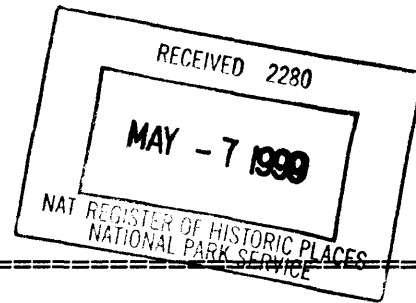


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South

other names/site number First United Methodist Church

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 314 W. Canadian Avenue not for publication N/A  
city or town Vinita vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Craig code 035  
zip code 74301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide XX locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Ward 2 May 1999  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
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 Edson H. Beall 6/3/99  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
for of Action

=====

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   N/A  

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation UNKNOWN

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other STONE--granite columns, cornice

\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====

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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1922  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
=====

Significant Dates 1920  
1922  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder BUTLER AND SAUNDERS -- architects  
LOVE BROTHERS -- builders

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
9. Major Bibliographical References  
=====

(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: \_\_\_\_\_

=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property Less than 1 (one) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	307070	4056700	3	—	—
2				4	—	—

N/A 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 Dianna Everett

organization Consultant date 1 August 1998

street & number 2510 Countrywood Lane telephone 405-348-4272

city or town Edmond state OK zip code 73003

=====  
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 Board of Trustees, First United Methodist Church

street & number 314 W. Canadian telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Vinita state OK zip code 74301



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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First Methodist-Episcopal  
Church, South  
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county and State

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SUMMARY:

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, at 314 W. Canadian, Vinita, Oklahoma, sits in a residential-commercial area immediately west of downtown Vinita. The major portion of the building, constructed in 1920-1922, faces east on Thompson; a secondary elevation faces south on Canadian. An education wing added in 1956 lies along an alley at the rear. The setting remains the same as it was historically, except for a new church across the street to the east and a parking lot across the alley to the west. The predominant visual characteristics of the 1922 section of the church are its exterior wall material and decorative treatments, which identify its design as vernacular Classical Revival style, with Italian Renaissance elements. These styles were popular from 1895 through the 1940s. Major elements include a monumental building; smooth wall surfaces; symmetrical, balanced facade; pilasters with Ionic capitals; an unadorned roofline; pediments; and a wide cornice and frieze band. The church's walls are of brown brick, and the details are gray granite. Stained-glass decoration is also important. All windows in the east, north, and south elevations are set with stained-glass; the west-side windows are plain.

Connected to the north elevation, in the lower northwest corner of the original building, is a 20-foot by 30-foot glassed-in walkway built in 1993. This area gives sheltered access to the original building's rear door and to the 1956 two-story education wing built along the alley. The education building was placed thusly so as not to impede the feeling and association of the original church. In size, the education building is less than half the volume of the original two-and-a-half story church. The plain, multi-color brick, Modernistic-style wing is visually different from the original Classical Revival church. Its main visual feature is 9 bays of hung windows and stucco panels on east and west sides. The primary alteration to the original 1922 church has been the 1993 attachment of this "lean-to" type of glassed-in walkway to shelter access between the two buildings; this covered less than 5 percent of the total vertical wall surface of the original church. This addition, however, did not make physical changes to the original building, and the original wall, doorway, and two stained glass windows are still visible through the glass panels. The glassed-in room and adjoining education wing do not detract from the appearance or feeling of the original church, although the whole is now one building. Other alterations in the original building include: replacement of transoms and doors on the east side; replacement of doors on the south side and one door on the north side; infilling of two windows on the lower level for the addition of air conditioning ductwork, and replacement of roofing material c. 1956 with composition shingles. New Lantern-type light fixtures have been placed at each entrance. There have been no alterations to the 1956 wing. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, maintains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and

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association. As these are the components of integrity, and have been preserved, it is maintained that the building's integrity was not seriously impacted by the 1993 alteration and that the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, of Vinita, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, for its architectural significance in Vinita, Oklahoma.

DESCRIPTION:

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, of Vinita, Oklahoma, sits in a residential-commercial area immediately west of downtown Vinita. The church is located at 314 W. Canadian, on the northwest corner of Canadian and Thompson. The building's long axis is oriented east and west. To the southeast of the church is the Craig County Courthouse, a large Classical Revival building that, including grounds, occupies an entire city block called "South Park." To the southwest, west and north of the church is a residential area. Across the alley to the west of the church is a paved parking lot, property of the church; this was the former location of a house, removed to create the parking area. Across Thompson to the east is a new church building belonging to another denomination. Further east is the downtown area of town. The present setting remains the same as it was historically, except for a new church across the street to the east and the church parking lot to the west.

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church is characterized by strong horizontal massing. In plan, it is L-shaped, with the stem of the L being the original 1922 building and the foot being a 1956 education wing. The original 1922 building measures 57 feet north-south and 98 feet east-west. The church's principal facade faces east on Thompson, and the secondary elevation faces south on Canadian (the street address is on Canadian). The rear or west elevation (the foot of the L) lies along an alley to the west of the original building. The original church building is two and one-half stories in height, and its height is accentuated by a parapet and east-side pediment. The roofline is horizontal, characterized by a tall parapet on all four elevations. On the east side, at the center, a pediment rises from the parapet. The pediment conceals a low pyramidal roof with composition shingles. This pyramidal roof, invisible to passersby on the street, covers the east-side sanctuary section, allowing for its coffered ceiling inside. The original roofing material of the pyramidal roof was ceramic tile, which was replaced c. 1956 with composition shingles, due to severe deterioration.

The predominant visual characteristics of the original 1922 church are its exterior wall material and decorative treatments, which identify its design as a vernacular version of the Classical Revival style with Italian Renaissance elements. Classical Revival, a style popular from 1895 through the 1940s, is typified by a monumentally sized building with smooth wall surfaces; a

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symmetrical, balanced facade; support columns, or pilasters (either functional or decorative), with Ionic capitals; generally unadorned roofline; pediments; and a wide cornice and frieze band. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, incorporates these details into its design. The building rises imposingly from the street at the east or main elevation, giving it a monumental effect. The horizontal massing is accentuated by a stone water table that extends around the building at mezzanine level, and by the projecting cornice and broad frieze as well. While the wall material is not particularly smooth when seen close-up, when viewed from a distance, it is very uniform in appearance, as if it were stone.

On the east side, the facade is symmetrical, balanced by the placement of bays and openings. In this elevation there are three bays. The central bay, imitates a recessed portico, after the Renaissance fashion made popular by Andrea Palladio. A square, stone engaged column marks each side of the bay. Between these there are four equally spaced, massive, round, stone engaged columns with Ionic capitals and shallow plinths. These appear to hold up the frieze and cornice. The columns rest on the water table. Interspersed between the columns are six small, single-hung, stained-glass windows--ranked in sets of two between the stone columns. On either side of the central bay are entry bays. In each, the wall is penetrated by a door, one at the north and one at the south. Above each of the doors is a small, single-hung, stained-glass window. Each of the doorways is elaborated by a stone multi-layered label mold, that extends downward to embrace the transom. Flanking each side of the label mold is a new metal lantern-type light fixture. The new doors are metal-framed glazed slabs with new transoms. The heavy door treatment balances the weight of the central bay. Each doorway is accessed from the street by three levels of concrete steps, the top two of which are bounded by a brick balustrade on each side. A metal railing, on the north side of each set of steps, is historic.

The south facade is also symmetrical, with three bays. A broad, recessed central bay contains six flat pilasters, of brick, with square stone capitals and plinths. The pilasters rest on the water table. Interspersed between the pilasters are five tall, stained-glass windows. Below each of these, beneath the water table, is a small single-hung basement window. The flanking bays contain entrances. The east bay of the south wall has a ground-level doorway with elaborate stone label like those at the main entry but having the addition of a stone surround. The new door is a single metal-framed, glazed slab door. The upper level has two ranks of single-hung, stained-glass windows (four in total), with one basement window to the east of the door. The west bay of the south wall has a mezzanine level doorway, with elaborate label mold. The door is metal-framed, with a glazed slab door. The doorway is accessed from the street by a set of concrete steps with stone balustrade. At the far west end of the south wall there is a new, metal, ground-level door with no elaboration. Metal railings on the steps on east and south sides are original.

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On the north elevation, the recessed bay mirrors that of the south; but at the east corner, windows substitute for a ground-level doorway. At the west corner there is a mezzanine-level doorway with plain stone lintel, as well as two small stained glass windows. Above the roof of the glassed-in walkway are two stained-glass windows on the upper level. These openings are original.

The west elevation of the original church building is characterized by plainness. Three external chimneys divide the wall into four bays. Each bay has vertical ranks of one, two, or three windows. The southernmost windows are of the smaller variety. All windows are single-hung, with frosted lights. The brick exterior chimneys project shallowly from the wall and break the roofline at the parapet, but the cornice molding is not broken by the chimney walls.

Gray granite decoration is another of the church's hallmarks. The broad parapet is punctuated with cornerpieces of stone in the recessed/projecting bays. The parapet and pediment are capped with stone as well. The window sills and lintels are also of stone. The entablature, consisting of a copper cornice molding, painted a brownish color (originally white), projects out over a broad, undecorated frieze band of granite. The water table is also of stone. The light-colored decorative finishes contrast with the brown of the brick. A commemorative cornerstone is set into the building's southeast corner; carved into the panel are the words "FIRST/METHODIST CHURCH/ERECTED 1921/ORGANIZED 1874". In the parapet above the recessed central portion of the east wall is a stone panel bearing the words "FIRST METHODIST CHURCH".

Stained-glass decoration is also visually important. Each of the windows in the east, north, and south elevations is set with stained-glass lights. The windows are generally of three sizes: tall, narrow openings for the sanctuary; small single-hung windows for meeting rooms; and smaller single-hung windows for bathrooms. The five tall, vertical windows in the north and south recessed bays are in three parts; the bottom two parts are a single-hung window, and the top part is a fixed window. All of the stained-glass windows have identical geometrical patterns, and the tall sanctuary windows also have a centrally placed cross. Only the windows in the west elevation are plain frosted glass. All windows have stone sills, and several have broad, stone lintels. Each window in the east, north, and south elevations has a new, metal-framed storm window installed in 1993 as a protective covering (these are removable).

Originally, the double-doors on the east side were wood-framed, with tall, wide single-pane glass panels. Above the doors, each transom had three star-like wood muntins. These were replaced in 1956. Now, each transom is an undecorated single-light, and the wooden doors are metal-framed glazed slabs. Thus, the doors are similar in appearance to the original, but the framing material has been changed.

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The floor plan of the original church was typical of its era: All church functions were integrated into one large building. On the east side of the building is a large sanctuary, often called an auditorium, or worship hall. This area is on a mezzanine level, above grade, and is entered from Thompson via steps at the north and south corners, leading up from the street. The sanctuary is characterized by a plain woodwork reredos (behind the altar area), in the center of which are a mural and a metal cross on the wall. There are three sets of pews, with two outside aisles and two inside aisles. At the east side of the room are large tambour doors that open into a large meeting room that sits between small entrance lobbies. On the west side of the plan are functional rooms--library, parlor, office, on the mezzanine level, and similar meeting rooms on the upper level. The building has a full basement, with windows placed at grade to admit light. On this level are other meeting rooms, and on the east side, at the south corner, is the Christ Chapel.

The church's two-story education wing, set on the alley 20 feet from the original building's northwest corner, was constructed in 1955-56. The education facility was not originally connected to the church. At that time, the church board placed the new education building along the alleyway, in the least conspicuous place, so to preserve the feeling and association of the original church. The architectural style of the education building/wing is clearly Modernistic, with sheer walls and minimal decoration. The massing is horizontal and the roof is flat. At the roofline is a band of metal trim or flashing, divided into a narrow upper section, painted dark brown, and a wider section below. The east and west elevations are identical. These strongly horizontal elevations are pierced by sets of vertical, aluminum-frame windows, in nine bays, divided by tall, narrow, multi-colored brick piers. The window sets, one window on first and one on second floor, are separated vertically by beige stucco panels. Each window is hung, in 2x2 pattern, with clear lights that are divided horizontally. There are no doors in the east and west elevations. The south elevation, under a glassed-in walkway, has a first-floor door and small windows on each floor; the first-floor windows are now infilled with wood panels. The north elevation is similar, with the windows on both floors being glazed. The footprint of the education wing is much smaller than that of the original church. In addition, the construction materials differ from those of the original church building, thus the new portion can be clearly distinguished from the old. The two-story education wing shelters classrooms and meeting rooms flanking a central hallway on both floors. The wing measures 44 feet north-south by 64 feet east-west. Its volume is less than half that of the two-and-a-half-story, 57-by-98 foot original section. The new wing is entered through its south elevation, which is sheltered by a glassed-in walkway that now connects it with the original church. In the north elevation, access is for emergency purposes. Attached to the rear or north side of the education wing is a small wooden shed, used for storage. The north and west sides of the grounds

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are enclosed by a chain-link fence that encloses a children's playground.

A 20-foot by 30-foot glassed-in walkway, built in 1993, connects the original 1922 church to the education building/wing. The purpose of this area is to provide sheltered access for the church and education wing. This area lies under a ribbed metal "lean-to," or shed-type roof that is set against the original building at about 45 degrees. The greatest height of the roof is 20 feet. The connecting area shelters one (formerly) exterior door and two small, original stained-glass windows, at the extreme west end of the north wall of the original church. An original, wood, single-light door has been replaced with a metal-framed, glazed slab door. In the southeast corner of the walkway, a set of metal stairs leads up to the second floor of the education building/wing and down into the original basement door basement of the 1922 building. Along the north wall of the original church, beneath the windows, is a new concrete handicap-access ramp with metal railing. The original building's historic fabric was not affected by the addition of the glassed-in walkway. In area, it covers only 16 percent of the original north wall, which is only a tertiary elevation. The glass panels of the walkway have a light grey cast but through them the wall, door, and small stained-glass windows of the original building is clearly visible. Above the roof of the glassed-in area, the original upper-story stained-glass windows are visible. The glassed-in walkway is also accessed from the exterior by a metal-framed glass door on east and west. On the west side of the walkway, a large porte cochere, built in 1996, shelters those who drive up to the west entrance of the walkway. The porte cochere, which is not attached to the original church, has a metal hipped roof, and its four columns and soffits are stuccoed. The driveway underneath the porte cochere is accessed from the alleyway.

New window-type air conditioners have been installed in three windows on the west elevation of the original 1922 church. In its north and south elevations, near the west corners, two windows have been infilled for the connection of air conditioning ductwork. The condenser units sit outside the walls at these points and are surrounded by chain-link fencing.

On the grass outside the main entrance sits a granite marker inscribed with the words "FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH/FOUNDED IN 1874/ON THIS 120TH ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 2, 1994/A TIME CAPSULE WAS BURIED BENEATH THIS/MONUMENT. IT IS TO BE OPENED ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 2, 2024". A plastic and metal advertising sign sits at the southeast corner of the grounds. Around the south side of the building is a shallow, concrete drainage structure. On the alley are three-sided enclosures that hide mechanical equipment. With the exception of these objects that do not materially impact the building's site, the grounds and the building retain excellent integrity.

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ALTERATIONS:

There has been one alteration to the exterior of the original church building. The primary change has been the 1993 attachment of the glassed-in walkway to shelter access to the 1956 education wing. This, however, did not involve alteration to the historic fabric of the original building. A 20-foot by 30-foot glassed-in walkway, built in 1993, connects the original 1922 church to the education wing. The greatest height of the glassed-in area's shed roof is 20 feet. In area, the walkway covers only a rear portion of the church, the extreme northwest bottom corner of the original north wall, or only 16 percent of the original north wall's vertical surface (the walkway covers a mere 5 percent of the total vertical wall surface of the entire church). The north wall is only a tertiary elevation, with the two principal elevations being the east wall and the south wall, which have street access. The polarized glass panels of the walkway have a light grey cast but through them the wall, door, and two small stained-glass windows of the original building is clearly visible. The stained glass windows are particularly visible at night when lighted. An original, wood, single-light door in this wall was replaced c. 1993 with a metal-framed, glazed slab door. Along the north wall of the original church, beneath the windows, is a new concrete handicap-access ramp with metal railing. The original building's historic fabric was not affected by the addition of the ramp or the glassed-in walkway. Above the roof of the glassed-in area, the two original upper-story stained-glass windows are visible. On the west side of the walkway a porte cochere, built in 1996, shelters those who drive up to the west entrance of the walkway. The porte cochere is not attached to the original church. The glassed-in walkway and the education building/wing do not detract from the appearance or feeling of the original church. The intent of the church board in 1993 was to preserve the historic fabric but to shelter access to both buildings. While the connection of the two buildings technically makes them one building, the materials, and workmanship of the original building were maintained. As these qualities are vital to integrity, and have been preserved, it is maintained that the building's integrity was not seriously impacted by the alteration.

Alterations to openings in the original church building include: replacement of transoms and doors on the east side; replacement of doors on the south side and one door on the north side; infilling of two windows on the lower level, at the southwest and northwest corners, for the addition of air conditioning ductwork, and replacement of the tile roofing material c. 1956 with composition shingles. Removable protective storm windows were placed over the stained glass windows in 1993. New lantern-type light fixtures have been placed at each entrance. Alterations to the interior of the original building included a remodeling of the sanctuary in the 1960s, primarily consisting of installation of new pews, air conditioning, and carpet.(2)

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The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South maintains excellent integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship. Its Classical Revival exterior, essentially unaltered from the original, is well able to carry the feeling and association of the church's place in an important period of Vinita's history.

ENDNOTES

1. The Story of Craig County (1984), I: 99-100; Loose fact sheet, "Methodist Church," Vertical File, Vinita Public Library.
2. "Reminiscences on the Occasion of the Centennial Year, 1874-1974," Booklet, Vertical File, "Methodist Church, Vinita," Vinita Public Library;



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SUMMARY:

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is located at 314 W. Canadian in Vinita, Oklahoma. Vinita became an important regional agricultural service center in the Territorial Era, a status that lasted well past the 1907 statehood. Most of the town's early residential development occurred around "South Park," or Block 70 of the original town, southwest of downtown. Typically, Indian Territory churches were prominent in any town's development. Vinita's original churches, like those of other towns, were scattered throughout the primary residential district and were of wood-frame construction with a Victorian or Gothic Revival appearance; almost without exception, these original buildings were razed in the early 1900s and replaced with substantial brick buildings. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, of Vinita, Oklahoma was constructed in 1920-1922 by the congregation and its Board of Trustees, replacing an earlier frame church. The present church building was constructed on Lot 11 of Block 51 in 1920-1922. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is significant within the architectural context of Vinita, Oklahoma, because it is the community's best, most intact example of Classical Revival-style architecture, and because it represents a period of public building in Vinita.

Since the Methodist Church is the community's only extant example of its resource type, that being early twentieth-century church architecture and plan, Criteria Consideration A is applied to this resource. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is a very important example of the city's historic architecture. The church maintains excellent integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, all criteria that are missing from other buildings of the period. With the exception of the courthouse [NR listed in 1984](altered), the Christian Science Reading Room (altered), and a few downtown business buildings (altered), the church is the only extant example of its resource type (stone and brick church buildings) and of the period of public building in Vinita that extended from the 1890s until 1929. The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is the best example of a Classical Revival style public building in Vinita and is the only remaining intact example of historic church architecture in Vinita. As such, the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT:

The town of Vinita, Cherokee Nation (after 1907, Oklahoma), was established in 1871 with the arrival of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas, Railway, Oklahoma's first rail line. The Vinita region had long been on a transportation route leading from Missouri to Texas, and the newly founded town

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quickly attracted a sizeable population. Rail service east and west was established when the Atlantic and Pacific built through the region in 1872.(1) Vinita became an important regional agricultural service center in the Territorial Era, a status that lasted well past the time of 1907 statehood. Until 1897 Indian law prevailed, but after the allotment of Cherokee lands, the towns of Indian Territory were properly incorporated, and Craig County was created with statehood in 1907. By 1910 the town's population stood at 4,082, and by 1925 Vinita had grown into a community of 5,000.(2)

Within the town of Vinita, businesses located in the vicinity of the railroad. A downtown business section developed south and east of the railroad tracks. In the 1870s and 1880s most buildings were wood-frame, a situation typical of railroad towns of the period.(3) By the 1890s fireproof brick and stone buildings were replacing the flimsier wood buildings. Several masonry hotels and banks were built in the 1890s. Through the pre-World War One years, the architectural styles of the downtown business buildings was generally western commercial. A few of these are extant (most have been heavily altered) on W. Illinois Avenue and Wilson Street, around the center of town.(4)

Most of the town's early residential development occurred around "South Park," or Block 70 of the original town, southwest of downtown. (A corresponding "North Park" area, north of the railroad tracks, was developed later). In the 1890s residential areas were built around South Park. Early residential styles found in and around South Park include vernacular versions of Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Folk Victorian, Prairie School, and, from a later period, Craftsman.(5) On Block 71, called South Park, Craig County completed a new courthouse in 1920. This building was located directly across Canadian Avenue from the First Christian Church and the site of the soon-to-be-built Methodist Church. Designed by Layton, Wemyss, Smith, and Forsyth, the courthouse building combined Classical Revival and Italian Renaissance elements in a massive brick building with granite decoration (NR 84002994).(6)

Typically, churches were prominent in any town's development.(7) Vinita's churches, like those of other towns, were scattered throughout the primary residential district. In Vinita the first church building in town was a community church, serving all denominations. This small frame building was constructed in 1876 at 133 S. Thompson Street; in 1895 the church was torn down.(8) In Vinita between 1892 and 1918 the major denominations proudly constructed their houses of worship a block or so west of downtown, between W. Illinois and W. Canadian avenues and between Scraper and Smith streets.

Almost uniformly, the first denominational buildings were typical of church architecture throughout the broad midsection of America in that time

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period. Typically, a town's first churches were of wood-frame construction of "prairie Gothic" (Victorian or Gothic Revival) appearance; these were generally one story and gable-roofed, with a corner or front tower or steeple.(9) Vinita's first churches were no exception. Again, almost without exception, these original buildings were razed in the early 1900s and replaced with substantial brick buildings, and again, most were designed in Gothic Revival style.(10)

In 1892 the Baptists built a frame church, with a tall tower, on W. Illinois Avenue; in 1918 they razed this building and built a new brick church. One block east of the Baptists, the Presbyterians built a frame building on Illinois Avenue in 1893 and then razed it and constructed a brick church on the same site in 1904. The Episcopal congregation built St. John's Church, a simple folk-Victorian style in 1900 and moved it to the corner of S. Miller and Canadian in 1903. The First Congregational Church was built originally in the 100 block of S. Scrapper Street in 1880; in 1908 the congregation erected a new, large, brick Gothic building at 122 S. Smith Street. By 1907 the First Christian congregation had built a large, two-and-one-half story stone church at Thompson and Canadian. The Christian Science Society built a tiny wood-frame Classical Revival building at 107 S. Miller in 1922. Smaller denominations built churches in outlying areas, but through the 1920s and 1930s the downtown churches remained on their original sites. After the onset of the Great Depression the only congregation adding to the South Park neighborhood of churches was the Church of Christ, who built a Gothic style stone building in 1940 at the intersection of South Avenue and S. Scrapper Street.(11)

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, of Vinita, Oklahoma was constructed in 1920-1922 by the congregation and its Board of Trustees, replacing an earlier frame church on adjacent property. In its earliest days, the congregation of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, had first met in a small building on S. Scrapper Street. Services were led by a circuit-riding preacher. In c. 1895, the Methodists had acquired Lots 8 and 9, Block 51 on S. Thompson Street, where a small community church building was located. In 1895 this building was razed, and a new, wood-frame Gothic Revival-style church was built on Lot 9. During the next twenty years the Methodist congregation greatly expanded, growing to 150, with 160 in the Sunday School. A new church became a practical necessity, and the trustees pursued the acquisition of additional property to the south of the existing frame building. Like the other churches in town, the Methodists' urge to improve their facility would result in the construction of a new brick building.(12)

In 1919 the Board adopted a resolution to purchase property "between Canadian Avenue and the Methodist Church on South Thompson for a site for a new church building." The Trustees purchased "the J. C. Gray place,"

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or Lots 10 and 11, Block 51 in 1920. The present church building was constructed on Lot 11 in 1920-1922.(13) The wood-frame church was donated to the African Methodist-Episcopal congregation, which moved it in 1922 to a new location at Delaware and S. Fourth Street. Meanwhile, the Trustees embarked on a fundraising campaign to raise the money to build the new church; a committee was constituted, headed by Ewing Halsell and directed by Guy Patton. Fundraising continued throughout the period of construction. At the beginning of the process, the Trustees secured the services of architects Butler and Sanders, of Tulsa, and a construction contract was awarded to Love Brothers Construction, a local firm, in mid-November 1920.(14)

In a request typical of the third decade of the twentieth century, Vinita's Methodist congregation asked for more than a simple house of worship, and in this they concurred in a broad movement within Protestantism.(15) One of the congregation's greatest wishes was for a floor plan that included adequate "social facilities." They realized, as did congregations across America, that a church should be a vehicle for Christian fellowship and education, as well as for worship. Thus, they asked for Sunday School classrooms, a club room, a banquet room, kitchen facilities, and parlors.(16) Across Vinita, other Protestant congregations had done or were doing the same in their new buildings. This form of church plan persisted (with a few notable exceptions, such as Tulsa's First Methodist Church, 1927) through the 1940s, after which time new churches were generally divided into "wings" serving various functions.(17)

With Rev. J. E. McConnell presiding, the Methodists broke ground on Tuesday, December 14, 1920. By January the basement had been dug, and on March 9, 1921, the cornerstone was laid in a ceremony involving more than 200 Vinita citizens. Construction moved rapidly, and by 1922 the building's exterior was completed. In February 1922, plans were made to begin working on the interior finishes. On October 26, the last service was held in the old church before it was moved, and on November 2 the first event, a reception, was held in the new church. The first worship service in the new facility was held on Sunday, November 5, 1922, and later that month the congregation hosted the Methodists' annual East Oklahoma Conference.(18)

The 1922 completion of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, at 314 W. Canadian in Vinita, was the last major church construction project in the South Park residential area before the onset of the Great Depression.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is significant within the architectural context of Vinita, Oklahoma, because it is the community's best, most intact example of a style of architecture, that being Classical Revival, and because it represents a period of public building in Vinita. The Methodist Church is the community's only extant example of its resource type, that being early twentieth-century church architecture and plan.

Historic resources of the same type and time are now gone. The 1918 brick First Baptist Church was altered in 1949 and was finally razed in 1960 to make way for a new building. The First Christian Church of 1907 was razed in 1976 to make way for a new building. The 1900 St. John's Episcopal Church was torn down and replaced by a brick building in 1960. The 1904 First Presbyterian Church was razed and replaced by a new brick church in 1951. Of the pre-1929 churches of Vinita, only two remain: the small 1922 Christian Science Reading Room on S. Miller, which has been heavily altered by the addition of a wing on the rear and by metal siding; and the 1922 First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, now called the First United Methodist Church. The only other church building still extant from the pre-1948 historic period is the Church of Christ, built in 1940 and altered in the 1950s by the addition of new windows and addition of a classroom wing that covered one original wall.(19)

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is also significant as one of three examples of Classical Revival-style public buildings in Vinita. The largest of these is the Craig County Courthouse (NR listed in 1984), designed by Layton, Wemyss, Smith, and Forsyth, of Oklahoma City. This brick and granite building, completed in 1920, is similar in presentation to that of the Methodist Church, in that the courthouse also has a recessed false portico, with columns; it also has an open balustrade in the center of the parapet in the main elevation.(20) The courthouse has an upper-level room that rises from the roof; this is the county jail, and its appearance has been altered by heavy metal exterior bars on the windows. On the southeast corner of the courthouse, a massive, metal, enclosed exterior stairway leads from the ground to the roof (used to take prisoners up to the jail). Although there is no date for the stairway, it does not appear to be an historic alteration. The main approach to the courthouse has been seriously altered by the addition of a long concrete handicap-access ramp, with metal railing, that leads from the sidewalk to the main entrance of the building. This alteration, as well as the addition of the metal stairway, changes the building's appearance significantly from the original.

The second Classical Revival-style building is the 1922 Christian Science Reading Room at 107 S. Miller.(21) This is a small wood-frame shotgun plan

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building with a hipped roof. The main elevation offers a full-height entry porch with massive pediment supported by four Doric columns. There is no elaboration in the pediment or at the cornice. This building was altered at an unknown date by the addition of a one-story wing at the rear. Both parts of the building appear to be covered with metal siding.

The First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, of Vinita maintains greater overall integrity than any of the aforementioned buildings, despite alteration in 1993. On the church property in 1956 a two-story education building was constructed along the alley 20 feet from the original building's northwest corner. The education facility was not then connected to the original church. At that time, the church board placed the new education building along the alleyway, in the least conspicuous place, so as to preserve the feeling and association of the original church. The architectural style of the education building/wing is clearly modern and understated, with sheer walls and minimal decoration. In addition, the construction materials differ radically from those of the original church building, and the new portion can be clearly distinguished from the old. The two-story education building's volume is less than half that of the two-and-a half-story original church. A 20-foot by 30-foot glassed-in walkway, built in 1993, connects the original 1922 church to the education building/wing. The purpose of this area is to give sheltered access between both buildings. This area lies under a ribbed metal "lean-to," or shed-type roof that is set against the original building at about 45 degrees. The greatest height of the roof is 20 feet. The original building's historic fabric was not affected by the addition. In area, the glass addition covers only 16 percent of the original north wall, which is only a tertiary elevation. The connecting area shelters one (formerly) exterior door and two small, original stained-glass windows, at the extreme west end of the north wall of the original church.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATION:

Criteria Consideration A must be applied to this resource. Under ordinary circumstances, religious properties are generally excluded from listing in the National Register. However, the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, now known as the First United Methodist Church, is a very important example of the city's historic architecture. The church maintains excellent integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, all criteria that are missing from other buildings of the period. With the exception of the Craig County Courthouse [NR listed in 1984](altered), the Christian Science Reading Room (altered), and a few downtown business buildings (altered), the church is the best extant example of its style and of the period of public building in Vinita that extended from the 1890s until 1929. As the city's most intact example public architecture, and as the most intact example

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of Classical Revival style, and as the only remaining intact example of church architecture from the historic period (to 1948), the First Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, is eligible for listing in the National Register for its architectural significance.

ENDNOTES

1. The Story of Craig County (1984), I: 4, 13, 26-28; Guy W. Logsdon, "Tulsa Metropolitan Area," in John W. Morris, ed., Cities of Oklahoma, 104.
2. The Story of Craig County, I:4; John W. Morris, "The Smaller Cities," in Cities of Oklahoma, 11; Logsdon, "Tulsa Area," 110.
3. The Story of Craig County, I:74.
4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vinita, Oklahoma, 1916; The Story of Craig County, I:75, 77, 78, 102-103; Windshield Survey, Vinita, Oklahoma, 15 July 1998, by Dianna Everett, Consultant; Morris, "Smaller Cities," 14.
5. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Vinita, Oklahoma, 1916, 1925; The Story of Craig County, I:78-79; Windshield Survey, Vinita, Oklahoma, July 16, 1998, by Dianna Everett, Consultant.
6. Ibid., I:101.
7. Morris, "The Smaller Cities," 16, 17, 19; Peter W. Williams, Houses of God: Region, Religion and Architecture in the United States (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 211-212.
8. The Story of Craig County, I:28.
9. Williams, Houses of God, 211-213.
10. Ibid., 214.
11. The Story of Craig County, I:28, 92-97.
12. O. B. Campbell, "'History of the Methodist Church in Vinita.'" Typescript, Vertical File, "Methodist Church, Vinita," Vinita Public Library, n.p. (12).
13. Deed Records, Craig Co. Clerk's Office, Book. 239, p. 357, Book 94, p. 164.

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14. Complete Quarterly Conference Record Book, 24 February 1919-7 November 1922, Vertical File, Vinita Public Library; Vinita Daily Journal, 10 May 1920, 11 May 1920.

15. Sheldon Cheney, The New World Architecture (New York: AMS Press, 1967 [1930]), 342-43.

16. Vinita Daily Journal, 17 May 1920.

17. Edward Norman, The House of God: Church Architecture, Style, and History (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 250, 291.

18. Complete Quarterly Conference Record Book, 21 July 1920; Vinita Daily Journal, 10 May 1920, 17 May 1920, 13 November 1920, 8 December 1920, 14 December 1920, 3 January 1921, 10 March 1921, 25 February 1922, 6 March 1922, 16 September 1922, 3 October 1922, 25 October 1922, 26 October 1922, 2 November 1922, 7 November 1922.

19. The Story of Craig County, I:92-97.

20. Ibid., I:101.

21. Ibid., I:94.



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Verbal Boundary Description:

The subject property is encompassed by the boundaries of Lots 9, 10 and 11, Block 51, Original Town of Vinita, Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the church.