UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED MAY 7 1982

DATE ENTEREDJUN 3 1982

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

## **1** NAME

HISTORIC

HISTORIC				
First United	<u>Presbyterian Church (</u>	<u>Originally First Pr</u>	esbyterian Church	.)
Presbyterian				
LOCATION			······································	
STREET & NUMBER 130 S.4th Str	not	١		
CITY, TOWN	· · · · ·		CONGRESSIONAL DIST	
Sterling			4	
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Colorado		08	Logan	075
CLASSIFIC	CATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRE	SENTUSE
DISTRICT	NAPUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	NA AGRICULTURE	NAMUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)			NACOMMERCIAL	NAPARK
NA STRUCTURE	<u>МА</u> вотн	NA_WORK IN PROGRESS	NAEDUCATIONAL	NEPRIVATE RESIDENCE
NASITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	ACCESSIBLE	NAENTERTAINMEN	
PA OBJECT	NA IN PROCESS	NHYES: RESTRICTED	NHGOVERNMENT	NASCIENTIFIC
	NA BEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: UNRESTRICTED	MINDUSTRIAL	NATRANSPORTATION
		NANO	NAMILITARY	MALOTHER:
NAME First United Street & NUMBER	F PROPERTY			
130 South 4t	th Street		STATE	
Sterling	NA	VICINITY OF	Colorad	
	N OF LEGAL DESCR			10
LUGATION	NOL FEGYE DESCL			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS	FTC. T. C. C. C.	1 1 5 1		
STREET & NUMBER	Logan County Cle	rk and kecorder		·····
••••••	3rd and Main Str	eets		
CITY, TOWN			STATE	
	Sterling		Colorado	)
6 REPRESEN	NTATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		
τίτιε Colo	orado Inventory of His	toric Sites		
DATE Ongo	Dîng	NA FEDERAL X_	STATE NACOUNTY NALOCA	NL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	Colorado Historical	Society, 1300 Broa	dway	·····
CITY, TOWN			STATE	
	Denver		Colorado 8020	3

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

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X EXCELLENT		NH_DETERIORATED
VA GOOD		NARUINS
NAFAIR	<sup>™</sup> .	NAUNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

X UNALTERED

CHECK ONE

XORIGINAL SITE NA

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Except for normal weathering and some color changes, the exterior of the First Presbyterian Church is unchanged from its original 1920 appearance. It is a solid, rectangular structure of buff stretcher-bond brick with limestone trim, rising  $2\frac{1}{2}$  stories above grade. A brick drum with a metal clad dome crowns the building.

The architectural style is Neo-Classicism. The entrance facade is symmetrical and has a colossal 2-story colonnaded portico containing four fluted limestone columns with Ionic capitals which define the three, set back, single panel, double doors. The doors are glass infilled and with a decorative lintel over each. Three vertical elongated windows occupy the space above the doors. Engaged brick pilasters flank the portico which is surmounted by a full-width, cornice-boxed, plain metal pediment with a plain metal frieze. To the side of the portico is a vertical alignment of three windows, with the two first floor windows decorated with a plain limestone cornice-boxed pediment supported by brackets. A cornice with plain molding surrounds the building.

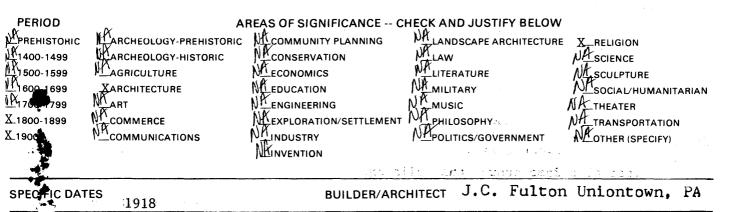
The side facades of the church are almost identical, each having as its main element a very large stained glass window surrounded by lights which are also filled with stained glass. The glass has been well preserved over the years, repaired when necessary, and is now protected by a mesh screen. The window is a segmental arch at the top and is flanked by pilasters and narrow vertical window openings. The slightly protruding wing which contains this window is surmounted by cornice-boxed pediment of limestone supported by limestone brackets.

The interior of the building consists of a semi-circular auditorium with balconies on the sides and rear, which provide for a seating capacity of 500, with every seat within forty feet of the pulpit. The pews are of oak matching the treatment of the pulpit. The interior has not been changed to any extent except for the removal of a large pipe organ which once stood behind the pulpit. All decorative features have remained intact and reflect the skilled workmanship of the period.

The building shares the lot with a two-story masonry building erected as a pastor's manse, but used for the last twenty years as an educational annex. The building is of similar materials, but is dissimilar in architecture.

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# **SIGNIFICANCE**



#### STAT ENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the First United Presbyterian Church of Sterling lies not only in the districtive architecture and beauty of the building, but also in the major contributions where the church and its congregants have made to the religious, cultural and social life of, the community during the church's 101 years of existence as an organization.

The entirch was established in September 1878, in a sod schoolhouse in a homestead colony three and one-half miles north and east of the present city of Sterling. This antedated the establishment of the town by three years and of the county of Logan by eleven years. The "Old Sterling" colony, as it was later known, had been established in 1874 by people from Mississippi and Tennessee. Most of them were Cumberland Presbyterian and Southern Methodists. Originally they met jointly for religious services in sod homes and an adobe school. In 1875, the Methodist Church South was organized. In September, 1878, answering a request from the Presbyterian settlers, Rev. S.H. McElvain of Greeley rode into the colony on horseback and formed a congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The congregation remained in the Cumberland ranks until May, 1906, when it transferred its affiliation to the Boulder Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America.

The congregation was the first to build a church edifice within the town of Sterling, although only the second to hold organized religious services in the new town. The congregational leaders of the Presbyterian Church were also the leaders in the establishment of the Town of Sterling, the building of canals and development of irrigation systems, and the building of early roads. In 1881, when the Union Pacific Railroad built its line from Julesburg to LaSalle, Colorado, M.C. King, one of the church's founders, persuaded the railroad to establish the town of Sterling on a site which he donated for the purpose. He also donated land within the new town for the Presbyterian Church. Construction of a small church began in the fall of 1882, and the building was occupied early in 1883. This building became the center for religious, social and cultural activities. At least two other congregations, Southern Methodist and Baptists, held worship services there until they had built churches of their own.

Members of the Sterling church were leaders in the economic developments which probably contributed most to the transformation of Sterling from a small railroad and cattle shipping village into Northeastern Colorado's largest city. These were the development of irrigatio systems and irrigated farming, establishment of the sugar beet industry with a sugar refiner in Sterling, and cattle feeding.

Within fifteen years, the 1883 church was unable to accomodate the rapidly growing congregation. A larger church was erected in 1898, adequate in all respects for the towns's population of 900 and a church membership of 150. However, as a result of the economic developments cited above, the city's population increased to 6,500 and the church membership to more than 500 in two decades.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES Church records Files of the <u>Sterling Republican-Advocate</u>	
Centennial Committee. Looking Back, Reaching Forwa Presbyterian Church of Sterling, Colorado. H Conklin, Emma Burke. <u>History of Logan County, Colo</u> Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolu	Published by the church. orado. Sterling: Elbridge Gerry
<b>10</b> GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1	1.0/.000
QUADRANGLE NAMESterling south	QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000
A 1 3 6 5 1 3 7 0 4 4 9 8 3 2 0 B ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE C	EASTING NORTHING
GLHHHHH	
South 95' of Lots 1-6, K & S Addition Origina	al Sterling
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPI	NG STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE CODE COUNTY	CODE
STATE CODE COUNTY	CODE
<b>11</b> FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE	
Robert H McCaffree	DATE
First United Presbyterian Church	Nov.20, 1979
STREET & NUMBER 14548 Debra Drive	TELEPHONE 303-522-2998
	STATE Colorado
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE	
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY	
NATIONAL NA STATE NA	
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic P hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certi- criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE	fy that it has been evaluated according to the
TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer	DATE 3.27.82
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
A. Entered in the	nor 1/2/2
ATTEST: National Register	DATE 6/3/82
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	VAIE

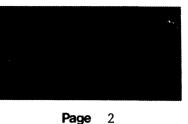
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## United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Statement of Significance Item number 8



Construction of the present church was begun in 1918. It was completed in 1919, and dedicated in 1920. The guiding light in the project was the pastor, Rev. M. Gatewood Milligan, who contributed ideas for many of its significant features, and insisted that it should be built large enough to accomodate growth and expansion in future generations. As a result of Rev-Milligan's foresight, 61 years later the church comfortably accommodates a congregation twice as large as in 1918. Interior remodeling has been necessary to provide additional space for Sunday School classes, and an adjacent building formerly used as a manse is now fully occupied as an educational annex, but it has not been necessary to enlarge the church building, or to alter the exterior of the sanctuary.

The cornerstone laying ceremonies were held Nov. 28, 1918, during the famous nationwide influenza epidemic. Because of restrictions against public assemblies which closed churches for nearly two months, only a handful of church officials and a few others were present for the ceremony. Despite the cost, between \$100,000 and \$110,000, the church was dedicated free of debt.

Prior to and during the construction, Rev. Milligan was in failing health. He was forced to resign Jan. 1, 1920 becoming pastor emeritus. He continued to live in Sterling until his death in 1924. The church's social hall, located in the basement of the building, was named Milligan Hall and dedicated to his memory.

Because of the magnificent acoustics, the First United Church of Sterling was the site of concerts and other musical programs for many years, being superseded only in the last decade when a larger auditorium with acoustics of similar quality was erected on the Northeastern Junior College campus.

The First Presbyterian Church is one of Sterling's most outstanding structures architecturally and a major local landmark because of its visual qualities. It is also probably the best example of the Neo-Classic style remaining in the town. It remains as a fitting monument to the town's founding pioneers.