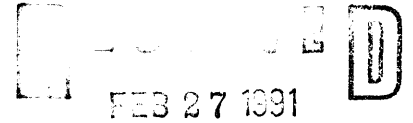


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: First Baptist Church

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 524 North Custer Avenue

not for publication: n/a  
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Hardin

state: Montana code: MT county: Big Horn code: 003 zip code: 59034

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_ building(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

1

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Resources of Hardin

4. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.      See continuation sheet.

Maude Shep 2-12-91  
Signature of certifying official Date

MT SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

           
Signature of commenting or other official Date

      
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

~~Entered in the~~  
~~National Register~~

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Alores Byer 4/11/91  
     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):     

fa            
Signature of Keeper Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic: Religion/religious structure

Current: Religion/religious structure

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification: Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements:  
Craftsman  
Other: Rustic

Materials: foundation: concrete  
walls: log  
roof: shingle

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The First Baptist Church is a one-story, cruciform-shaped, log building built in the Craftsman style. The church has a cross-gabled roof covered with wood shingles. Logs have saddle notches and the sawn butt ends grow shorter to the tops of the walls lending a battered effect to each corner. Gable ends are sheathed with vertical log slabs. The church sets on a concrete foundation and has a concrete handicap access ramp to its main entry, which is centrally-located at the east end. The entry consists of a pair of simple, flush wooden doors with an eight-light transom. A simple vertical log steeple with a flared wood shingle roof sets on the ridge of the roof near the east end. Windows throughout have simple wood trim and 9-over-1 double-hung wood sash units. There is a large river-cobble fireplace and chimney-mast centrally located on the end of the south transept and a brick chimney at the apse end. With the exception of the pews, which appear to be new, and the dropped ceiling in the sanctuary, the interior of the church appears unaltered. A narthex and two cloak rooms are located at the east end. The Church sanctuary occupies the nave and crossing. A simple swag-and-dart plywood frieze extends around the entire sanctuary. A fellowship hall is located in the south transept and the pastor's study in the north, sliding wood panels separate the transepts from the crossing, evidently so the size of the sanctuary can be increased. A small utility room is located at the apse (west) end of the building. A log parsonage, which was built later and is not a contributing building, sets on the lot to the south of the church and is not included in this nomination.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C	Areas of Significance: Architecture
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A	Period(s) of Significance: 1930-1931
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: 1931
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/Builder: Morissette, Edelbert

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The First Baptist Church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as a rustic variant of Craftsman style architecture, as manifested in an ecclesiastical building.

The building is an intriguing variant of Arts and Crafts design, combining the rustic, adaptive construction techniques which have persisted in Montana since the 19th century, with more stylish design ideas emulating early 20th century currents of American architecture. Craftsman influences are demonstrated by the horizontal orientation of the building, the low-pitched roof and broad gables, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends, and the battered, pier-like arrangement of log ends at the corners. Fenestration is also characteristic in the use of rows of sash windows in a multi-light-over-1 pattern. In addition, the log construction lends the building a natural, picturesque quality in keeping with Craftsman sensibilities.

The design for the church was developed by Edelbert Morissette and communicated to volunteer laborers by means of a model. A French-Canadian with only a second grade education, Morissette had homesteaded on the ridge area near Hardin in 1908. While many other homesteaders in the area built their homes of frame construction, Morissette built his of log. After struggling for thirteen years, Morissette and his family gave up the homestead and moved back to Connecticut, where he had worked previously for a bridge-building company. In 1924, they returned to Hardin; Edelbert remained in the community until his death in 1949.

Morissette could not read or write English, which perhaps explains why he developed a model for the church, rather than plans and specifications. Clear references to Craftsman design concepts in the building, however, indicate that Morissette was architecturally informed to some extent, despite his relative isolation and limited academic background.

In the month prior to the stock market crash of 1929, the members of Hardin's Baptist congregation announced a campaign to raise \$5,000 to build a new church on recently purchased lots at the corner of Custer and Sixth. Despite the ensuing depression, Hardin's Baptists were able to raise the money and build their church, in large part because the labor was volunteered by members of the congregation, and because the rustic design of the building lent itself to volunteer labor. Logs for the church were cut in the Sarpy area east of Hardin in November, 1930, and construction began the following month. The congregation dedicated the building in April, 1931.

Although conventional wood frame and masonry construction have been dominant in Montana since the 19th century, log construction has remained a low-cost option for self-built projects through the 20th century. Edelbert Morissette and Hardin's Baptist congregation demonstrated the utility of log construction for self-built projects by adapting it for their use in their church.

The First Baptist Church is being nominated to the National Register as an addendum to Historic Resources of Hardin.

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## 9. References

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Bicentennial Committee of the Big Horn County Historical Society, Lookin' Back, Big Horn County Historical Society, Hardin, MT, 1976.  
Hardin Tribune, August 23, September 27, 1929; November 21, December 30, 1930; April 10, 1931.  
Hardin Tribune-Herald, June 16, 1949.  
Morissette, Ray, telephone interview with Jackie Redding, June 13, 1988.  
Quivik, Frederic L., "Development of the Built Environment in the Original Townsite of Hardin, Montana," Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, September 1984.  
Ibid., "Historic Resources of Hardin, Montana," National Register Nomination, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, 1984.

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 -- Specify Repository:

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	13	297140	5067600

Verbal Boundary Description:

The First Baptist Church is located on Lots 1 and 2, Block 4, First Addition, Hardin, Montana. The property is located in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 23, T1S, R33E.

Boundary Justification:

These boundaries encompass the legally recorded property which contains the building described in this nomination.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Jackie Redding

Organization: Center on Hardin

Street & Number: 204 N. Center

City or Town: Hardin

Date: July 1988

Telephone: 406/665-2137

State: Montana

Zip: 59034