Czechs’ Iowa Ties Start at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Mt. Vernon Sun, November 23, 1978.

“Dedicates Church in Cedar Township,” the Catholic Messenger, Davenport, Iowa: July 19, 1917.

“Great Throng at Dedication of New Church Near Solon,” The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, Monday, July 16, 1917, p 2.

Griffith, Eleanor, “The Czechs in Cedar Rapids,” Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 42:2, April 1944, pp. 114-162 and 423, July 1944, pp. 266-326.

Hessouna, Joseph. Ceske Kat. osady v Americe (Czech Catholic Settlement in America), 1865-1890. St. Louis, Missouri: Rev. A. Petrus Houst, 1890.

Hoffman, Mathias Martin. Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Dubuque, Iowa: 1938.

Jerde, Jay. “Spirituality in the Heartland,” Julien’s Journal, 21:6, June 1996, pp. 14-17.

Jerde, Jay to Patricia Eckhardt, letters and attached personal research on Dubuque architecture and Guido Beck., July, 1996.

Klassen, L, ed. Gebaude fur Kirchliche Zwecke. Leipzig, Baumgartner’s Buchhandlung, 1891.

Litts, Charles and Jean (Pavelka) Family Archives, Rural Solon, Iowa.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 9, 10 Page 29

Oldt, Franklin T., Ed. History of Dubuque County, Iowa. Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, nd.

Otting, Loras C. "Gothic Splendor in Northeast Iowa," the Palimpsest, 66:5 (September-October), pp. 146-173.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Dubuque, Jones, and Clay Counties, Iowa. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1894.

"Solon Church Celebrates Corpus Christi for the Last Time," Cedar Rapids Gazette, June 15, 1996.

"St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Bancroft, Iowa, 100 Years, 1891-1991."

"St. Peter's and St. Paul's Dedication Tomorrow," Iowa City Citizen, July 14, 1917.

"St. Peter's and Paul's Church is Dedicated," Iowa City Citizen July 16, 1917.

"Parishioners bitter in Solon," Iowa City Press Citizen, Monday, April 1, 1996.

"2 Solon Churches to close in summer," the Cedar Rapids Gazette, Saturday, March 30, 1996.

Zeller, Anna, "St. Peter and Paul's Parish, of Near Solon, Preserves Old Church in Honor of Founders," Cedar Rapids Sunday gazette,, July 3, 1927.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property sits along the west side of North Taft Avenue in, Section 6, SE Quarter of SE Quarter, Cedar Township, Johnson County, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the church and all of the property attached to it in Section 5, Cedar Township.

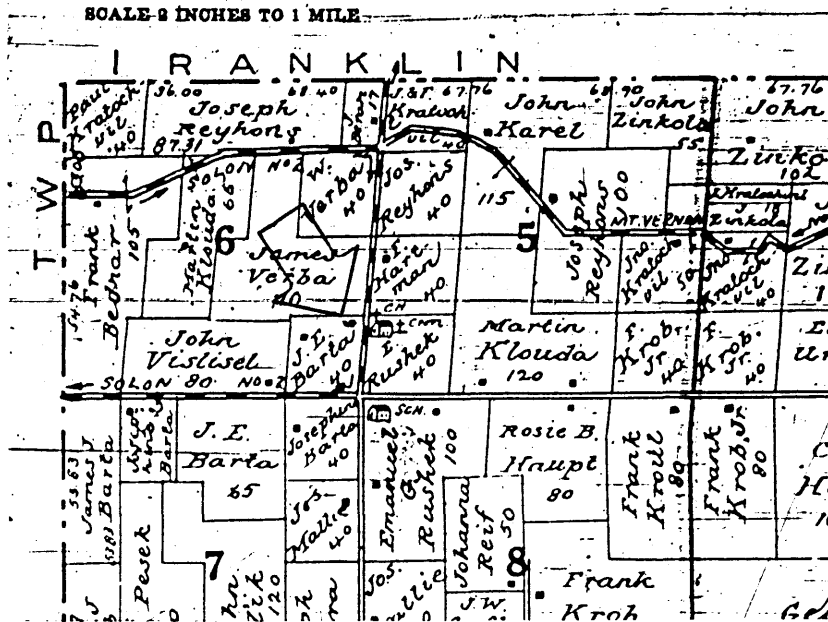
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Johnson County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 30

LOCATION OF CHURCH ON 1933 MAP OF CEDAR TOWNSHIP, JOHNSON COUNTY



PROPERTY PLAT

