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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OCT 19 1992

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
other names/site number Casselton Mennonite Church; St. Stephen's Church

2. Location

street & number SE cor 3rd Ave & 5th St N/A not for publication
city, town Casselton N/A vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Cass code 017 zip code 58012

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Episcopal Churches of North Dakota
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James E. Shum North Dakota SHPO 10-13-92
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historical Society of North Dakota
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Adams 12/3/92
 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:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls stone

roof wood/shingle
other stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Exploration/settlement

Period of Significance

1886
1886-97

Significant Dates

1886

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

George Hancock - builder/contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet, section 9.

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
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property less than one acre

UTM References

A	1 4	6 3 6 3 8 0	5 1 9 5 7 0 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			

[] See continuation sheet, section 10.

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10.

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Barbara Beving Long, consultant	date	May 21, 1992
organization	Four Mile Research Company	telephone	(319) 547-4344
street & number	315 N. Elm Street	state	Iowa
city or town	Cresco	zip code	52136

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 7. Description Page 1

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Casselton displays the key defining design elements of the property type, Episcopal Churches of North Dakota, 1872-1920s. These features are the presence of liturgically correct Gothic Revival stylistic elements, including side porches, steeply pitched gabled roof, pointed arch openings, asymmetric plan, honest use of materials, and importance of the chancel. Built in 1886, the essentially intact church and its immediate surroundings just north of main street Casselton are in excellent condition. Among the most distinctive churches in the state, St. Stephen's is remarkable for its similarities to an Episcopal church in Medway, Massachusetts and the quality of the stonework, especially the unique entry tower with soaring turret. St. Stephen's is a striking and tangible instance of a cultural heritage transplanted to the Plains. As such, it is an important remnant of the state's earliest settlement period, a period largely dominated by easterners and Canadians of English descent.

The nave of the church and the transept are gabled, while the remarkable entry tower (or porch) has a hipped roof. The church was aptly described in 1887 as "a noble building, entirely of stone--even to the tip of the detached turret which overtops the rich tower itself."¹ Unlike some North Dakota examples from the 1880s (Pembina and Lakota, for example), the one story Casselton church does not have wood shingle in the gable ends nor is its tower open and primarily of wood. Local split fieldstone, roughly dressed and expertly laid up, is the wall material. While tan granite and sandstones dominate, very dark grey, grey, and pink stones are also in evidence. The stonework is particularly well executed for the pointed arches of entries, bell tower, and numerous windows, also the round windows, soaring turret (including its roof), and corners of the building. Delicate ironwork (cross and cresting) highlights the tower and its turret and contrasts with the boldness of the stone.

St. Stephen's Church displays elements which are characteristic of Episcopal churches in the state, including numerous stained or colored glass windows (15), stone-bearing walls, and buttresses. The textures of the heavy leading and delicate window glass contrast effectively with the natural roughness of the stone, thus calling attention to the "honesty" of the materials. Windows (which have original wood storms) seem to be punched into the stone, further emphasizing the organic and natural appearance of

¹1887 Journal of Convocation, p. 30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 7. Description Page 2

the material. Staunch stone buttresses extend approximately two feet from the wall surface and alternate with pointed arch windows along the nave sides. On the main facade the corners are extended in the manner of buttresses for both the nave and tower entry, imparting a feeling of solidity and strength. (See photos 1 and 2.)

The plan of St. Stephen's Church (approximately 21x63') is properly asymmetric. Off the basic rectangle of the nave are the detached towered entry at the northwest corner, an offset chancel on the east, and a transept consisting of an organ loft to the north and vestry to the south. The siting reflected the traditional practice of placing the chancel toward the rising sun, although the entry porch is not on the traditional south side. The corner lot, which faces north and west, may have been responsible for this departure.

Interior arrangement and details continue the liturgically correct Gothic Revival design of the exterior. Important defining features are the scissor-beam wood trusses and the narrow-board wood ceiling. The framing is similar to that of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Lisbon (1886), as are the plaster pointed arch and round wood columns which frame the chancel. A simple wood chancel rail (and step) divides the lower areas of the chancel from the altar space, and there is also a communion or altar rail and another step. The arrangement clearly points out the importance of the chancel and, within it, the most sacred of spaces, the altar.

Interior details are relatively simple. Ten rows of original wood pews (pine or fire) have inset panels and beveled corners as do the double doors between tower and nave. Wood wainscoting is located along the nave walls below the windows.

Alterations are minor and acceptable. Although the use of wood shingles for the roof is appropriate, the shingles are thicker and have a more rugged texture than the originals. Three replacement ceiling lights have fans and are of suitable design and scale. The organ tgranscept was walled off at an unknown date, and the ceiling lowered. Over the years portions of the masonry have been re-done, including the use of grey (rather than original pinkish) mortar in 1980; these joints are thicker than the original. To increase space and provide classrooms, indoor plumbing and modern heating, members of the present Mennonite congregation painstakingly excavated a basement under the nave, and stairs to it have been discretely placed at the back of the nave. The two-year project began in 1957.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 7. Description Page 3

St. Stephen's Church enjoys a corner site located three blocks north of the main street of Casselton. The lot is ample and contains a number of tall shade trees. The surroundings are primarily older residential. Immediately south of St. Stephen's is a brick Catholic church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 8. Statement of Significance Page 4

One of the most distinctive churches in North Dakota, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Casselton is a significant example related to the multiple property submission, context, and property type, Episcopal Churches of North Dakota, 1872-1920s. Because of its unique appearance and materials (Criterion C) and its associations with George Cass, the Northern Pacific Railroad and early settlement, it is of statewide significance. Examples of this distinctive building type are unsurpassed in terms of unity of design, style, materials, and craft in North Dakota and comprise a significant architectural body of work. The building is significant under Criterion C (architecture), for it embodies the Gothic Revival Style. As such, the church illustrates principles of the Episcopal Ecclesiological movement. The circumstances behind its design and construction illustrate the use of older Episcopal or Anglican churches as direct design inspiration and also easterners' donations to the home missionary movement. The church is also significant under Criterion A in the area of exploration/settlement, for it is an important remnant of the state's earliest settlement period along the pivotal Northern Pacific Railroad. St. Stephen's is a remarkable and tangible representation of a cultural heritage transplanted to the Plains. Still used as a religious property, it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction (Criteria) Consideration A). Built in 1886, St. Stephen's Church displays the key defining design elements listed under the registration requirements (side porch, steeply pitched roof, pointed arch openings, asymmetry, honest use of materials, chancel design). The period of significance for Criterion C, 1886, covers when the church was built. The period of significance for Criterion A is 1886-97 and begins when the church was constructed during the first Dakota Boom (which began in 1878) and ends in 1897 with the close of this initial intense period of settlement.

The history of Casselton and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church are intertwined with an important individual who helped foster the long-sought Dakota Boom in the 1880s, General George W. Cass. Cass, an Ohio-born civil engineer and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, was involved in railroad construction and development beginning in the 1840s. He served as president of the re-organized Northern Pacific Railroad from 1872-75.² Because of his interest in that railroad, he worked to promote settlement along the line by

²Johnson and Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, II: 561-2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 8. Statement of Significance Page 5

experimenting with agricultural practices in the Plains. Cass and Peter B. Cheney, a director of the railroad, established near Casselton the first bonanza farm in the state.³ When the railroad reached Casselton in the late 1870s, it was platted and named for General Cass. Few lived in the new town in the 1870s--the population reached 15 in 1877--but by 1882 there were reportedly 1,200 Casseltonians (and 1,365 in 1885).⁴

According to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, General Cass "was generous and he gave very largely to his church and to charities." Among those donations was St. Stephen's Episcopal Church located in his namesake town. In September of 1885 Cass donated two lots "for the use and benefit" of an Episcopal Church in Casselton. Construction began, apparently the following spring, using fieldstone from the Buffalo area just 15 miles west of Casselton on the Northern Pacific. At the end of July 1886, the Bishop of North Dakota officiated at cornerstone-laying ceremonies, assisted by the Masons. The local newspaper lamented that 77-year-old Cass, the "generous donor of this building," could not be present.⁵

The circumstances behind the funding and construction of the church illustrated the intense interest among some easterners in donating funds intended to "save the West" as part of the home missionary movement. "...the church edifice with its grounds, furniture and fixtures, all complete, was a donation by Gen. Geo. W. Cass." St. Stephen's was planned and built despite the absence of a congregation in Casselton. The church was essentially completed the summer of 1887. Since it was free of debt, it was formally consecrated, on August 30, 1887. There were but eight communicants (members in good standing), hardly sufficient to maintain the church. Early in 1888 the congregation was organized and a rector was named, the Rev. William C. Maguire. It is possible that all work was not completed at its consecration, for a Minnesota stonemason,

³The nearby Cass-Cheney Bonanza farm, best known as the Oliver Dalrymple farm, exists today, but lacks any integrity of historic properties associated with the farm.

⁴*Souvenir Book. Casselton Diamond Jubilee, June 16-17, 1954; Casselton Centennial, 1879-1979; June 28-July 1.*

⁵Abstract of Title for church lots; "St. Stephens Church," *Casselton Reporter*, July 24, 1886; *Casselton Centennial*. Cass died March 21, 1888, and it does not appear that he ever visited the church in Casselton.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 8. Statement of Significance Page 6

Nathanial McConachie, was reported to have come to Casselton to complete or repair work on the steeple in August of 1888. McConachie worked on other stone churches in the region, and the high quality of the stonework at St. Stephen's is likely his work.⁶

The Bishop's report for 1887 on the church and its consecration revealed attitudes toward its design and an awareness of the features of liturgically correct Gothic Revival churches:

This church is the most beautiful and the costliest in this missionary jurisdiction. Its chaste and rich interior, its handsome stone tower, its good stained glass, its pure architecture make it a fitting temple for our savior's honor. It has been erected for the glory of God and in memory of two departed sons, by this generous Christian layman [Cass].⁷

A single specific design source for St. Stephen's Church is difficult to assign, and it appears more accurate to parcel responsibility among several bodies. The similarity between St. Stephen's in North Dakota and Christ Church in Massachusetts designed by Stephen Earle is clear, as discussed and illustrated in the multiple property submission, and Cooley was clearly involved at some level. There are contemporary references to Father Cooley's participation in church construction in North Dakota. For example, it was "under the Rev. Mr. Cooley's management [that] the foundation was laid" for St. Stephen's.⁸ It appears that Cooley brought the plans for Christ Church with him to North Dakota, either in his memory or on paper, and his efforts must be seen as an important design inspiration. The role of the Church Building Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota has not been precisely determined, but the committee was active in the 1880s and its members included Cooley, Bishop Walker, and architect George Hancock, all of whom were conversant in Ecclesiologically correct

⁶*The North Dakota Churchman*, September 1, 1887 and January 1, 1888; *Perham [Minnesota] Enterprise*, August 3, 1888. A January 1903 account in *The North Dakota Sheaf* contains a number of errors: that the cornerstone was laid in 1884, that the building was consecrated in 1885, that Hancock Brothers were the architects, that Cass's middle initial was S., that he founded Cass County and Casselton.

⁷*The North Dakota Churchman*, February 1, 1888.

⁸*The North Dakota Churchman*, September 1, 1887.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 8. Statement of Significance Page 7

Gothic Revival church design. As an architect, and an English-born one at that, Hancock likely played a role in interpreting the Medway, Massachusetts design for the Casselton church. He acted as the superintending architect for the project; church pews are stamped with instructions directing that they be sent to him.

Contemporary accounts repeatedly asserted that Grace Church in Jamestown "was built from the drawing of Mr. Hancock of Fargo, who used as a model Christ Church, Medway, Mass." That statement could be applied to St. Stephen's as well. In sum, the design sources for St. Stephen's are varied and collective; responsibility should not be assigned to one person.⁹

From its establishment as a congregation in 1888, St. Stephen's continued to struggle. Permanent rectors were difficult to find, and between 1888 and 1900 five men filled the position. A lay reader typically filled in during the periods without a minister in charge. By 1943 there was no congregation, and the building stood vacant until 1951 when the Casselton Mennonite Church purchased the church. The Mennonite congregation continues to own and care for the church.

⁹The *Casselton Centennial* gives credit for the church design to noted architect Cass Gilbert, who did design an Episcopal church in nearby Moorehead, Minnesota. A 1979 thesis by Patricia A. Murphy, "The Early Career of Cass Gilbert: 1878 to 1895" uses detailed Gilbert records and makes no mention of the Casselton church. Gilbert did obtain commissions from the Northern Pacific Railroad and may have been related to General Cass, but it does not appear he designed the church in Casselton. Indeed, misinformation abounds regarding the church. It has been erroneously stated that the church was a "replica" of General Cass' boyhood church in New York, yet he was born and raised in Ohio but was living in New York in the 1880s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 9. Major Bibliographical References Page 8

Long, Barbara Beving. Episcopal Churches of North Dakota. Multiple properties submission, 1992.

●Wilkins, Robert and Wynona. *God Giveth the Increase. The History of the Episcopal Church in North Dakota.* Fargo: ND Institute for Regional Studies, 1959.

●"St. Stephen's Church." *Casselton Reporter*, July 24, 1886.

●"Casselton." *The North Dakota Churchman*, September 1, 1887.

●Item regarding "St. Steven's [sic] Church." *The North Dakota Churchman*, January 1, 1888.

●Fourth Annual Report of the Missionary Bishop of North Dakota. *The North Dakota Churchman*, February 1, 1888.

●*Casselton Centennial, 1879-1979: June 28-July 1.* [Casselton: n.p., 1979.]

●Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Casselton, North Dakota. 1904.

●Abstract of Title, Lots No. 11 and 12 of Block 30 of Bostwick's Addition to Casselton. Location: SHSND Archives #46201410.

●*Souvenir Book. Casselton Diamond Jubilee, June 16-17, 1954.* Location: UND-Institute for Regional Studies.

●"St. Stephen's, Casselton." *The North Dakota Sheaf*, January 1903, pp. 4-5. Contains a number of errors.

●Johnson, Allen and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. II. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929 and 1930. Entry for George Washington Cass: II: 561-2.

●Schrock, Dellis. *Casselton Mennonite Church, 1928-1988.* Location: SHPO files.

●Dahl, Curtis. *Stephen C. Earle, Architect. Shaping Worcester's Image.* Well illustrated exhibit catalog and monograph, Worcester Heritage Preservation Society, no date.

●Telephone conversation with the Rev. Edwin Pease, Christ Church, Medway, Massachusetts, January 25, 1992. The Rev. Pease kindly sent important documents, including the Dahl work and photographs.

●*The History of Medway, Massachusetts.* 1976. Photocopy of portion regarding Christ Church. Location: SHPO files.

●Murphy, Patricia A. "The Early Career of Cass Gilbert: 1878 to 1895. Master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1979.

●Diocese of North Dakota. Records. SHSND Archives #4600102.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass County, ND

Section number 10. Geographical Data Page 9

Verbal Boundary Description

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church occupies lots 11 and 12, block 30, Bostwick's Addition, in Casselton, North Dakota.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lots that have historically been part of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cass Co., ND

Section number PHOTOGRAPHS Page 10

•Photographer for all views: BJB Long

•Location of negatives for all views: State Historical Society of
North Dakota, Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation

•Date of photographs for all views: July 1991

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Cass County, ND:

1. West and north facades (view to SE)
2. East facade (view to west)
3. East and south facades (view to NW)
4. South facade (view to north)
5. South and west facades (view to NE)