

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **OCT 16 1979**  
DATE ENTERED **DEC 14 1979**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

First Presbyterian Church of Lawton

AND/OR COMMON

Centenary United Methodist Church of Lawton Little Chapel

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

<sup>St.</sup>  
8th and D Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lawton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE 40

COUNTY Comanche

CODE 031

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_DISTRICT

\_\_\_PUBLIC

\_\_\_OCCUPIED

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_BOTH

\_\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Centenary United Methodist Church of Lawton

STREET & NUMBER

702 D Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Lawton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Comanche County Courthouse--Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Comanche County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Lawton

STATE

Oklahoma

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

none

DATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

The First Presbyterian Church of Lawton consists of the original 1902 building, which was a one-story brick structure, and a two-story addition made in 1946. The older, one-story sanctuary was approximately 41' x 125' in size. The architectural design of this structure was an American variation of Gothic European church styling, seen in elements such as arches, buttresses, and ornamental brick patterns.

The foundation of the sanctuary is cut-stone, rising approximately three feet above ground level. The walls above the stone base are 12" thick red brick, with 16" wide buttresses at the corners and on one side. Each buttress rises 9'8" up the side of the walls. The windows are arched with stone sills. The north end of the church has a large arched window with diamond-shaped windows on either side. Around each window and door is an ornamental band of brick.

The roof on the 1902 section is gabled, with two dormers and covered with cedar shingles. Gable ornamentation remains on the north end, but has been removed from the two dormers. The roof is in good condition, but the shingles should be replaced. On the west side of the sanctuary is an off-set entryway with a gable roof line, and a covered doorway with a hip roof line. Both are original.

In 1946 members of the congregation voted to build an educational and recreational structure adjoining the original sanctuary. The two-story addition more than doubled available space. The new structure did not destroy the architectural integrity of the 1902 sanctuary, for cedar shingles and red bricks were chosen to match. The most obvious variations were rectangular windows and a hip roof.

The interior of the old sanctuary is typical of older community churches. Stained-glass windows, which are original and in excellent condition, adorn all sides of the building. A plaster Gothic arch at the chancel proscenium and original oak wooden pews also are in excellent condition. Hardwood floors still add to the beauty of the building.

The only alterations to the interior are exposed electrical conduits overhead, wall-board over the original plaster, and paint over the original wooden pews.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1902-1979

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1902, the First Presbyterian Church of Lawton is locally significant for several reasons: it is the oldest brick building in Lawton, a town settled in 1901; it is the oldest place of worship in Lawton, founded only one day after the land opening; and the structure is a well preserved example of turn-of-the-century American-Gothic church architecture, typical of many small communities in the region.

The land on which the church was built in 1902 had been Indian land prior to August of 1901. In the Indian treaties signed after the Civil War, the greater part of southwestern Oklahoma was reserved for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita tribes. Whites' land hunger and the culmination of the Peace Policy, however, forced the federal government to open the land to white settlement. In August of 1901 the land was distributed by lottery to lucky homesteaders. Overnight, the town of Lawton emerged from the prairie.

On August 3, 1901, the Oklahoma Territory Presbytery sent Reverend Thomas J. Irwin to Lawton with instructions to organize a church. On August 4, Irwin held the town's first church services, convening on prairie sod across the street from the United States Land Office. With only a tent for cover from the August sun, the First Presbyterian Church of Lawton was born.

Members of the congregation soon desired a less precarious location for their church; on August 25th the church tent was moved to a lot at 716 D Avenue, purchased by John H. Porter for \$340. Official organization of the church followed quickly thereafter. On September 1, 1901, twenty residents of Lawton listened to the inauguration sermon.

As the financial and governmental center for Comanche County and the southwestern region of Oklahoma Territory, Lawton enjoyed prosperity after the land lottery. A curious mixture of Indians, cowboys, farmers, businessmen, and outlaws filled the twentieth-century frontier settlement, fomenting an atmosphere of rowdiness, lawlessness, and instability. As the town matured, however, a more settled element of the citizenry assumed leadership of the community. One of the most active institutions working for social and moral development of Lawton was the First Presbyterian Church. Befitting

(Continued on sheet 1)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ralston, Ted, ed. Lawton's Golden Anniversary, 1901-1951. Lawton: Lawton Jubilee Committee, 1951. Pp. 6-9.

Interviews with various members of the congregation.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9,750 sq. ft.

QUADRANGLE NAME Lawton Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 55 5 06 5 38 29 10 6 0

B                                                  

C                                                  

D                                                  

E                                                  

F                                                  

G                                                  

H                                                  

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at the corner of 8th Steet and D Avenue, proceed east 65' along the curb to a point approximately 10' beyond the northeast (Cont.)

## 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

Dr. Bob L. Blackburn

ORGANIZATION

History Research and Consulting Company

DATE

July 24, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

435 N. W. 19th

TELEPHONE

405-524-5492

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

STATE

Oklahoma

# 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

*F. Glenn Jordan*

TITLE

DATE

10/10/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Carol O. Skell*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12-14-79

ATTEST: *Pete Grosvenor*

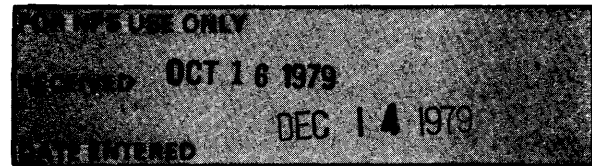
DATE

10/8/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

its role as a stabilizing institution, the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church wanted an impressive and stable house of worship, a building suitable for Lawton's oldest church.

That desire gave way to action following the evening services of October 31, 1901, when the congregation voted to finance a permanent church building. Members pledged \$1,500, the amount to be matched by \$1,500 from the regional Board of Church Erection. Construction began immediately and was completed in October of 1902. On October 12th Reverend Irwin dedicated the church.

For more than forty years the First Presbyterian Church remained in the unaltered brick structure. By 1943, however, membership had outgrown the building. The solution was the addition of an educational and recreational annex. Completed in 1946, the addition conformed to the architectural styling of the original section, the only differences being the windows and the roof. The Presbyterian Church operated from this location until 1956, when the building was sold to the Centenary Methodist Church of Lawton. Today, the building is unused.

In addition to being the oldest brick building and the oldest church in Lawton, the Centenary Methodist Church Little Chapel is architecturally significant to the community. Typical of modified American-Gothic church design, the Chapel is a good example of small-town attempts at ornate and elaborate church construction. From the brick buttresses to the arched stained-glass windows, the building provides the community with a richly designed structure refreshingly different from the usual post-World War II rectangular brick churches found in small towns. Moreover, located in the downtown business district, which is rapidly becoming commercially dominated, the church preserves some of the historic character of Lawton's frontier heritage.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

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corner of the building. Then proceed south 150' through the parking lot to a point 5' beyond the southeast corner of the building. Then proceed 65' along the alley to a point approximately 12' beyond the southwest corner of the building. Then proceed 150' along the curb of 8th Street to the original point of departure.