

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 18 1988

date entered MAY 19 1988

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic First Church of Christ Scientist

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 222 Blue Earth Ave. E. N/A not for publication

city, town Fairmont N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 (MN) county Martin code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Church of Christ

street & number 222 Blue Earth Ave. E.

city, town Fairmont N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56031

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Martin County Courthouse

street & number Lake Avenue

city, town Fairmont state Minnesota 56031

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985-1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First Church of Christ Scientist is located at the southwest corner of Blue Earth Avenue and Elm Street in Fairmont, Minnesota. The church stands in a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood on one of the city's major thoroughfares, two blocks east of downtown.

The First Church of Christ Scientist, built in 1898, is an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The church was designed by prominent Minneapolis architect Harry W. Jones, apparently with assistance from parishioner Frank E. Wade of Sheldon, Iowa. The 45' by 65' building was constructed of massive rockfaced Sioux quartzite blocks which were quarried near Pipestone. The red stone was combined with contrasting buff colored rockfaced limestone for a polychromatic effect. The nearly square building has a steep hipped roof with short intersecting gables on the north, west, and east facades. Within each gable is a group of three small rounded arched stained glass windows. The gable on the main (north) facade has stone piers flanking the windows and a date stone at the top. Beneath this gable is the main entrance to the church, recessed behind a pointed arched with buff colored stone voussoir. The double main entrance doors are set beneath a rounded arched stained glass transom within the entrance alcove. Flanking the main entrance, and repeated on the side and rear walls, are pairs of tall rounded arched windows filled with stained glass. The church is further ornamented with square stone piers which project above the corners of the building, heavy corbels at the eaves, and a contrasting stone watertable, foundation, and belt courses at the sill and springing block levels. The building has a tall brick chimney rising above the west side wall.

The First Church of Christ Scientist is basically intact and in fair condition. Minor alterations have included reroofing with asphalt shingles, constructing an unobtrusive woodframe entrance shed on the east facade, filling the rear windows with wood, and remodelling the interior, all done at an undetermined date.

This nomination includes one contributing building.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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 1898 **Builder/Architect** Harry W. Jones, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Church of Christ Scientist, built in 1898 in Fairmont, Minnesota, is architecturally significant as a striking Richardsonian Romanesque-inspired church designed by prominent Minneapolis architect Harry W. Jones. The church is historically significant as the local home of a religious sect whose doctrine and social composition contributed an unusual element to traditional Catholic and Protestant-dominated religious activity in Fairmont.

Christian Science, which was founded in 1875-79 in Boston by 58 year old Mary Baker Eddy, is one of few major religious demoninations which are native to the United States. Mrs. Eddy's teachings emphasized what she called primitive Christianity, with an emphasis on the healing of sickness through spiritual understanding. She taught that sin was an illusion which could be overcome through knowledge, and that the trinity, the devil, the resurrection, heaven, and hell did not exist. Christian Science developed during the late nineteenth century within an unusual climate of esoteric spiritual and religious exploration occurring outside of the bounds of traditional Catholic and Protestant doctrine. During the years between 1870 and 1920, interest in the occult, spiritism, mysticism, astrology, theosophy, homeopathy, and other non-traditional spiritual movements flourished in Western Europe and the U. S., particularly among the wealthy middle and upper classes and usually in urban areas.

Christian Science was brought to the village of Fairmont in 1888 when Mrs. Phoebe L. Haines (who lived in northern Iowa a few miles south of Fairmont) healed one of the town's most prominent residents, Valentine Wohlheter, of an incurable illness. Mrs. Haines also cured several members of the Fairmont's prominent Wade family, spurring a group of wealthy residents to form a Christian Science study group, led by Mrs. Haines, which first met at the Edward F. Wade residence. The group, comprised of 31 members from Fairmont and surrounding communities, also established a Christian Science Dispensary and circulated Christian Science literature throughout the community. In October of 1891 the First Church of Christ Scientist was organized with Mrs. Haines as its first leader.

The existence of a Christian Science group in a town the size of Fairmont (1900 population of 1205) only ten years after its emergence as a national sect is unusual, and certainly offered a radical departure from the more traditional Lutheran, Catholic, and Episcopal groups which dominated religious life in Fairmont at the time. Following the national trend, the group which began studying Christian Science in Fairmont in the 1880's was comprised of the community's "upper crust" of wealthy families of Yankee and English background.

The group's First Church of Christ Scientist was constructed during the summer of 1898. The building was designed by prominent Minneapolis architect Harry W. Jones, who apparently collaborated with church member Frank E. Wade of Sheldon, Iowa. Fred Grupe of Sherburn, Minnesota, was one of the building contractors. The church, which cost \$9,150 to build, was completed in late 1898 and dedicated on May 20, 1900. Its heavy

(See Continuation Sheet)

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Continuation sheet First Church of
Christ Scientist

Item number 8

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rockfaced stone massing, rounded arched window openings, and lack of applied ornamentation combined to make it an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. When it was completed the church was one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings in Fairmont. The Christian Scientists used the church until 1937 when they constructed a new building. The stone church was then occupied by the Christian Church of Fairmont.

The architect involved in the design of the church was Michigan-born Harry W. Jones (1859-1935) who graduated from Brown University and studied architecture at M. I. T. and in Europe from 1880-1882. In 1883 Jones worked in Boston for Henry H. Richardson (for whom the Richardsonian Romanesque style was named), an experience which obviously influenced his design for the Fairmont church. Jones began practicing in Minneapolis in 1884 and taught architecture at the University of Minnesota from 1891-93 and 1900-1902. He was 39 when construction of the Fairmont church began. During his many decades of practice in the Midwest, Jones designed a number of houses, churches, warehouses, and commercial buildings. Among his best known buildings are the Butler Building (now Butler Square), the Washburn Park Water Tower, and the Lakewood Cemetary Chapel, all in Minneapolis, and the Northfield State Bank in Northfield, Minnesota.

The First Church of Christ Scientist was included in an historic sites survey of Martin County conducted recently by the State Historic Preservation Office. The survey staff determined that the church is one of the most architecturally distinctive churches in southwestern Minnesota and represents an unusually good and locally rare example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style in outstate Minnesota. The church fits within the State Historic Preservation Office's "Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction" historic context. Built as Martin County's railroad network was just being completed, the church represents an interesting component of the social and religious development of Fairmont during this period, as well as an example of the import into a small southern Minnesota community of Twin Cities architectural talent.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ballou, Ellis E. "Christian Science Church May Receive Bequest." Minnesota Centennial, 1858-1958. Fairmont Sentinel, 1958.
 "Church Dedication." Martin County Independent, May 24, 1900.
 Mathison, Richard R. Faiths, Cults, and Sects of America. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1960.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre.

Quadrangle name Fairmont Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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3	8	2	3	1	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4, Block 4, Webster and Johnston's Addition to the Village of Fairmont. The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger/Contract Historian

organization State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society

date February 1986

street & number Fort Snelling History Center

telephone (612) 726-1171

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

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

Nina M. Archabal

title Nina M. Archabal

State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/8/88

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Selores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 5-19-88

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration