

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED DEC 11 1979
DATE ENTERED JAN 25 1980

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

Charles H. Spencer House

AND/OR COMMON

First Church of Christ, Scientist

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

611 Sixth Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Grinnell

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY

Poweshiek County

CODE

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

First Church of Christ, Scientist

STREET & NUMBER

611 Sixth Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Grinnell

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Poweshiek County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Montezuma,

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED

DATE 2.15.85
1932

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building, now used for religious purposes, was originally built as a residence c. 1860. Exhaustive research has not provided specific documentation of a building date, but the form of the house and various indirect evidence suggests a mid-19th century date. The house has been moved twice, most recently in 1932.

The house is of wood frame construction on a stone foundation, with dimensions of 23' x 55'. It is one story, with front-gable orientation of the main block, and has a flat-roofed rear wing. The gable ends of the main block feature bracketted parapets and have what appear to be short, square panelled posts at each corner. On the front elevation, the parapet rises to a sharply-pointed false gable edged with decorative vergeboards and a small center pendant. Beneath this is a single, round-topped window set below a triangular molding, the pitch of which repeats that of the false gable.

Across the front is a wooden veranda, with chamfered, bracketted posts. Beneath the roof, the facade is divided into three bays, with entrance to right of center. The door and window surrounds feature shouldered architrave trim and denticular cornices. Windows on the side elevations of the main block have plain surrounds. On the west side, the "windows" are actually floor length, sliding doors. On the east side, toward the rear of the main block, is a projecting rectangular bay, the windows of which have segmental-arched tops similar to those of the large roof dormer on the same side. On the west side are two smaller dormers, with gable roofs, and decorative aprons in the gable ends, above single round-topped windows.

The rear section of the house has bracketted eaves, and 4/4 double hung sash windows topped with simple cornices.

The interior room arrangement has been modified, with original walls removed to make one large meeting room that occupies 2/3 of the main floor plan. The rear portion of the building contains a reading room and restrooms.

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 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

c. 1860

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this house lies in its singular visual character, which is established principally through the picturesque treatment of the gable ends and particularly the pointed false gable on the front, the latter suggestive of Downing's Gothic cottage detail. The house is a study in small details, with its assortment of window treatments, dormers, and the projecting bay. It is known locally both as a visual oddity and as among Grinnell's oldest houses. For these various reasons, the house deserves recognition as a most unusual element in the built environment of the community.

Charles H. Spencer is believed to have been the original owner of this house. He was the original title holder for the lot, and local residents and historical accounts attribute the house to him, with an approximate date of 1860. Spencer came to Grinnell in 1856, and soon became active in local banking and real estate. He was killed in a Colorado Springs railroad accident in 1892.

The only definite documentation for the first relocation of the house is an 1898 fire insurance map that shows the house at 1010 Spring Street. It appears, from city directories, to have been used as a rental property, until purchase and final relocation by the Christian Scientists in 1932. While at 1010 Spring Street, the house lost a side porch, and the projecting bay (according to the fire insurance maps) was made smaller. Once moved to its present location, several interior walls were removed, but the exterior has been left intact.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Murphy, Pat, "Domestic Architecture in Grinnell, 1854 to WWII," typescript, 1976, Grinnell College Library.
History of Poweshiek County, Iowa. Chicago: Union Historical Co., 1880.
Grinnell Old Settlers Association Proceedings, 1894-1902.
Poweshiek County Recorder's Office, Montezuma. **UTM NOT VERIFIED**
 (See Continuation Sheet).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1QUADRANGLE NAME Des Moines, IowaQUADRANGLE SCALE 1:250,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	5, 22, 4, 00	46, 8, 16, 00
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

C			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

E			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

F			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

G			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

H			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E 50' Lot 11 SESE 8.80.16, Grinnell, Iowa.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

M. H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

September 1979

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

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

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

TITLE Director, Division of Historic PreservationDATE December 3, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 1-25-80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William H. GrahamDATE 1-22-80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Charles H. Spencer House, Grinnell, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

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Interview, J. E. Jacobsen with Bertha S. Sherman, Grinnell,
September 1979.
Grinnell City Directory, 1879.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1898, 1906, 1911, 1922.