

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **AUG 1 1979**  
DATE ENTERED **OCT 4 1979**

# 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

Mennoville Mennonite Church

AND/OR COMMON

Mennoville

## LOCATION

N of El Reno on U.S. 81

STREET & NUMBER

8 m. North on US 81 (SE/4 Sec. 32, T 13 N, R 7 W)

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

El Reno

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 6

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

40

COUNTY

Canadian

CODE

017

## 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 RESIDEN

RELIGIOUS

— SCIENTIFIC

— TRANSPORTATION

— OTHER:

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Western District of Mennonites

STREET & NUMBER

722 Main Street (Box 347)

CITY, TOWN

Newton

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas 67114

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Canadian County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

El Reno

STATE

Oklahoma

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey

DATE

1978

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

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

Mennoville Church is a virtual prototype of the small, early-day rural church building - a roughly 30 x 40-foot rectangle with a gabled projecting entryway, all of frame construction and simple in design. Both sanctuary and lower entry have unbroken hipped roofs. A brick chimney centers the solid back (west) wall. Side walls north and south are evenly spaced by four tall, narrow, two-pane, double-sash windows, each topped by a plain, triangular pedimented head. The east entry has recessed double doors, each containing three narrow lights so arched as to complement the pitch of the entry and church itself. Five small windows in a horizontal bank ornament the entry facade above the doorway. They are topped by a simple cartouche reading MENNONITE CHURCH. Cost of the church when built in 1894 is not known. Much of the labor involved was undoubtedly donated. It is recorded, however, that the stones used in the foundation cost \$6. The original lap siding has now been covered with white asphalt tiles, the wood shingles with composite shingles. Structurally, however, the exterior is unchanged.

Interior of the Mennoville church was, and remains, quite plain. Somewhat unusual (not to say effective) is finish of the solid back wall beyond the one-step-up altar area. Above the simple wainscoting, narrow finishing boards are vaulted against the centering chimney pile so as to again complement the pitch of the church's hipped roof. Floor is of bare pine. The church never had regular pews and its straight back chairs have now disappeared. Otherwise the sanctuary is little changed from the way it was when it accommodated the 1894 Christmas program.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

PECIFIC DATES      1894 - 1959                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      a Mr. Wilking

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mennoville Mennonite Church, built in 1894, is the oldest existing structure pertaining to the Mennonite faith in what is now Oklahoma. The Mennoville congregation, organized in 1891, was the faith's first in Oklahoma. And it, in turn, was something of a spiritual legacy of the Mennonite mission and industrial boarding school, opened at nearby Darlington in 1881. Darlington itself represents the initial missionary effort by any church group on behalf of the Indians of western Oklahoma. Although the congregation was never large, and was officially disbanded two decades ago, Mennoville played a significant role in the life of this agricultural community for more than half a century.

\*

The Mennoville church stands as a modest memorial to the faith of twelve pioneering Mennonite families - of Swiss, German, and German-Russian stock - who came from Berne, Ind., to take up land in this area when it was first opened to white settlement. Interestingly enough, the section line running north-south on the east side of the church property was the dividing line between Old Oklahoma, opened by "run" in 1889, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian Reservation, similarly opened in 1892.

The congregation was formed in 1891, with 16 families participating. It had 27 charter members and the Rev. Joel Sprunger was chosen to be the first minister. For two years the congregation met in the various church homes. Then in late 1894 a two-acre site for a church and adjoining cemetery was purchased - for \$10.00 - and a Mr. Wilking was hired to erect the simple frame structure that still stands. It was apparently completed by Dec. 24, 1894. An early chronicler states: "We celebrated the first Christmas in the Mennonite Church. We even had a tree."

Services were held at Mennoville until 1953, when a shrinking farm population cut membership to the vanishing point. (Mennonites were then and remain today largely agricultural.) For six years the church was unused. Then in 1959 the congregation was officially

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Krehbiel, H. P., The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America, privately printed, 1898  
 Kroeker, Marvin Elroy, The Mennonites of Oklahoma to 1907, unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1954  
Mennonite Weekly Review, Newton, Kans., Oct. 22, 1970; May 16, 1972; June 12, 1975

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY two acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Okarche

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minutes

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 494320 3944200

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on SE corner of SE/4 Sec. 32, 13 T N, 7 R E, running W 12-65/100 rods, then N 25-3/100 rods, then E 12-65/100 rods, and then S 25-3/100 rods to original point.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

January 1979

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol Shull

DATE

10-4-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Bob Groves

DATE

10/4/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

disbanded, the building turned over to the Western District Conference of Mennonites. The Conference now cares for both building and cemetery, which is still in use. An historical marker was unveiled at the site in 1972, which hails it as "a continuous reminder of the rugged faith of pioneers to this area."

In recommending Mennoville for the National Register the Canadian County Historical Society calls attention to the church's "rich history of service in this pioneer neighborhood and down through the years . . ." It also points out that Mennonite influence in the area goes back another ten years or so - that is, to the middle 1870s, when the General Conference began investigating the possibility of mission work among the Indians. Initial contact was made with Quaker Indian Agent John Miles in 1877 - at nearby Darlington (placed in the National Register Aug. 14, 1973). The Mennonite mission and industrial boarding school were opened in 1881 - the first for the Plains Indians of western Oklahoma. It was this group of mission workers that helped organize the Mennoville Church in 1891.