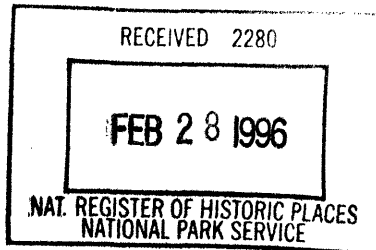


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 any 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 Calvary Episcopal Chapel

other names/site number Old Stone Church (preferred), 32CS197

2. Location

street & number 206 Wilcox Avenue North N/A not for publication

city or town Buffalo N/A vicinity

state North Dakota code 017 county Cass code ND zip code 58011

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Signature of certifying official James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)

2/21/96
Date

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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):

for
Signature of the Keeper
Edson W. Beall

Date of Action

3/29/96

Entered in the
National Register

Old Stone Church
Name of Property

Cass, ND
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	
<u>1</u>		building
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Episcopal Churches of North Dakota

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Second Gothic Revival

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls STONE
WOOD/shingle
roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Old Stone Church
Name of Property

Cass, ND
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria **Areas of Significance**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

(Enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

- 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.

Period of Significance
1885-1886

Significant Dates
1885-1886

Criteria Considerations

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

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder

HANCOCK, GEORGE; ARCHITECT
BEATON, ANGUS; BUILDER

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:

Buffalo ND Historical Society

Old Stone Church
Name of Property

Cass, ND
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 1 4 6 1 0 3 3 0 5 1 9 7 2 5 0
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

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 Dale Bentley and Rolene R. Schliesman, SHSND

organization Buffalo Historical Society date 9/12/95

street & number 206 Wilcox Avenue North telephone (701)633-5259

city or town Buffalo state ND zip code 58011

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Buffalo Historical Society

street & number 206 Wilcox Avenue North telephone (701)633-5259

city or town Buffalo state ND zip code 58011

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Description

Church Exterior

The Old Stone Church is located in Buffalo, North Dakota, on the northeast corner where Wilcox Avenue crosses Third Street. The building is situated on its original foundation in a mostly residential area at 206 Wilcox Avenue North. Resting on a fieldstone foundation, the church is a one-story building of uncut mortared fieldstone with a steeply pitched gable roof. The church was designed in the Gothic Revival style by George Hancock, a prominent architect from the neighboring city of Fargo, and constructed in 1885-1886 by Angus Beaton, a Canadian stone mason.

The church includes a simple nave measuring 60 feet north-south and 22 feet east-west, a small gabled vestry on the north, and a gabled entrance on the south. These smaller eight-foot by ten-foot spaces are offset, giving the building an irregular floor plan and massing. Seven stone corner buttresses were added to the building for structural support in 1903.

The wood frame roof appears to weigh heavily on the stone building. The steep pitch of the roof is a Gothic Revival element. All three of the gable roofs of the building are clad in asphalt shingles, and the gable ends of the main building, vestry, and entrance are covered in wood shingles. A red brick chimney is visible on the west slope of the roof near the north end of the building.

The Gothic style fenestration includes four original pointed-arch, or lancet, window openings deeply recessed into the stone walls along the east front and west elevations of the main building. The deeply recessed window openings are inset as much as one and one half feet into the stone walls. A round window, reminiscent of a Gothic rose window, is located above the chancel in the southern gable end, and a set of three elongated lancet windows are located in the northern gable end. The windows on the gable ends have a drip molding on the window crown designed to deflect water. Square nails used in the construction on the building are visible on the gable ends. Two lancet window openings and a pointed-arch doorway are located in the entrance. Matching the shape of the pointed archway is a set of original wooden doors made of tongue-and-groove diagonal boards. Two lancet window openings are located in the western wall of the vestry, and a rectangular door, also made of tongue-and-groove diagonal boards, provides the rear entrance to the south.

Exterior features of the original building which are no longer extant include a bell tower over the entrance, decorative crosses at the roofline, and stained glass windows. The original stained glass windows were destroyed by vandals while the church was unused from 1912 to 1916. A brief renewal of interest brought about a restoration during which the windows were replaced with textured and mottled clear

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND

Description (continued)

glass. After the church was closed in 1934, vandals once again destroyed the windows. Exterior plywood panels and interior fiberboard panels were installed in 1936 to cover the glass in the lancet windows to prevent further vandalism.

A photograph of the church found in the December 1895 issue of The Record reveals an original stone bell tower built over the front entranceway. The tower walls rose to the same height as the peak of the main gable over the nave and were capped by a wood frame and wood shingled roof. A smaller chimney-like stone spire continued upward over the northeast corner and was capped by a tall four-sided metal roof. An elongated pointed-arch opening was located in each of the four sides of the tower to create an open space for the bell. The photograph shows a small metal balustrade along the inside of the lancet openings. The stone bell tower was pulled down and dismantled during the winter of 1899-1900. A wooden bell tower replaced the stone tower later in 1900.

A circa 1904 postcard shows the wooden replacement bell tower which borrowed architectural elements from its stone predecessor. Nearly 30 feet tall, the tower was enclosed for the first eight feet, then open with eight support columns and a wooden banister. The roof was double-pitched with a tall center spire and a cross at the peak. It was an impressive replacement bell tower, awaiting a bell that never materialized. The second bell tower became unstable in 1912 and church services were moved because of the dangerous condition. In 1916, it was replaced with the simple gable roof that exists today.

Other alterations to the exterior of the building include the removal of an original roof-mounted ventilation system and the replacement of the original wood shingles with asphalt shingles, both of which occurred in 1985. The ventilation system consisted of a door which could be opened and closed by means of a rope-and-pulley system from inside the church.

Ecclesiologically correct, the irregular asymmetrical massing of the church was intended to provide movement and animate the exterior, to highlight the natural and honest use of building materials, and to call attention to specific liturgical elements.

Church Interior

A pointed-arch doorway leads west from the entry into the nave of the church. The nave appears to be much larger than what is conveyed by the exterior and is enhanced by the open rafters and exposed trusses that stretch upward. Bead board lines the nave under the window sills and above the windows where the walls meet the rafters. The wainscoting and other woodwork is stained dark brown.

The chancel is located under the round window at the southern end of the building and is two steps above the regular floor. The altar is elevated an additional step. A pointed-arch doorway near the chancel leads west to the vestry. The lancet arch door is constructed of tongue-and-groove diagonal boards.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 3

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Description (continued)

Because there is no basement, the floor is suspended approximately twelve to fourteen inches above the ground. The flooring material is four-inch wide tongue-and-groove fir planks.

Church furnishings included an altar, three altar panels, bishops chair, chancel chair, font, lectern, pulpit, organ and bench, hymnal board, and chairs for seating, according to an article in the June 10, 1887, issue of the Buffalo Herald. The elaborate furnishings were carved of oak and darkly stained. The chancel floor was covered with a red and black intricately patterned carpet. Before the church was sold in 1936 the furniture was sent to various churches throughout North Dakota and Minnesota.

In 1936, the Buffalo Masonic Lodge #77 AF & AM purchased the building to use as their temple. The original lighting consisted of several wall bracket kerosene lamps with reflecting mirrors and two kerosene chandeliers which hung from ornate hooks in the ceiling. The Masons installed electricity, adding two electrical outlets, three decorative pendulum replacement light fixtures which hung by chains in the main section of the building, and three simple fixtures added to the vestry and entrance.

Other interior alterations by the Masons included cutting back the chancel, and covering the north and vestry windows with plywood and installing used carpeting from a Fargo hotel. The original wall color, a rich rose/blush indicative of Episcopal church interiors, had been changed to a cream color during the 1918 restoration. The Masons painted the walls light blue. The original wood stove located on the north end of the building was replaced with a fuel oil burner, and a natural gas stove for cooking was added to the vestry. The building remains without running water and restrooms. The foundation of the original outhouse is still visible on the church property west of the vestry. The Masons vacated the Old Stone Church in the late 1970s due to a dwindling membership. They merged with the Masons from the neighboring town of Casselton.

In 1985 the Masons donated the Old Stone Church to the Buffalo Historical Society, which rewired the building in 1988. The Society retained the Masonic light fixtures and added five electrical outlets. The building contains most of the Masonic Temple furnishings and some items from the order of the Eastern Star, Aurora Chapter #59, including their oil floor cloth purchased in 1908.

Other furnishings housed in the building are an elaborately carved secretary belonging to Dr. Clark, one of Buffalo's first doctors, several oak and leather juror chairs from the Cass County Courthouse, and an oak roll-top desk. Recent investigations have located most of the original church furnishings. Efforts to retrieve them have resulted in the donation of the original altar, three altar panels, the hymnal board, the very ornate two-tiered pump organ and bench, and the Episcopal throne sent from the namesake Calvary Chapel in New York. Recently the original silver candlesticks for the altar were returned from California, to the Buffalo Historical Society, by a granddaughter of an early church member, who had helped haul some of the stone used to build the church. Donation of other items are pending. Two of the wall bracket kerosene lamps remain, to light the chancel. Scraps of the original chancel carpeting have been

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 4

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Description (continued)

found in an attic crawlspace, and pieces of the original stained glass windows were found outside along the foundation.

Church Integrity

Few changes in the building have occurred in the building since its construction in 1885-1886. And they do not compromise its high level of integrity. Long periods of vacancy (1912-1917, 1920-1926, 1933-1936, circa 1977-1985) contributed to this fact. The replacement of the bell tower with a gabled roof entrance occurred in 1916 and has become part of the historic fabric. Minor changes such as the wooden panels in the windows and different paint colors, are reversible.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance

The Old Stone Church, which was built in 1885 as the Calvary Episcopal Chapel, has had many names throughout its history. As the oldest church building in Buffalo, it is commonly known in the community as the Old Stone Church.

Built in the Second Gothic Revival style, the Old Stone Church is nominated under Criterion C for its statewide significance in architecture. A fine example of an "ecclesiologically correct" Gothic Revival Church, the building was designed by prominent Fargo architect George Hancock.¹ As the first stone Episcopal church built in Cass County, it represents a rare type of Episcopal church construction, that being uncut fieldstone rather than the dressed version. Ordinarily National Register criteria excludes religious buildings, however the Old Stone Church is eligible under Criteria Consideration A, because it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction.

The church is identified as a significant church in Episcopal Churches of North Dakota, a multiple property submission in the National Register of Historic Places. The church meets the registration requirements described in the multiple property submission with its Second Gothic Revival Style detailing: steeply pitched roof, asymmetrical plan, side entry, liturgically oriented chancel, side vestry, corner buttresses, lancet windows, pointed-arch openings, and honest use of materials. The church is specifically mentioned for its placement of the vestry and its unique "stubby" arched windows, which are reminiscent of the narthex windows at Christ Church in Medway, Massachusetts. The church at Medway served as a model for most of the Hancock Brothers' and the Church Building Committee's plans for ecclesiologically correct churches in the First Dakota Boom.

The church possesses a high degree of integrity in its nearly unaltered state and good condition. "Examples of this distinctive building type are unsurpassed in terms of unity and comprise a significant architectural body of work," states Barbara Beving Long in the multiple property submission. The period of significance for the property is 1885-1886, the construction date of the church.

Ecclesiologically correct refers to a religious philosophy adopted by Augustus Pugin and other Ecclesiologists who preferred the Gothic Revival style for churches and furnishings. Liturgical and symbolic functions of the worship service were reflected in the construction of the churches, including an elevated chancel, offset vestry, and the "honest use" of materials. The honest use of materials refers to a physically permanent, symbolically enduring, and stable material, usually fieldstone or brick. Barbara Beving Long, "Episcopal Churches of North Dakota, 1992" TMs, p. 13-15, Archeology and Historic Preservation Division, Bismarck, ND.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 6

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

History

Built as Calvary Chapel, the story of the Old Stone Church includes many high and low points. Growth was tempered with decline of membership and loss of clergy; debt and long periods of vacancy were tempered by renovation and restoration efforts of the congregation, later the Masons, and finally the Buffalo Historical Society.

Plans for Calvary Episcopal Church in Buffalo began in 1884. At the time, there were six Episcopal churches in North Dakota, with the first built in Fargo in 1874. Episcopal Bishop William D. Walker sent Reverend O'Callaghan McCarthy to Buffalo, a small town along the Northern Pacific Railway and 45 miles west of Fargo. There were no church buildings of any kind when the Reverend McCarthy arrived in Buffalo. Episcopalians were few in town, but numerous on the farms. When Bishop Walker visited the community in 1884, almost 100 people gathered to hear him. The Buffalo congregation grew rapidly, and the Episcopal Society, under the guidance of Reverend McCarthy, made plans to erect a church building.

Mary Strong Wilson and her sister, Laura Strong Letchworth, donated the land on which the church was built. The sisters were heirs to the estate of John C. Strong, a wealthy New York landowner. Lots were donated to anyone who would build a business, church, or school in the city of Buffalo.

In July of 1885, during an elegant and impressive ceremony, the corner stone of the Episcopal Church was laid. The procession included Bishop Walker, the Reverends Cooley and Swan, several ladies and gentlemen, and the Episcopal Choirs of Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota. They arrived by rail in the Bishop's special car and were received by Reverend McCarthy, the Buffalo Band, and a large concourse of citizens. The occasion was one that marked an important step in the history of Buffalo. The enterprising Episcopal Society was composed of many Buffalo's leading citizens, and the edifice was to be built at once.

The church was designed by architect George Hancock (1849-1924), who with his brother Walter, created the architectural firm of the Hancock Brothers in Fargo. Hancock was born in Uley, Gloucestershire, England, and later studied building construction and architecture at the South Kensington Institute in London. Hancock came to North Dakota in 1882, eager for architectural commissions. Hancock contacted Bishop Walker, offering his services to the Diocese Building Committee. Hancock was seen as having the distinct advantage of having actually seen, visited, and studied English Anglican Gothic churches. Hancock and Bishop Walker also developed a social, as well as, a business relationship. The Hancock Brothers are known to have designed churches in Bozeman and Aneconda, Montana; Wadena, Minnesota; and Buffalo, Devils Lake, Casselton, Jamestown, and Lisbon, North Dakota. The Hancock Brothers designed a variety of commercial buildings, schools, institutional structures, and churches statewide.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND

Statement of Significance (continued)

The Old Stone Church was constructed using mostly uncut, native fieldstone, gathered by the parishioners. In the Diamond Jubilee, the family of Sophia Helen Newbert, immigrants from Olso, Norway, were among the many early settlers who hauled rock and fieldstones to town during planting season. Whenever possible, Bishop Walker encouraged his congregations to build stone churches. He explained his preference this way: "In the fire-swept, tornado-racked climate it has seemed wisest of policies to rear such massive, stable churches as will pass the ordeal of fire and storm. ... I find that men and women will give more labor and love and money to the abiding sanctuary than the timber makeshift. And so wherever a stone church is built the enthusiasm among the people is hot and self-sacrificing." Rural communicants many almost penniless, "who," as Walker wrote, "when coming to their market-town, carry in a load of stone and lay it on the church lot. It is a rugged type of loyalty ... which rarely meets the gaze in the East. It is a beautiful Western devotion."

Calvary Chapel was built by Angus Beaton, a Canadian stone mason, and was the first stone church in North Dakota to be built with a stone tower. Construction progressed rapidly according to the July 29th 1885 convocation journal of the Episcopal Church, the missionary district of North Dakota. The walls of the building were completed and ready for the roof, and the cost of the building was estimated at \$1,200.

The building of the church must have served as a welcome sign to the more refined citizens of the day. An account in the Tower City History describes the atmosphere in Buffalo in the fall of 1885, "Buffalo had been cursed that fall with the toughest crowd of pimps that ever visited. They were stealing chickens, drinking poor whiskey, and raising hell generally. They won't work and prowl around endangering property and lives." The Hope Pioneer urged the citizens "to unite and run them out at the end of a shotgun."

The cost of building the church rose almost as fast as the walls themselves. By August 14, 1885 the projected cost was increased to \$1,500. Crucial funding was received from Calvary Chapel, Bishop Walker's church in New York. Members and financial support were coming from other settlements in the area, including Alice, Tower City, and Ayr, however costs were expected to rise even higher. The Episcopal Society of Buffalo was actively engaged in fund raising to pay for the expected increases. Dramatic readings, literary entertainment, gypsy fortune tellers, formal balls and raffles were held by the Society. The idea of dancing and lotteries, advertised publicly, associated with the building of a Christian house of worship, brought on a pile of letters filled with fire and brimstone from other local communities and priests. They were refuted with powerful letters of support from prominent business owners and citizens of Buffalo. One such letter stated that the Episcopal Society would "dance all the way to heaven" if it needed to. An outpouring of like responses effectively ended the criticisms.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

The Buffalo Herald notes in its Friday August 6, 1886 issue that "Our Episcopal Church is rapidly nearing completion. The tower is up, plastering nearly done, and the stained glass windows have been placed." The first service in the church was held on October 15, 1886 by the Reverend John Trenaman, missionary from Wheatland. On November 12, 1886 it was announced that "the Episcopal Chapel is now finished and furnished with elegant furniture." A font, lectern, chancel chair and other items had been sent from Calvary Chapel of New York. Also noted was "a sweet toned organ. Its superior is not in Dakota. Services are held every Sunday evening."

The church was consecrated "Calvary Chapel" on June 5, 1887, by the Right Reverend William D. Walker, Bishop of Dakota Territory, assisted by Reverend McCarthy, originator of the mission, and Reverend Trenaman the resident rector. During the ceremony thanks was given to the mystery benefactor whose payment of the churches indebtedness, a total of \$170, allowed the church to be consecrated, as no Episcopal church could be consecrated until it was free of debt. The convocation journal of 1887 records the consecration and states that "Calvary Chapel, New Buffalo, is a model of neatness and architectural beauty. The cost of the edifice was not far from \$2,500 and although the town is not large, it is an honor of Buffalo and vicinity who have given so generously." Appreciation also went specifically to the ladies of the Womens Guild, who raised over \$330 for the building fund.

The membership consisted of 12 families and 26 individuals. Included in a list of early church members were: Socrates Squire, a heavy stockholder in the Northern Pacific Railway; his daughter, Gertrud Squire-Talcott, who named the town "New Buffalo" after her birthplace, Buffalo, New York; and her son, Frank Talcott, who organized the very successful Talcott farm and was a state senator from 1900-1913 and appointed warden of the State Penitentiary by Governor Louis B. Hanna. Other early members included Mrs. S. G. More, who in 1892 became the first female bank president in Cass County, and many other prominent citizens, a variable who's who of early Buffalo.

Reverend John Trenamen served the congregation faithfully and during his term as rector, also served the mission at Tower City, walking the six miles between the two points year round, and in all kinds of weather. He constructed his own rectory, albeit very small, next to the church in Buffalo in 1887. He also took the lead in a movement in 1888 to establish an Episcopal College in the vacant buildings of Tower City University in neighboring Tower City. The plan was eventually abandoned for lack of funding. In 1889 he assumed the responsibility of the mission in Casselton and in 1892 moved there occasionally serving Calvary Church until 1896.

The 1890s were years of financial depression and caused the closing of many missions, at least temporarily. The lack of clergy to serve the churches and missions of North Dakota was a constant problem, limiting the growth of congregations severely.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

During these years, the Women's Guild held bazaars, bake sales, and other fund raisers, with the funds used for church needs, mostly improvements and repairs. There was also a thriving Sunday School, which was a rarity in Episcopal Churches of the day. Dr. S. B. Clark, who was the Sunday School superintendent, also served as warden of the chapel into the 1920s.

Without a resident rector, and regular services the spirit and momentum of a congregation was hard to maintain. So in 1895 the congregation decided that to attract and keep a reverend they would have to provide comfortable living quarters, so the size of the rectory was tripled with a two-story addition. The plan was a good one, and it attracted the services of the Reverend Roderick J. Mooney in 1896. Reverend Mooney had charge of the Buffalo-Tower City and Mayville-Portland missions.

Under Reverend Mooney's guidance, a rebirth of the mission took place. Numerous communicants were added, and the congregation was revived. Noting the Reverend Mooney's success at Buffalo, the interim Bishop, the Right Reverend Morrison, Bishop of Duluth, stated in his 1897 convocation address "I doubt if you can find anywhere in a missionary jurisdiction, mission churches that will compare with those beautiful little houses of worship, with their walls of prairie boulders, which we find in this state ... 16 miles west of Casselton lies the splendid little parish of Buffalo, where Mr. Mooney has done such remarkable work." The Bishop was so pleased, that on September 5, 1897 he called Reverend Mooney to serve Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo. And Buffalo was again without a rector, and services were again infrequent.

The Reverend T. H. J. Walton took charge of the Buffalo mission on June 5, 1898, and also served Casselton. New altar furnishings in seasonal colors and a brass altar cross were secured. The church, which had been seated with chairs up to this point, was fitted with beautiful oak pews. Also a fine Estey organ with double manual and bass pedals valued at \$450 was purchased. With 25 communicants, the congregation was flourishing. Reverend Walton was instrumental in writing the church policy on divorce for the state of North Dakota.

During the winter of 1899-1900, the stone tower on the church, which had become unstable, was pulled down to avert disaster. A wooden replacement bell tower was built in the spring of 1900. A photo on file at the Buffalo Historical Society shows the wooden replacement tower.

Reverend Arthur Chard took charge of the Buffalo-Casselton mission in July of 1900. Under the leadership of Reverend Chard numerous improvements were made, a barn was built on the rectory property in 1900, a cistern was placed in the rectory, and choir stalls were constructed in the church. However, hard times were just around the corner and before the year was up, the congregation was in debt. For the first time they had to secure a loan from the Bishop, and ask the Bishop Chancellor and standing committee for a reduction in the amount of salary paid by them to the Reverend Chard. The Bishop responded by increasing Buffalo's yearly grant from \$100 to \$250.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

The removal of four communicants, and a number of families that had supported the church in the past, in 1902, made matters even worse. Reverend Chard reported that the strength of the congregation was materially decreased. Reverend Chard had a rectory built in Casselton, a larger congregation mission with what he felt was a brighter future. Buffalo was described at the time as having a fine church building, but a dead congregation. Following Chard's move, the Bishop made his first visit to the congregation. Over 100 people showed up for Sunday services hoping to persuade him to call another rector to their parish, but to no avail. The church would never again have a resident rector.

Bad luck continued for the small parish. Five more communicants were removed in 1903. And according to Buffalo, Our Town on the Prairie, "On the night of July 3, 1903, during a severe rain and wind storm, the southeast corner of the stone wall under the wooden tower of the church fell away leaving an unsightly hole and leaving the remaining portion of the tower unsafe."

Back from New York for the summer, Mrs. G. S. Talcott and her sister, Miss Squires, who were early residents of Buffalo and did much toward the establishment of the church, began a subscription for the purposes of repairing of the tower and other necessary items. By November 1903, the congregation had rebuilt the wall of the tower, and at the same time, strengthened the masonry walls by adding heavy buttresses at the corners both of the entry, and of the main building. Total cost of the repairs was \$175.

Bishop Mann declared that "the church was now in condition to withstand the piercing blasts of our North Dakota winters." Again, the church was crowded to overflowing during services. The Sunday school was doing well, and the Women's Guild was busy at work holding activities and fund raisers. They earned over \$103 selling needlework, and refreshments in the park on July 4th. The funds were used to repaint the rectory and barn.

Reverend Chard was replaced by the Reverend G. J. Childs, who also served the mission from Casselton. Through 1905, congregations were large, filling the church to its capacity. In May of 1906 the church was reshingled, using funds raised by the Woman's Guild. In July of 1906, broken and faded walls were replastered and painted. The chancel was rearranged, the sacristy improved with the insertion of a false ceiling, a new concrete floor was poured in the entry, and the exterior woodwork was all repainted. The repairs and the new shingles constituted a complete renovation.

Attendance at church, however, began a steady decline in 1906-07. Due to members moving and passing away, and the inconsistent schedule of church services caused by scheduling problems with the passenger service on the railroad. Many services were delayed, missed, or canceled. Severe weather summer and winter alike, and rough country roads hindered attendance. Reverend Childs traveled by train from Casselton, and services were to be held at 7:30, or "as soon as possible after the train arrived." The Reverend missed numerous services. One Sunday, he missed the train, which left early,

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

and due to recent storms the roads were impassable. When he tried to phone to cancel services, the phone lines were down. Worship times changed monthly, ranging from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and from Wednesday to Thursday and Sunday. According to George Birdsall, by 1910 services were held so infrequently and so unannounced, that sometimes the only members in attendance were the two Talcott women, who lived across the street from the church.

Concrete sidewalks were poured, bordering the church and rectory in July of 1911. The Buffalo Express reported "the largest congregation in recent memory attending the Christmas services at Calvary Church in December of 1912." By April of 1912, because of the dangerous condition of the bell tower it became necessary to hold services in the homes of the parishioners. Madam Talcott's home was used, until her move to Bismarck, North Dakota in 1913. Later, several services were held in the Presbyterian church, until Reverend Childs left in 1914.

The energy of a new rector provided the spark that was needed to get the church going again, as stated in the following article from the Buffalo Express dated Thursday, October 26, 1916. "Reverend J. C. Ferrier of Casselton was to the vicinity a few days this week, looking after the repair work on the Episcopal church building. The building has been crumbling for the past few years and it would have been only a short time before it was completely ruined. Stone workers are busy rebuilding it and in every way putting it back to shape. Reverend Ferrier will hold services in the church after its completion. Buffalo welcomes Reverend Ferrier and his good work." It was at this time, that the gable roof was placed over the entry.

The exterior restoration was completed by October 1917, and attention was focused on the interior which was badly damaged by dirt, rain, and snow. Vandals had destroyed the beautiful stained glass windows, while the building was unused from 1912-1916. In November of 1917 the new glass had arrived, and was being replaced, but due to severe cold, the project would not be completed until March of 1918. The men of the congregation gave the church a thorough cleaning, and once more Calvary Church would hold services. On June 16, 1918 assisted by Reverend A. H. Beer of Casselton, Bishop Tyler reopened Calvary. Stating that "it was a very good congregation, and a pleasure to have a service in this pretty church again." The Reverend A. H. Beer was to hold regular services, and the Bishop appointed a committee to get the congregation reorganized. Regular services were held throughout the summer.

Early that fall, Spanish influenza spread across North Dakota and by the end of August 1918, all churches in North Dakota were ordered closed by a government ban on all public meetings. The work at Calvary Episcopal came to a stand still. The ban was lifted in November of 1918, but a visit by Reverend Beer to Buffalo revealed that all of the church people were sick, so plans were made to return to hold services in December. Early that month, the Reverend Beer finally succumbed to the ravages of the influenza and took to his bed. Upon recovering, the Reverend made a several-month visit to his

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Statement of Significance (continued)

home country of England. Returning from England, the Reverend Beer accepted an appointment in Santo Gomingo, and prepared to leave at once. The departure of Reverend Beer left the church at Buffalo without services once again. Congregations in Casselton had dwindled, and a permanent rector was not installed. From 1920-1926, no services were held in the recently repaired church, and the windows were boarded up.

In July of 1926, Calvary Chapel of Buffalo was once again reopened. The congregation's search for a rector eventually lead to Reverend T. A. Simpson of Valley City. The following is the account that appeared in the North Dakota Sheaf. "This little sanctuary after being abandoned for a number of years, during which time it had fallen into a disreputable condition was reopened in July. The task of taking of the boards from all the windows (and oh! How it rained while were doing it!) Of sweeping, scrubbing, and making the place habitable was not small one. Mr. & Mrs. Victor Pehrsson gave the minister in-charge valuable assistance and have assured us that the building will never be permitted to suffer such neglect again. On Sunday, July 25th the minister, the choir from All Saints, Valley City and about thirty of the Valley City friends conducted the reopening services. It was a time long to be remembered. Several successful services have been held since that time, including a celebration of the Holy communion by Bishop John Tyler. At present there is no way of heating or lighting the building, but we trust that something can be done along these lines in the near future."

Several services were held at Calvary Church each year from 1926-1932, but with a high of only eight communicants, the church had no real strength. The hard times experienced due to the Great Depression, lowered the number of communicants to two by 1933. In 1934, after may hardships, trials and tribulations, through years of enduring faith, Calvary Episcopal Church of Buffalo was closed for the last time. The church fell into disrepair, and in 1936 it was sold to the Buffalo Masonic Lodge #77 AF and AM.

The Masonic Lodge, and Order of the Eastern Star used the building until the late 1970s. In 1985 the Masons donated the building to the Buffalo Historical Society. The Masons and the Order of the Eastern Star donated their remaining balance of \$1,600 to the Society to maintain and repair the building. Many of the families in Buffalo have maintained their ties to the building, as congregants, as fraternal and sororal members, and as members of the local historical society. The Society hopes to restore the church, and the exterior painting is underway. Community support for the restoration is evident, including a recent gift by the Buffalo Community Club for \$2,000. The Old Stone Church now functions as the headquarters for the Buffalo Historical Society.

The Old Stone Church serves as a reminder of the early pioneers and settlers of Buffalo. It is a small, simple, sturdy church, and an excellent example of an ecclesiastically correct Gothic Revival design, adapted to suit the needs and materials of the rugged North Dakota prairie.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 13

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 14

Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 15

**Old Stone Church
Cass County, ND**

Verbal Boundary Description

The property includes the church and land that occupies Lots 5 and 6 of Block 11, of the Original Townsite of Buffalo, Cass County, North Dakota. The boundaries used in this nomination are those legally accepted by the Cass County Register of Deeds in Fargo, North Dakota.

Boundary Justification

The church is located near the center of the nominated property and the land in these lots is historically associated with the property. Neighboring Lots 4 and 7 on which the rectory and garage rest are not included in the nomination boundary.