

4801

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen

other names/site number N/A

name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 520 North Decatur Street

N/A

not for publication

city or town Watkins Glen

N/A

vicinity

state New York code NY county Schuyler code zip code 14891

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	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/church

RELIGION/parsonage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/church

RELIGION/parsonage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian--Romanesque Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: stone

walls: brick

roof: slate, asphalt

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The First Presbyterian Church property is located in the village of Watkins Glen, Schuyler County, part of the Finger Lakes region of New York. The First Presbyterian Church property consists of a mid nineteenth century Romanesque Revival brick church and a distinctive late nineteenth century brick residential manse. The nominated property is located in the village of Watkins Glen, Schuyler County, in the northeast section of the village. The church is a large, brick building facing North Decatur Street with a rear education wing. The façade is three distinct bays with the south bay being a four-part bell tower. The main entrance is in the center bay and the north façade bay square brick tower contains the current entrance. The church embodies common features of the mid-nineteenth century Romanesque or round-arched style (*Rundbogenstil*), with round-arched stone window surrounds on all elevations, a round arched door surround, brick corbeled cornice on the façade and flat pilaster-style buttresses with stone caps between the windows on the north and south elevations. Other features are the stone foundation, molded stone belt courses, painted brick corbeling on the north and south elevations, and a square sectional tower capped with a pyramidal roof and wood eave brackets. The manse to the north was built shortly after the church and is a two and one-half-story, three-bay brick building with cross-gabled roof and full-width first floor wood porch. The center façade bay projects forward and has a paired window in the gable end. The north elevation of the manse features a distinctive two-story one-bay tower with a pointed, capped roof. A ca. 1960 one-story two-bay garage is east of the manse and is noncontributing since it was built outside of the period of significance (1866-c. 1874).

The church was designed in 1866 by A. J. Warner a well-known and prolific architect from Rochester, New York. Churches of the time were increasingly designed in an imposing variant of the Romanesque Revival style in large part because of the style's many associations with staunch faith and communal solidarity. The exteriors of church and manse have seen little change. Interior updates occurred over the years, but both buildings retain a high degree of integrity in terms of materials, workmanship, location and setting, design, feeling and association.

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Narrative Description

Watkins Glen is well-known as a tourist destination, being the location of Watkins Glen State Park and the Grand-Prix automotive racetrack (NR listed 2002), a short distance outside of the village. The streets in the village follow the standard grid pattern laid out in 1842 by the village's founder, Dr. Samuel Watkins. The residential streets in the southeast end of the village are anchored by the former high school (1929, NR listed 2015) on the south, and Lafayette Park on the north. The park dates from 1842 and occupies an entire village block. The First Presbyterian Church is one of three active churches located near the park, the other two being St. James Episcopal Church (1864, NR listed 2012) and the First Baptist Church (1889) on Fifth Street (NR listed 2001). The First Presbyterian Church is sited facing west on North Decatur Street directly across from St. James Church.

The church and manse sit on two 100-foot by 200-foot lots occupying one half of a residential downtown block on the east side of Decatur Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Lot #62 contains the mid nineteenth century brick Romanesque Revival church, completed in 1868, and designed by the well-known architect A. J. Warner of Rochester. Lot #61 has the pastor's residence, a brick manse (c. 1874) as well as a non-historic labyrinth garden and a one-story, two-bay garage, built around 1960.

The main church building facing Decatur Street measures 63-feet wide and 100-feet long and consists of the narthex (vestibule) with a gallery over the same, the bell tower, sanctuary and classroom ell. The building's foundation was laid in the spring of 1866, built on nine-foot white oak piles, driven the entire length below the basement floor. Above ground is a stone foundation supporting brick walls with limestone dressings. A stone in the bell tower foundation has the date 1867 inscribed on a raised panel. An attached two-story chapel and school at the rear forms an ell, measuring 36-feet wide and 78-feet long and currently consists of classrooms, music room, nursery, library and a gymnasium.

The church and chapel are of comparable massing and are structurally fully integrated. The building retains its classic Romanesque Revival features of semicircular molded arches over windows and doors, corbel table, stepped buttresses and a four part corner bell tower, which is the tallest in Watkins Glen. The exterior is enlivened by patterned brickwork, regular fenestration and limestone detail, most notably in the window sills

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and buttress steps. The interior beauty is enhanced by stained glass windows fitted throughout with the largest on the north and south sides of the sanctuary.

The main North Decatur Street façade, or west elevation, is bracketed by an asymmetrically arranged buttress tower to the left and the bell tower base to the right. In the center is a single arched entrance to the narthex with double wooden doors. At the gallery level are three large windows with a continuous limestone belt below the sills. Above the gallery is a triple arched window arrangement with a common limestone sill and stepped brickwork complementing the roof line. A second single arched entrance to the narthex and sanctuary is on the Sixth Street side of the 16-foot square bell tower base. The stone steps at this entrance door have been replaced by a wood platform with steps and an ADA access ramp. The 92-foot bell tower base is divided into three vertical sections of brick. Corner buttresses rise from the limestone base to stepped sloping offsets, also of limestone. Single and double round-headed windows mark the lower level. Round windows and arched openings mark the second bell level, which at its top has a cornice that breaks to an open pediment on each of the four sides. The third top section has coupled arched openings on four sides with corbeling above and wooden eave brackets encircling the spire base. The tower is topped with a 40-foot curved pyramidal roof.

The church elevations are similarly divided into five regular bays, separated by external stepped buttresses. Each bay on the north and south elevations of the church contain a tall, single window opening illuminating the sanctuary. These openings are sub-divided by a vertical center tracery column which splits to form two pointed arches. Glass panels fill the two vertical sections and the spandrel above the center column. All bays around the structure are topped with brick corbelling.

The chapel/school addition at the rear of the church is two-stories the three-bays on the north and south and five-bays along the east elevation. Window openings of each external bay are of two unequal vertical arched openings with stone surrounds and sills; the taller of the two, on the second story. The exposed building corners have three-section external tower buttresses with stone details, which are similar in size and form to the external tower buttress found on the left side of the church façade. These tower buttresses, while structural, also complement the overall visual balance of the structure. Continuous corbel brick work under the horizontal eaves and intersecting roof lines visually tie the two parts of the building together.

Copper roof flashing was replaced in-kind, being the original material, as well as the copper clad buttress tower pyramidal caps. The church wood entrance doors, including a third chapel/school entrance on Sixth Street

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were replaced (ca. 2005), replicating the originals and adding modern hardware. The original steps at the chapel entrance were replaced with blue stone. An emergency exit door and metal fire escape from the gymnasium was added to the east side second floor at mid-bay.

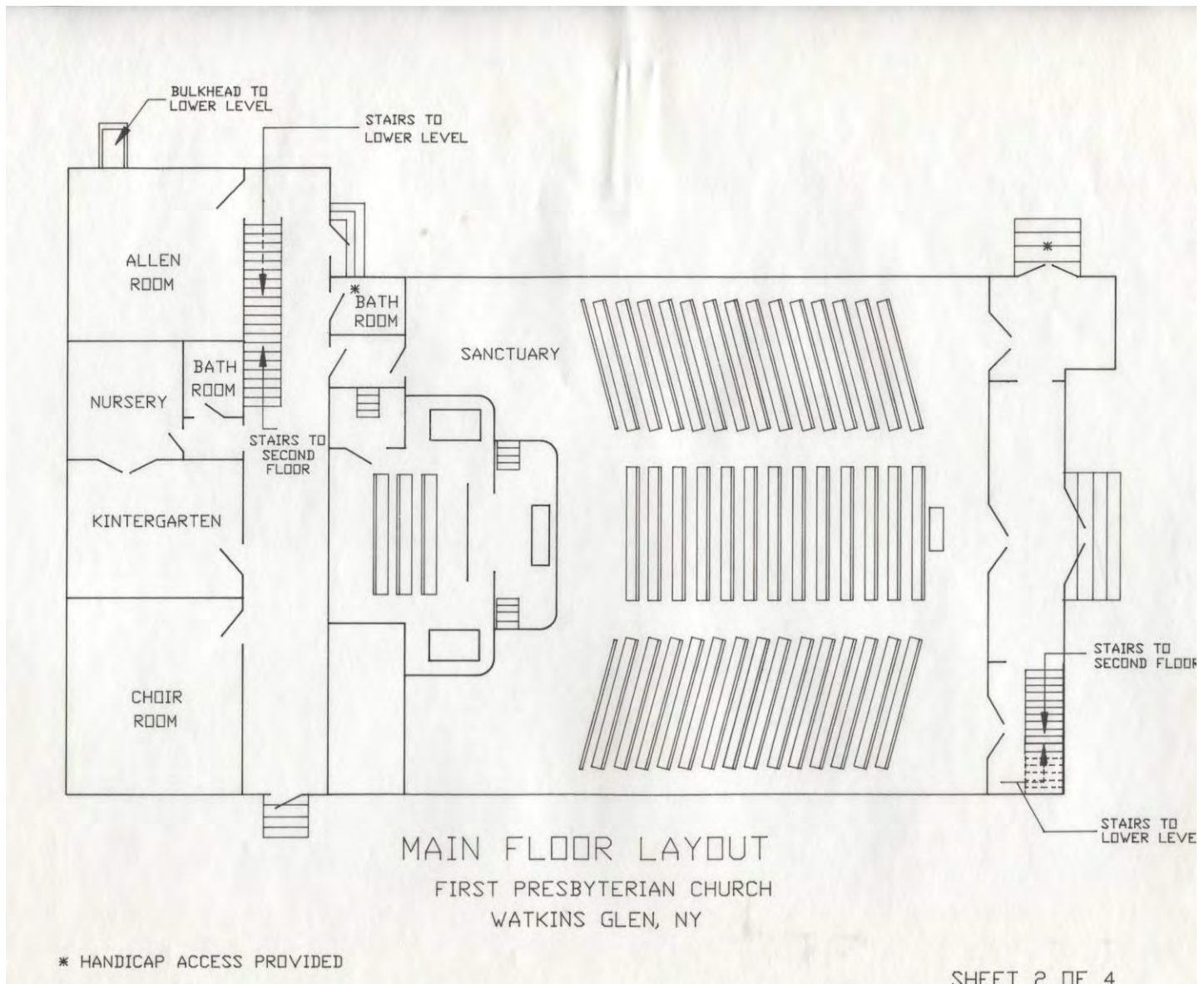
Interior spaces consist of the narthex, sanctuary or worship space, meeting rooms, classrooms and second floor gymnasium in the rear addition and a full basement with offices, a large dining room/fellowship hall and kitchen. The largest interior space is the sanctuary that follows the auditorium plan with three rows of pews facing a platform with pulpit and choir under a large recessed arch. The west end of the building has a balcony set into a recess with a curved/arched ceiling. The balcony has four rows of pews at four stepped levels. Pews are original (c. 1868) and flooring in this area consists of wide wood boards. The balcony is accessed from either end by similar enclosed wood staircases with wood wainscoting, heavy newell posts and carpeted treads and risers. These stairs originate in the narthex, which also has plaster walls, chestnut wood wainscoting and paired wood doors to the sanctuary, but the floor was tiled around 2005.

The interior of the sanctuary has seating for 750 and was renovated around 1917, and again in 1968 and 2005; however, most of the changes were cosmetic in nature, with the original form and much of the original material retained. The suspended lights appear to be from one of the renovations and consist of a large round glass center section surrounded by eight smaller bulbs with inverted cone-shaped covers. The first renovation (c. 1917) modified the pulpit and platform to accommodate a choir loft and the Moller Opus 2269 organ.

The ceilings and walls are plaster with curved end sections. Three ornate metal ventilation panels are in the center of the ceiling and both are painted white and currently have ceiling fans extending from the center. The east end of the sanctuary has three arched sections, one with the choir and two outlined with organ pipes. Both organ sections are outlined by wood framing and one has a historic memorial plaque dedicated to John Magee, who made the construction of the church possible, and the other has a wood paneled door and transom. The interior is wainscoted throughout the entire church building and is the original chestnut wood with oil finish.

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During the 1968 renovation, the paneling in the sanctuary and vestibule was stripped of the original dark shade and refinished to a lighter color. At the same time the pews were replaced by the present oak pews that were finished to match the lighter shade of the refinished wood paneling. The gallery above the narthex/vestibule, has seating for an additional 150 and retains the original pews in the darker shade. The sanctuary stained glass windows are relatively recent installations, ca. 1966. Wide window moldings and fluted wood tracery is original and now painted white. Windows in the narthex and classroom addition are the original opaque centers with green, yellow and red stained glass borders.

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The rear ell of the building interior reflects the later renovation periods with drop ceilings and carpeted floors but retains much of the historic interior fabric of paneled doors, moldings, wainscoting and staircases similar to those in the narthex. The first floor originally consisted of a large lecture room, two parlors and an entrance hallway on the southwest section of the building and is now divided into a choir/music room, nursery and a parlor/library (Allen Room). The choir room still features the original fluted metal support posts evenly spaced throughout the room. The original south entrance hallway now extends the entire length of the building to the north entrance door and retains fluted arched moldings, wide baseboard moldings and metal heat/air grates. The original chestnut wainscoting and staircase remain on the first and second floor hallways.

The second floor has a gymnasium, previously an auditorium, with 32-foot high ceilings, an original wood floor and historic windows with protective meshing. These are all from the ca. 1917 renovation, and no other changes were made in subsequent years. The gymnasium is now used for seasonal community project storage and shows some deterioration. An original second floor kitchen was renovated into Sunday school classrooms. None of the kitchen apparatus remains; however, the rooms retain original doors and moldings, beadboard wainscoting, tall baseboards and fluted metal support columns.

A basement is under the entire building. It is accessed by stairs from both the school's main hallway and the church narthex. It was deepened in the 1940s to accommodate a large fellowship hall and modern kitchen. Steel support columns and I-beams were added at this time to improve the openness of the hall and maintain sanctuary support. An electric lift was added to the west end allowing greater access to and from the narthex and sanctuary. An exterior stairwell with shed roof was added to the south side of the church building at mid-bay, allowing direct outside access to the fellowship hall.

The church property includes a manse, the pastor's residence (c. 1874), located north of the church at 500 N. Decatur Street. The manse stands where the previous wood church stood and is across the street from Lafayette Park to the north. The house is brick with a stone foundation and displays distinctive mid-nineteenth century architecture complementing the church. The design is asymmetrical with a picturesque quality typical of that period. It features a two-story, half hexagon bay window on the north side, increasing the floor plan of the pastor's study on the first floor, and the master bed room on the second floor. This feature is capped with a six sided spire. The first floor front and bay windows are floor length. Windows appear to be original double-hung four-over-sash set into wood surrounds. All have soldier course lintels with stone edge caps and all but the lower projecting bays windows have stone sills. An unusual sawtooth string course encircles the house at the

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second floor level. An ornate verge board with interspersing pendants runs along the edge of the roof eaves. The first floor façade has a full width porch, paired turned support posts with square balusters and a flat railing between each pair. The roof has a plain cornice with paired brackets at the entrance and a plain triangular gabled pediment.

The interior of the manse has been renovated several times, most recently in 2016, but retains its original form with rooms off a central hallway. The first floor contains five rooms, one being the pastor's study/library and another a parlor, with the study featuring the original marble mantelpiece and metal insert. There are four bedrooms on the second floor and a bathroom on each floor. The house retains much of the original wood work, notably the wood staircase with newel post, pocket doors and retractable window shutters inside the study and master bedroom bay windows. Oak floors were replaced in-kind throughout the house and the mahogany planked front porch was refinished. An ADA access ramp was added to the manse rear porch. Between the manse and a labyrinth garden is a ca. 1960 one-story, two-bay garage with a front gabled roof and is considered noncontributing since it was built nearly one century after the church and manse. The labyrinth is also a recent non-historic feature designed to provide a path for meditation and prayer and is open to the public.

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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:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C a birthplace or grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F a commemorative property. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1866-c.1874

Significant Dates

1866, 1868, c.1874

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

A. J. Warner

Period of Significance (justification)

The period begins with the construction of the church in 1866 and ends with the addition of the manse ca. 1874.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) The church is primarily significant for its architecture and for being the work of prominent Rochester architect A. J. Warner.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The First Presbyterian Church property is architecturally significant for its architecture as an intact representative example of mid-nineteenth century house of worship and related residential building in Schuyler County, reflecting the growth of the local community and Presbyterian congregation, being one of three historic of churches built during this period of village development. In the mid-1860s, Watkins Glen (named Watkins at that time) prospered as the county seat, a hub of transportation, and a tourist destination boasting one of the most dramatic gorges and falls in the region. The population of the area grew, as did the size of Presbyterian congregation and the need for a larger church. Located in a quiet residential neighborhood, it was built on its property directly across from the recently constructed St. James Episcopal Church. The size of the Presbyterian congregation and assistance from a wealthy patron, the Hon. John Magee, allowed the Presbyterian church trustees to commission well-known Rochester architect A. J. (Andrew Jackson) Warner to design a large sanctuary and attached chapel/school that was larger than St. James and had the tallest bell tower of any church in the village. Warner's provided a design for the First Presbyterian Church that was a high-style example of the mid-nineteenth century Romanesque Revival design, often referred to as round-arch Romanesque, reflecting the dominant feature used by the style. The use of the style for First Presbyterian Church presented a direct contrast to the popular Gothic Revival style used in St. James Episcopal Church (ca.1864). Both styles were commonly used in ecclesiastic architecture in the nineteenth century as being appropriate styles for houses of worship. The Romanesque featured wide rounded arches, corbeled tables, short and wide pilasters that act as decorative columns, and asymmetric pointed towers, all design elements used by Warner in First Presbyterian. Around 1874, a manse was built on the property and it is unknown if Warner designed it. This residence contained distinctive period style elements which complemented the new church signifying the buildings functioning as a unit.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Early History of Watkins Glen

Following the American Revolution, land rights were acquired by speculators, except for an area in Central New York State known as the Military Tract. The tract was an area of approximately 1.5 million acres that was held in reserve as payment to veterans, which encouraged migration and additional land speculation. Much of the

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land east of Seneca Lake was divided and granted to war veterans with preference to officers. The remainder was made available to land speculators from the big cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia. The village of Watkins Glen was the result of two brother's land speculation efforts, John and Samuel Watkins of New York City. John was the first to try to establish a settlement called Salubria in 1797. His efforts failed and left him in near bankruptcy due to the land being mostly swamp. His brother, Dr. Samuel Watkins, tried again in 1828 and succeeded where his brother failed, aided by the opening of the Chemung Canal completed in 1833 that resulted in increased steamboat traffic to the village on Seneca Lake.

The canal improved drainage of the wet lands, and the village provided a weigh point for commodities (coal, lumber and agricultural products) making their way from the Southern Tiers area of New York and from Pennsylvania to the Erie Canal. The canal was accessible from the north end of Seneca Lake via another feeder canal, the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. In 1842, the communities of Savoy and Salubria combined to officially form the village of Jefferson, that was renamed Watkins in 1852 in honor of Dr. Samuel Watkins shortly after his death. As more people moved to the village, schools and churches were established to serve the needs of a growing community. In 1860, the village was described as having a courthouse, five churches, a newspaper, a daily steamboat service to Geneva and a population of 1084.¹

History of First Presbyterian Church

One of the five churches was the First Presbyterian Church that originally formed in 1818 in a barn on the farm of Captain John Diven, a veteran of the Revolutionary War. The barn was located on a hill one and one-half miles west of the head of Seneca Lake. The area was called Reading and was at that time part of Steuben County. As such, the church society was originally named the First Presbyterian Church of Reading. By 1833, the society was able to erect a frame building in Savoy with a seating capacity of 400, which is now part of Watkins Glen, on the hillside just west of the head of Seneca Lake. The congregation worshipped at this location until 1847, when it was sold to the Catholic Society and a new larger wood framed structure was completed opposite Lafayette Park (the present site of the manse). The land for the new structure at Fifth and Decatur Streets was gifted by Mrs. Samuel Watkins on what was called "the flats" in a new residential area east of the business center. In 1867, the construction of the present church edifice was begun with the generosity of

¹ J. H. French, *Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Syracuse, NY: R. Pearsall Smith, Publisher, 1860), 611.

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the Honorable John Magee, a prosperous businessman and politician, deeply committed to promoting the strength and welfare of the community and the Presbyterian doctrine.

John Magee was originally from Bath, New York, was a veteran of the war of 1812, and in his career, served as a sheriff, judge, and legislator, as well as president of the Steuben County Bank. He established the Fall Brook Coal Company in 1859, which mined coal in Tioga, Pennsylvania. Magee acquired extensive land holdings in Watkins for operations related to the delivery and shipment of coal to the northeast industrial states. Along with his family, he was instrumental to the tremendous growth in population and industry as more people settled in the village and surrounding area. In 1864, Mr. Magee moved his residence from Bath, New York to Watkins, after he purchased Dr. Samuel Watkins's mansion at Fourth and Decatur streets. Being a long time faithful member of the Presbyterian Church, his membership was transferred from Bath Presbyterian to the First Presbyterian Church at Watkins. Fully anticipating the rapid growth of the village, and a corresponding increase to the congregation, he pledged resources to erect a new church, instead of making much needed repairs to the existing wood frame structure.

With Magee's generous gift of \$50,000, the church society's trustees, and the principal benefactor, commissioned the services of A. J. Warner in 1866. Warner was a prominent architect from Rochester, Monroe County, New York who provided a high style design, based on the Romanesque Revival that was introduced to America in the 1840s by James Renwick and Richard Upjohn as appropriate for use by non-Episcopal churches and public buildings. The style became one of the primary modes of church design in the mid-nineteenth century, both for its picturesque possibilities and for its evocation of the romanticized image of medieval piety. ²

Architecture of First Presbyterian Church

A. J. Warner was born in New Haven, Connecticut (1833) and educated at Gilford Academy in Guilford, Connecticut. In 1847, he moved to Rochester at the age of 14 to apprentice in the architectural office of his uncle, Merwin Austin. Warner learned his craft, working first as a draftsman, and then assisting with commissions until he was made partner in 1855. In 1858, Warner established his own practice, taking on a number of partners throughout the years, including Charles Coots under the name A.J. Warner & Company, which continued until 1872, and later with his son J. Foster Warner in 1883. A. J. Warner officially retired in

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1893, but he retained offices in the Powers Building in Rochester until his death in 1910. Throughout his long career, he was known for his many ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical works in Western New York, including the Brick Presbyterian Complex (1860) in Rochester (NR listed 1992), Our Lady of Victory Roman Catholic Church (1868), also in Rochester (NR listed 1992), Powers Building (1869) in Rochester (NR listed 1973), the Erie County Hall in Buffalo (1871, NR listed 1976), St. Bernard's Seminary (1891) in Rochester (NR listed 1992), two Corning City Halls (1875 & 1893) and the Willard Memorial Chapel (NHL listed 2005) in Auburn, New York that has a Tiffany decorated interior. These buildings demonstrated A. J. Warner's versatility in design and his ability to cater to the clients' stylistic preferences.

The First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen was designed at a time in Warner's career when he was establishing his reputation as a designer. His choice for the church was the Romanesque Revival style that was largely Germanic in origin and was often referred to as *Rundbogenstil*, translated as the round arch style, based on the Romanesque round-arch churches seen in Germany early in the nineteenth century. Ultimately the *Rundbogenstil* was traced back to medieval Lombard buildings and, in America, the style was also called Lombard, Norman, or Byzantine Romanesque.³

The *Rundbogenstil* was first used for an American church by Richard Upjohn at the Church of the Pilgrims (1844-1846) in Brooklyn Heights, New York. This church was the first to use round rather than pointed arches. Upjohn believed that the Gothic style was appropriate to Episcopal and Roman Catholic services and he turned to a non-Gothic style when adapting designs for a congregational society. The new church style allowed these Protestant sects to erect buildings without using the symbolic forms of the Gothic. The Church of the Pilgrims was constructed of stone; however, the more common type of early Romanesque Revival style church was a rectangular structure constructed of brick with stone accents. The towers were of unequal height, with the taller being placed at the corner. The Church of the Pilgrims was soon followed by a more prominent design for the Smithsonian Institution Building in Washington D.C., designed by James Renwick, Jr. (1847-1851). Renwick supposedly submitted two proposals for the design competition, one Gothic and the other Romanesque in style. The Smithsonian Institution chose the latter which was based on designs from German architectural books.⁴

² William H. Pierson, Jr., "Richard Upjohn and the American Rundbogenstil," *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986), 223.

³ "Brick Presbyterian Church Complex," *National Register Nomination*, September 1991, 8-1,8-2.

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Several forces contributed to the popularizing of the Romanesque Revival in the United States. One was the large influx of German immigrants in the 1840s, who were familiar with the *Rundbogenstil* and another was a series of books published at the time of building examples. One of these was *Hints on Public Architecture* by Robert Dale Owen, a social reformer and great proponent of the Romanesque style. This work was prepared for the building committee of the Smithsonian Institution and featured illustrations of Renwick's design. Owen argued that Greek Revival architecture, which was the prevailing style at the time for churches, banks and private residences, was unsuitable as a national American style. He maintained that the Greek style of design failed to accommodate the requirements of windows, stairs or chimneys needed for modern buildings and that the low pitched roofs and tall colonnades were ill adapted to cold weather northern climates. Owen argued that the Romanesque style was ideal for a more flexible and economic American architecture.⁵

Pertaining to churches, the Romanesque style was seen as more appropriate for some Protestant sects as the simplicity of the style had a particular appeal symbolizing a solid foundation in the community. The services of Congregational sects did not need chancels, side aisles and other liturgical areas used for ceremonial purposes. The services of these sects were based on preaching and it was important that their churches be built so that every member of the audience could both see and hear the preacher. The form of the early Romanesque Revival churches, which was generally unadorned on both the interior and exterior, was functionally ideal for the services and also appealed to the American sense of utilitarian design.

Warner's design for the First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen fit into the popular use of towered Romanesque Revival style churches for the period. His Decatur street façade displayed a rhythmic pattern of arched windows, a single center arched entrance way, decorative brick corbeling and a steeply peaked bell tower at its corner. The bell tower was appropriately sized to complement the mass of the main structure. The tower incorporated a second arched entrance on the Sixth Street side with arched and circular openings with stone sills, accentuated by raised and recessed brickwork. The Sixth street side of the building was given a five-bay wide rhythmic arcade, a pattern which continued around the building, topped by a continuous corbeled cornice. He unified the church and school/chapel segments of the building by repeating these designs (corbeling and arcading). The sheer size, rectilinear form and simple power of the exterior brickwork of Warner's First

⁴ William H. Pierson, Jr., "Richard Upjohn and the American Rundbogenstil," *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986), 223.

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Presbyterian Church, provided a distinctive and distinguished example of the style that could be directly compared and contrasted with the Gothic Revival St. James Episcopal Church across the street.

Warner's interior layout of the Watkins Glen Presbyterian Church employed the original concept of functionality and utilitarian form with a large open worship space with three arches on the east end with the largest in the center for the pulpit platform. The interior was largely left plain with decoration limited to wainscoting and paneling on the platform and balcony. Decoration in the chapel/school was limited to paneled doors, moldings and wainscoting. Even windows had limited decoration, consisting of an opaque center section with narrow, colored glass borders. These remained in the sanctuary until 1968 when a renovation campaign replaced them with figural stained glass. Also replaced were the original plain dark stained pews with lighter oak with carved crosses on the ends, except for those in the balcony.

Additional modifications were made during three renovation campaigns in 1917, 1968 and 2005 but kept Warner's overall plan and form intact. One modification was to accommodate a much larger organ as well as reorientation and placement of the choir. When the Moller Opus 2269 organ installation was completed in 1917, space for the 1500-plus pipes was found behind both sides of the East wall with decorative pipes arranged in an arch on either side of the pulpit platform. The organ control console was placed in the center of the platform. A later renovation adopted the present rostrum configuration with the original center platform expanded into Warner's recessed arch to include the choir loft facing the congregation with the organ console moved to the side. The Baptismal Font was relocated to the northeast corner in what was the original location of the first organ and choir assembly area. Additional modifications to the school building/chapel interior were made over the years, reallocating available space to better meet the needs of the congregation and community. Chapel space was made into a choir room and smaller rooms made into a nursery and meeting room/library. Noting these modifications, many of the original features of the interior remain intact, including the wainscoting, moldings and the balcony.

After church was built at the corner of Decatur Street and Sixth Street, the original wood framed church was no longer needed for worship and was moved to further south on Fifth Street where it was used as school until it burned in 1898. In 1874, the pastors' manse was built on the site next to the present church. It clearly has an

⁵ James Early, "American Architectural Writing in the Earlier Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1947-1974), vol. 12, No 2 (Summer 1957), 24.

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen

Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY

County and State

architect or some design guidance (builder's guides, etc.) as the windows and complicated roofline reflected the details seen in the church. The manse or parsonage continues to serve as the residence of the pastor and retains is historic center hall plan.

In spite of fluctuations in the economy, the village of Watkins Glen remains a vibrant community by capitalizing on its role as a destination, which began in the mid-nineteenth century with travelers visiting Watkins Glen. The church remains a vibrant part of the community and maintains a healthy membership at present. The church is still grateful to John Magee and long ago placed a marker in the sanctuary honoring his memory, although, ironically, the marker is more Gothic than Romanesque Revival. The mission of the church and its congregation remains strong and looks forward serving the Watkins Glen community well into the future.

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brayer, Betsy. The Warner Legacy in Western New York. Rochester, NY: the Landmark Society of Western New York, 1984.

“Brick Presbyterian Church Complex (Rochester, Monroe County).” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, September 1991. Online at <https://cris.parks.ny.gov>.

Cooper, Gordon, *Watkins Glen Tour Guide*, Presto Woods Publishing, 2009.

Early, James. “American Architectural Writing in the Earlier Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Architectural Education* (1947-1974), vol. 12, No 2 (Summer 1957), 23-25.

Howe, Rev. F.S. *In Memoriam of John Magee*, Charles Scribner & Company, N.Y., 1870.

Kingsley, Jennifer. “Watkins Glen Congregation Sprucing Up Historic Church.” Gannet News Services, *The Ithaca Journal & Star Gazette*, September 2003.

Klees, Emerson. *Rochester Lives*. Rochester, NY: Friends of the Finger Lakes Publishing, 2003. “A. J. Warner/J. Foster Warner,” pages 229-234.

NoeHill: Architectural Styles, Romanesque Revival (1840-1910), online at https://noehill.com/architects/style_romanescque.aspx.

Pierson, Jr., William H. “Richard Upjohn and the American Rundbogenstil,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986), 223-242.

Schuyler County, *Online Assessment Records System* Property: MANSE 3-423, Dix, SWIS: 442401 SBL: 65. 13-3-61. Property: SIXTH & DECATUR (CHURCH), Dix, SWIS: 442401 SBL: 65. 13-3-62.

Schuyler County, *New York, Atlas 1874*. Pomeroy, Whitman & Company, 1874.

Potter, John, *Schuyler County New York: History of Families*, Schuyler County Historical Society, 2005.

Presbyterian Church Watkins Glen, Schuyler County Historical Society, Document folder, *New Presbyterian Church, March 15, 1866*, Review & Express, reprint 1991.

United Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen, New York, 1968, *150th Anniversary in Watkins Glen, 100th Anniversary in Present Building, 1818-2018*. Watkins Glen, NY: Historical Documents/ First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen, N.Y. 2018.

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository: 1st Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>367362</u> Easting	<u>4707565</u> Northing	3	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing
2	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing	4	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the same as for the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Rossiter (edited by Virginia L. Bartos, Ph.D., NYS OPRHP)
organization First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen date 5 September 2019
street & number 520 N Decatur Street telephone 607-535-2377
city or town Watkins Glen State NY zip code 14891
e-mail Virginia.Bartos@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

Name of Property: First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen

City or Vicinity: Watkins Glen

County: Schuyler State: New York

Photographer: Virginia L. Bartos

Date Photographed: 20 July 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 0020: First Presbyterian Church, bell-tower and south elevation, view looking northeast.
0002 of 0020: West elevation and partial view of north elevation, looking southeast from street.
0003 of 0020: Detail view of west elevation (façade).
0004 of 0020: Detail view of south elevation showing secondary entrance in ell.
0005 of 0020: East elevation of school/chapel, looking northwest.
0006 of 0020: North elevation of school/chapel and church, looking southwest.
0007 of 0020: South and east elevations of Manse, looking northwest.
0008 of 0020: North and west elevations of Manse looking southwest from Lafayette Park.
0009 of 0020: Sanctuary looking east from balcony.
0010 of 0020: Detail view of sanctuary windows (north side).
0011 of 0020: Detail view of Magee plaque (west wall).
0012 of 0020: View toward balcony, looking west
0013 of 0020: View of balcony, looking south.
0014 of 0020: Stair from pulpit platform and entrance to school/chapel.
0015 of 0020: Choir room, first floor school/chapel.
0016 of 0020: Library/parlor, first floor school/chapel.
0017 of 0020: South stair to second floor, school/chapel.
0018 of 0020: Second floor Sunday school classroom.
0019 of 0020: Second floor auditorium/gymnasium.
0020 of 0020: View of basement/fellowship area, looking south.

Property Owner:

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

name N/A

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Watkins Glen, Schuyler Co., NY

520 North Decatur Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 380 760 1,520 Feet

First
Presbyterian
Church of
Watkins Glen



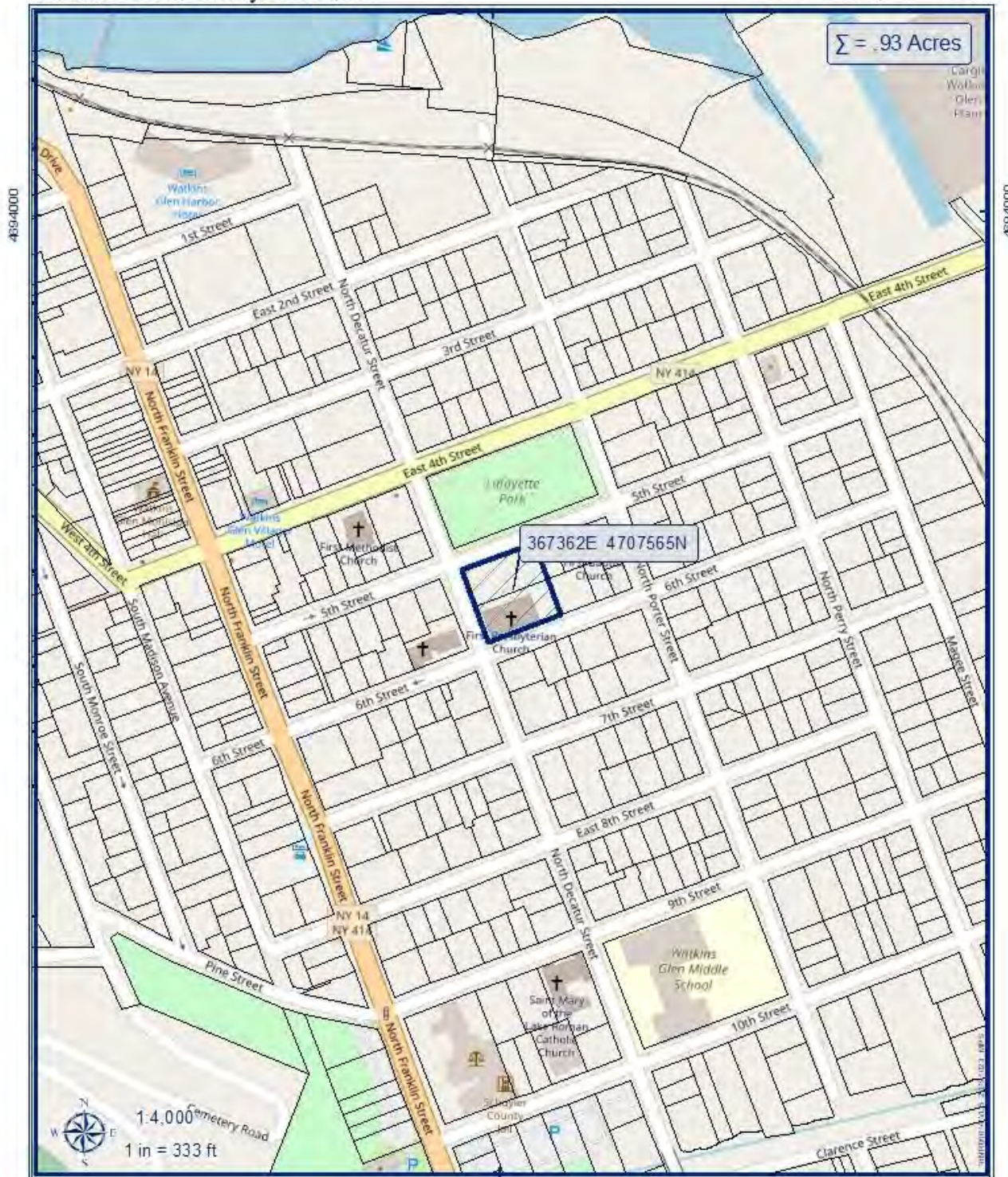
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Watkins Glen, Schuyler Co., NY

520 North Decatur Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 125 250 500 Feet

First
Presbyterian
Church of
Watkins Glen

NEW YORK
STATE
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Watkins Glen, Schuyler Co., NY

520 North Decatur Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 125 250 500 Feet

First
Presbyterian
Church of
Watkins Glen



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY
County and State

RECEIVED

AUG - 9 2019

DIVISION OF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN

TOURIST HUB OF THE FINGER LAKES

HOME OF ROAD RACING IN AMERICA

7/30/19

Mayor and the Board of Trustees
Municipal Building
Watkins Glen, NY

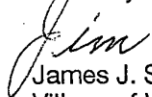
Dear Mayor,

In my capacity as Village Historian I received a notice from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation that the Presbyterian Church at 520 Decatur St. will be placed on the National and State Register of Historic Places on September 5, 2019.

The Department would like to know if there is any comment pro or con in relation to this action. As Village Historian I believe that it would be a positive action on the part of the members of that Congregation to preserve a wonderful historic structure. The process is long and detailed.

If the Mayor or any of the Trustees have a comment they would like to make regarding this matter you can Contact Virginia Bartos, Division of Historic Preservation, Peebles Island State Park, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188, or call 518 268-2161.

Sincerely



James J. Scaptura
Village of Watkins Glen Historian
321 N. Glen Ave.
Watkins Glen, NY 14891
535-4991

"RETURN TO THE STREETS OF THE GLEN" FOR THE 2019 GRAND PRIX FESTIVAL
SEPTEMBER 6, 7 AND 8















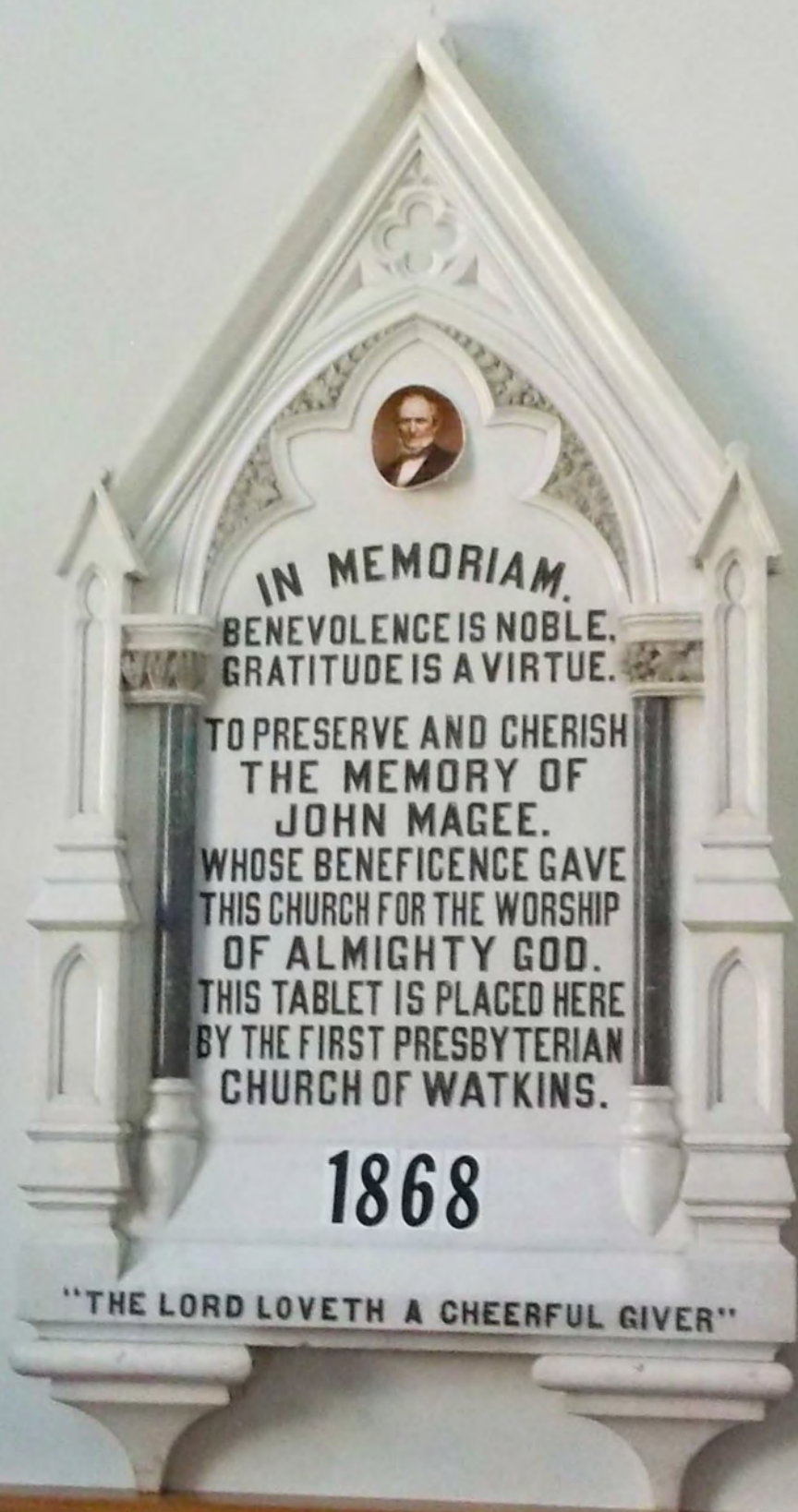






THE CHIMES WERE ADDED
TO THIS ORGAN
IN MEMORY OF
WARREN W. CLUTE
BY HIS FAMILY
1947

ORGAN RENOV
IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH JOHNSTON
BY HER FAMILY
1976

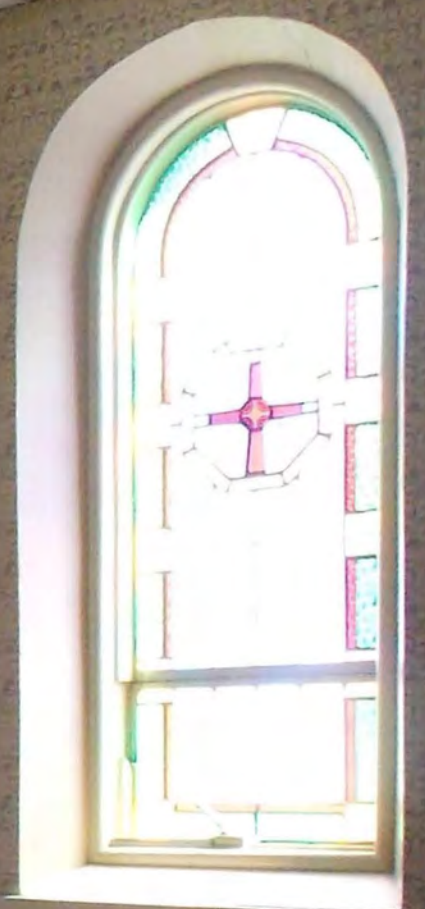


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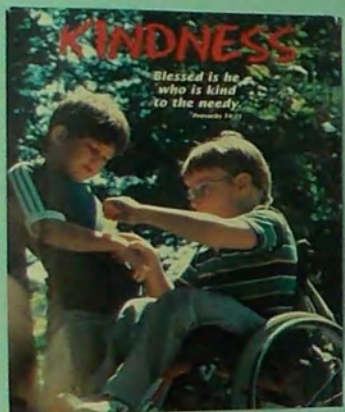














SENECA
SANTA



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 11/6/2019 Date of Pending List: 12/6/2019 Date of 16th Day: 12/23/2019 Date of 45th Day: 12/23/2019 Date of Weekly List: 12/30/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject 12/23/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner

4 November 2019

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following six nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Amsterdam Free Library, Amsterdam, Montgomery County
First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen, Watkins Glen, Schuyler County
Richard Pousette-Dart House and Studio, Suffern, Rockland County
Clyde Downtown Historic District, Clyde, Wayne County (52 owners, 0 objections)
Boarding House at 72-74 Sycamore Street, Buffalo, Erie County
Polvino Building, Rochester, Monroe County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office