

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0699420

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RECEIVED	FEB 17 1979
DATE ENTERED	FEB 26 1982

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Church of St. John the Baptist

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

712 Division Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Burlington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF

First

STATE

Iowa

CODE

19

COUNTY

Des Moines

CODE

57

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ___ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ___ PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- ___ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- ___ YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE

- ___ AGRICULTURE
- ___ COMMERCIAL
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ GOVERNMENT
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ MUSEUM
- ___ PARK
- ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- ___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Church of St. John the Baptist ✓

STREET & NUMBER

700 Division Street

CITY, TOWN

Burlington

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 52601

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Des Moines County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Burlington

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historical Survey of Burlington, Iowa

DATE

1977

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, Iowa

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. John's is a large Gothic Revival structure, 160' x 73' in dimension, with a central 168-foot tower and projecting side towers in the front corners. The body of the church is constructed of brick and rises out of a high basement of rough-hewn stone. The gable roof is of slate. The church sits prominently on one of the high hills which ring the center of Burlington and are its most distinctive topographical feature.

The main (south) facade of the church is symmetrical and of three bays. The main entrance is deeply recessed within the wall of the central tower and is accented by the high-pitched gable of its arched enframingent. The side portals repeat the motif on a smaller scale. Above the side portals, set within frames identical to those surrounding the doors below, are paired lancet windows. The portals and the windows above are unified into a single motif by the applied piers which extend from the ground to the springing of the window gables and by the overlapping of the portal gables and the windows.

Above the center portal are high triple lancet windows, similarly unified to the portal below. Framing this central unit are sets of graduated piers that merge into the roof spire and create the effect of a full-length, diminishing tower. The piers are of such bulk and projection and the central portal and window of such height and breadth that the wall area of the middle bay is reduced almost to nothing and the church seems reduced to bare structure.

Above the roofline the tower is octagonal and divided into two stages. On the major sides it is pierced with louvred, pointed-arched openings and extended upward into small pointed gables which intersect with the spire. On the minor or diagonal sides it is left blank. The spire is ribbed and decorated with a crown of eight tiny gablet dormers near its apex. The corner stair towers also are octagonal and stand almost free of the body of the church. Each is pierced with three small pointed-arched windows and four blind openings around the top.

The sides of the church are divided into 7 bays, the bay divisions marked by a three-stepped wall buttress. Each bay contains a paired lancet window, glazed with stained glass, set within an indented rectangular panel marked at the top with a course of dentils. The rear of the church is dominated by the enormous projection of the apsidal enclosure of the choir.

Exterior decoration is limited to the window tracery, the blind arcading within the tympana of the portal and window gables and the arcading of the raking cornice. Floral finials are set on top of the side towers and a cross on top of the center tower.

See continuation sheet

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1883-85 BUILDER/ARCHITECT ? Dillenberg

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. John's is significant as a noteworthy example of late 19th century Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture and as a symbol of the solidarity and longevity of the German Catholic community of Burlington.

The church was designed by a Chicago architect named Dillenberg and constructed between 1883 and 1885. In form and mass it is simple and straightforward, the immensity of the single gable roof, which unifies the entire body of the church beneath, contrasting with the slender fragility of the three towers and creating the bold outline which renders an urban landmark effective from great distances. The profusion of projections at the front, when viewed from an oblique angle, creates an effect of great depth and plasticity and belies somewhat the overall simplicity of the building. The device of the stepped buttresses which merge into the diminutive octagonal roof spire to produce the effect of a substantial full-length tower is skillful and interesting.

Historically, the church focuses attention on the largest and most influential settlement group in Burlington -- the Germans. St. John's role as an ethnic social institution established by and for German-speaking residents during the early years of heavy German immigration into the city, make it an appropriate structure to associate with German settlement.

St. John's German Catholic Church was organized in 1852. The forty to fifty families that formed the first congregation were part of the large influx of German immigrants that settled in Burlington in the 1840's and 1850's. Their immigration pattern reflected national trends that were encouraged by the revolutions of 1848 throughout Europe. Having begun as a splinter congregation from English-speaking St. Paul's Catholic Church, St. John's membership grew as the number of German settlers in the city increased. In 1879 the parish had 200 families, and in 1888 the figure stood at 2000 individual members. These figures reflect what one local source described in the 1920's as a community where, in the 1880's, "fully 60% of Burlington's population was of German birth or parentage."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historical Survey of Burlington, Iowa. Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, 1977.
Centennial booklet, Church of St. John the Baptist, Burlington, Iowa 1855-1955.
History of Des Moines County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Burlington, Iowa; Illinois

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 659530 4518920
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 921, 922, Original Town Plat of Burlington

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

STATE N.A. CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

S.J. Klingensmith, Architectural Historian, Ralph J. Christian, Arch. Hist.

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

January 1979, January 1982

STREET & NUMBER

26 East market St.

TELEPHONE

319/353-6949

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa 52240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Adrian D. Anderson

TITLE Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE January 26, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William H. Braitham
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 2-26-82

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Church of St. John the Baptist, Burlington, Des Moines Co., Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The interior of the church is a basilican plan and consists of a nave and side aisles without transepts. The choir is apsidal in form, of height and breadth equal to the nave.

The elevation of the seven-bay nave walls consists of an arcade, occupying fully two-thirds of the height, with neither triforium nor clerestory (formerly such features may have been painted, but later frescoing schemes have been less and less detailed and now the walls are painted in flat areas of yellow and white). No raised horizontal molding course separates the zone of the arcade from the blank wall surface above and the colonnettes which support the vaulting ribs rise uninterrupted from the base of the nave piers to the springing point of the vaults. The nave walls thus have a vertical emphasis which counteracts somewhat the spreading effect created by the relatively wide spacing of the piers. The ribbed vaulting of the nave is sexpartite and springs from a point almost level with the apex of the arcade.

The apse is lighted by five single lancet windows, the sills of which are at a level somewhat above that of the capitals of the nave piers, making the order of the choir different from that of the nave. The original paint scheme continued the line of the nave capitals around the apse by means of a painted molding, from which was suspended a drapery screen. Between the molding and the windows was a painted triforium. Presently, however, the choir is unadorned and the plainness of its walls is an effective foil for the elaborately carved and gilded high alterpiece installed in 1893. In 1976, when the latest redecorating of the church was undertaken, the altar table was separated from its reredos and made free-standing.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Convent. A short distance north of the school is the three-story red brick residence for the nuns who teach there. When originally constructed in 1904, this building was similar architecturally to the school, but a 1931 remodeling and enlargement destroyed most of its detailing, and added a collegiate Gothic projecting entrance tower.

Community Center. At the same time the convent was enlarged and remodeled, the parish erected this two-story brick edifice that serves as parish hall and gymnasium a short distance to the north. In an architectural sense, this essentially utilitarian structure combines elements of both the Gothic and Romanesque Revival modes. Its corner buttresses and octagonal side towers are characteristic of the former while the three round arched entryways are identified with the latter mode. In recent years this building has been altered somewhat by the bricking up of the windows on its north side.