

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 1 1975
DATE ENTERED MAY 21 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

"Old Main" Nebraska Wesleyan University

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

50th and St. Paul *Sts.*

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

31

COUNTY

Lancaster

CODE

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Nebraska Wesleyan University

STREET & NUMBER

50th and St. Paul

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds, County-City Building

STREET & NUMBER

555 S. 10th Street

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main building for the Nebraska Wesleyan University campus was built in 1887-1888. It was designed by architects Gibbs and Parker of Kansas City and erected at a cost of \$70,000.

Where?
"Old Main" is a three-story, Richardsonian Romanesque building of brick and stone with a limestone foundation. It is 150' by 71' in dimension with a 70' by 32' addition on the back. The exterior walls are made of pressed brick trimmed with red stone. Heavy rounded arches cover a number of windows and a massive arch spans the main entrance. Originally, a clock tower adorned the roof reaching about 30 feet above the cornice, but this was removed in the 1940's, as it was considered a safety hazard. The slate roof is crowned with ~~crestings~~ of galvanized iron. The side doors are protected by porches of heavy arched masonry. Above these porches are horizontal panels which bore inscriptions, "Let there be light" beneath the south gable and the wording, "And there was light" under the north gable. These inscriptions have been obliterated by weathering through the years. Courses of red stone and ornamental brickwork, some in a basket weave design, run around the entire structure. On all sides, the arched upper portions of the windows are divided into small squares and glazed with heavy cathedral stained glass.

The building has a full basement, which originally housed the chemistry and mechanical departments and their work areas. On the first floor one found the physics, mathematics, and art departments. Also located on this level were a reception room and office of the president. The wide stairway leading to the floors above is centrally located opposite the main entrance and rises up the east wall of the structure. At the first landing is a beautiful art glass window, a copy of the Holman-Hunt painting, "Light of the World." The second floor originally housed the library in the north wing, with the large space over the main entrance occupied by the museum. Classrooms for various subjects covered the remainder of the floor space. A chapel large enough to accommodate one thousand people was located on the entire south end of the third floor. The space above the museum served as a society room with the remaining space on the north devoted to music rooms. The hallways on all floors are wide and were lined with a basket weave patterned wainscotting.

The rear addition added in 1902 was originally built as a one-story gymnasium with a basement for expansion of "Old Main's" heating plant. It is a simple red brick structure with a stone foundation. A second story was added to the addition during World War I.

The present exterior appearance of "Old Main" is not far removed from the original. In the late 1940's a remodeling project was undertaken. At this time the spires were removed from the roof and a louvered structure replaced the tower above the entrance.

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The first floor interior has been altered considerably with new woodwork and a false ceiling in place of the original woodwork and high ceilings. The wainscotting has been removed on this floor. The upper floors remain much as they were before the turn of the century. The heavy woodwork is in good condition. A theatre workshop is now occupying the addition.

There is some deterioration in the building due to water leakage through the roof and gutter leaks, resulting in damage to the inside walls and window casing. In 1974 the east half of the building received a temporary roof to help alleviate the problem.

"Old Main" has been in continuous use since its erection. It served as the administrative center of the University until a few months ago when these offices were moved into a new building. Nebraska Wesleyan is planning to restore the structure, and at this time ideas for future use are being discussed. In the meantime, classes are being held in the building as usual.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1887-1888

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Gibbs and Parker of Kansas City

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In December of 1886 a commission made up of representatives of the Methodist conferences in the state met at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, to discuss the problems of the three Methodist colleges in the state. They were all in financial difficulty, and the commission thought it best to consolidate interests and build one central educational institution which would serve the entire state. Lincoln was voted as the place to locate the campus, and a 45 acre parcel of land, the Baldwin-Pitcher tract three miles northeast of Lincoln, was obtained.

Plans began at once for the erection of a main college building and by May 3, 1887, the design, done by Kansas City architects Gibbs and Parker, was in the hands of the trustees. Originally, the building cost was to be kept at \$50,000; however, the proposed plan required an additional \$20,000 to be spent. This extra money was raised by the selling of lots around the main campus area. Hence the village University Place, now a Lincoln suburb, sprang up around the college. By 1888 there were enough homes in the little town to board the women students. The men stayed for a time in an improvised dormitory in the college building until other housing was available.

The cornerstone of "Old Main," as this original college building came to be called, was laid on September 22, 1887. The day was proclaimed Nebraska Wesleyan Day. A procession of one thousand people walked to the southwest corner of the building to take part in the festivities.

In September of 1888 the doors were opened to the students. After an inspection tour of the building, some of it by way of ladders, the students registered for their classes. Three parallel curricula were offered: classical, scientific, and philosophical. It was possible to earn three baccalaureate degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Philosophy. Fifty students enrolled that first year. The earliest few weeks of classes were held amidst the confusion caused by the continuation of work on the building. Students and faculty alike were most anxious for the completion of the stairway to the third floor chapel. Finally, on October 24, 1888, with access to the chapel possible, a service was held for inauguration of the first chancellor and consecration of the new university.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Booth, Ethel: Where Sunflowers Grew, the Story of Nebraska Wesleyan, Lincoln: Nebraska Wesleyan Press, 1962.
- Hayes & Lox: History of the City of Lincoln, Lincoln: State Journal Company, 1889.
- Sawyer, A. J.: History of Lincoln and Lancaster County, Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916.
- "Daily Nebraska State Journal," May 3, 1887.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

ULTIMATE HA

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 4	69 81 90	4 5 2 3 3 2 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Janet Jeffries, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

March 25, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1500 "R" Street

TELEPHONE

432-2793

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Morin E. Kvett

3/28/75

TITLE

Director

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Ernest A. Rasmussen

DATE MAY 21 1975

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE 5/20/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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By 1900, "Old Main" was the visual center of University Place, with its two stone arches over the front walks leading to the building and the newly planted trees surrounding it. The bell, which was located in a partially concealed frame on the roof, announced the time of day in early years, and later served as the "victory bell" after Wesleyan became involved in college sports.

Architecturally, "Old Main" is one of the last remaining examples of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of institutional buildings in the area. An interesting detail is the patterned brickwork, which accents the designs in the upper portions of the windows and provides continuity from the exterior to the basket weave patterned wainscotting in the interior. As the last remaining original college campus building in Lincoln, the structure holds significance for the entire city.

"Old Main" has become a landmark on the Nebraska Wesleyan Campus. It stands proudly in the center of several new, modern buildings, which have gradually overtaken the campus. The present student body can use this building as a link to the earliest days of Nebraska Wesleyan University, and because "Old Main" has been in constant use since 1888, a feeling of continuity and permanence is apparent on campus. Past and present come together in the halls of "Old Main."