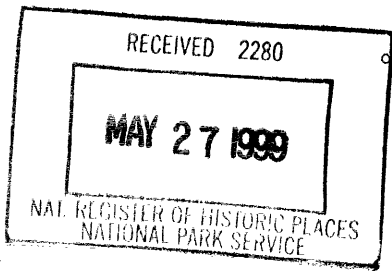


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery

other names/site number Postville Welsh Church & Cemetery (NeHBS PT00-048)

2. Location

street & number Rural Route 2 not for publication [ ]

city or town Monroe vicinity [x]

state Nebraska code NE county Platte code 141 zip code 68647

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Wendell Summer*  
Signature of certifying official

5/24/99  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
  - entered in the National Register.
    - 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*

6/25/99

*for*  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
3		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instruction)

**RELIGION: Religious Facility**  
**SOCIAL: Meeting Hall**  
**FUNERARY: Cemetery**

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**OTHER: Social Meeting Place**

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**OTHER: one room, no style**

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foundation **stone, brick**  
walls **wood clapboard**

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roof **wood shingle**  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

#### SETTLEMENT

**ETHNIC HERITAGE: European**

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#### Period of Significance

**1884-1949**

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#### Significant Dates

**1884**

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#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**N/A**

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#### Cultural Affiliation

**N/A**

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#### Architect/Builder

**Evans, W.W. and L.E.**

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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 for Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_
-

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 2

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	615060	4605700	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Melissa Dirr and Robert Parry  
 organization NSHS and Postville Welsh Church date April 1999  
 street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402.471.4787  
 city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery  
 street & number Rural Route 2 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 city or town Monroe state NE zip code 68647

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery  
Name of Property

Platte County, Nebraska  
County and State

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**DESCRIPTION**

The First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and Cemetery is located in rural Platte County, Nebraska in the central and eastern part of the state. The 34' x 24' one room wood frame building has a gable roof and is located on a two acre lot. The setting of the area is defined by rolling hills and open fields. Built in 1884 the simple building with minimal ornamentation rises from a stone and brick foundation and retains a high degree of historic integrity.

The former village of Postville is located in eastern-central Nebraska in Platte County. The geography of the area is diverse with the Platte River and its low-lands and valleys providing the southern boundary of the county, rolling hills primarily carved from glacial till on the easternmost side of the county, and dissected plains of steep slopes and drop-offs encompassing the western part of the county. It was in this area in the 1860's where a settlement of Welsh people gathered on the west bank of the Shell Creek in section 23 in Joliet Township and built their church.

The church has a rectangular floorplan measuring 34 by 24 feet with an eight by eight-foot entry vestibule that faces east. Much resembling a one-room school house the primary identifying features of this building as a church are the double wood doors in the entry vestibule and the only exterior ornament of fishscale shingle work in the gable of the vestibule. The words "Postville Welsh Church, 1884" are painted on the glass transom above the entry doors. Three double hung four over four windows punctuate the north and south facades and allow for the only interior illumination as the building has never had electrical services installed. The west facade retains a brick chimney with no other details.

The interior reveals stunningly simple details placing the church within the stark ideals of a Calvinistic faith. There is no typical religious iconography or symbolism. Upon entering through the double-doored vestibule, the church reveals its single room plan with wide plank pine flooring. Seating includes groups of three wooden chairs that are connected by wood planks to form a sort of bench. The fifteen foot high ceiling is covered with pressed metal. Where the apse or an altar would be located is an elevated eight foot wide platform where the armed minister chair, a book case, the pedaled organ and two smaller chairs were located. Significant to the interior are the ornamental painted plaster panels which are outlined in each wall section between the windows and behind the elevated platform. These panels provide the most significant ornamental feature of the church. Above the platform and at the top of the panels are illustrations of Biblical pages and the tablets of the ten commandments.

Changes to the building over time have been minimal. The front stairs have been rebuilt since its original construction but retain the spirit of the original stair. The original plan of the building consisted of two interior chimneys and two wood burning stoves for heat. Some unknown time later, but within the historic period, the two chimneys were removed and one outside chimney was centered on the west wall. The church was then heated with one large wood burning stove located toward the rear of the building. Six oil lamps were mounted on each of the six windows to light the church. In 1991 the old wooden shingles were removed and replaced with new wooden shingles.

The church resides on a lot of approximately two acres. The building faces east, is surrounded by a chain link fence and is oriented toward the road. A cemetery occupies the remaining ground behind the church. Old stones are mixed in with new and many family names recall the current membership as well as the original founders of the church congregation. Mature conifer type trees are scattered throughout the lot and in the far northwest corner of the property is the original outhouse. Overall, the First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and Cemetery retains a high degree of historic integrity, is a first-rate representation of a very simple building type, and is the only remaining illustration of the small community of Postville.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation SheetFirst Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery

Name of Property

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## SIGNIFICANCE

The First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and Cemetery, later known as the Postville Welsh Church is significant under criterion A for its long association with the Welsh settlement and community in Platte County, Nebraska in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since its construction in 1884 it has been in continuous use as a gathering place for church and community services, and remains today as the only example of this small settlement. Criteria consideration A for religious properties also applies to the Postville Church, however the church conveys its significance for the early Welsh settlement as the only remaining gathering place of the Welsh community in Platte County. The period of significance of the Church and Cemetery, 1884-1949, is derived from the construction date of the church through 1949, the established fifty year termination date. This nomination includes the church, an outhouse, and the historically associated cemetery. The church is still used by the descendants of the original Welsh settlers for funerals and other small gatherings.

The former village of Postville is located in eastern-central Nebraska in Platte County. The geography of the area is diverse with the Platte River and its low-lands and valleys providing the southern boundary of the county, rolling hills primarily carved from glacial till on the easternmost side of the county, and dissected plains of steep slopes and drop-offs encompassing the western part of the county. It was in this area in the 1860's where a settlement of Welsh people congregated to form the community of Postville. Their official and governmental organization began with establishing a post office.

Prior to 1873 the U.S. Post Office that served this area was located in Wolf, Nebraska, three miles east of the Postville settlement. It was on the land of F. B. Wolf on the east side of the Shell Creek. Shell Creek carried a large volume of water at this time and the banks were very steep. One of the most well traveled roads was on the west side of the Creek and the Welsh had already established a school there in 1874. Founder John Elliott believed the Welsh community was the most ideal place for the post office, and made a formal request to the U.S. Post Office Department on September 26, 1878 to move the Wolf, Nebraska Post Office to the Welsh community. This would shorten the mail route by three miles and locate it on a direct route between Columbus, Nebraska to the south and Lindsay, Nebraska to the North. On October 17, 1878, the Wolf Post Office was moved and John Elliott became the first Postmaster of the Postville, Nebraska Post Office. Elliott also chose the name Postville after his good friend Alfred M. Post who lived in neighboring Columbus, and was a well known lawyer who served six years on the Nebraska Supreme Court. Mr. Post is buried in the church cemetery.

The Postville community eventually grew with numerous farms, a school, post office, the church and even some accounts of an orphanage. The Postville School was built in 1874 and later became District 31. It was located in the middle of section 23, near the church, but as section line roads began to take the place of the trails and ruts that lead to people's farms, the school had to be relocated twice. In 1885 Robert and Ann Lewis transferred one acre for the school house and in 1890 Thomas and Sara Jones transferred one acre to move the school one-half mile outside the lines of the new grid pattern roads. The school remained active until it was closed in 1970. Currently the old school building has been moved onto a neighboring farm and is being used for hay storage. One brief historical account mentions the Park Hill Orphanage was operating at Postville in 1886; however, no additional details concerning this institution have been found.

As the settlement grew, the inhabitant's spiritual and community needs were recognized, and on December 6, 1881 Elias Hughes and John Edwards formed the Articles of Association By-Laws and Constitution of the First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church at Postville. After filing was completed on December 14, 1881 the church was an official institution. On July 10, 1884 David and Mary Thomas deeded two acres of land to the church for a cemetery and building site. According to a board found in the attic of the church, the building was completed in 1884 and built by W.W. and L.E. Evans.

Although the Welsh population was stable with neighboring farms, school, and church, the post office was short lived and on September 30, 1902 Postville lost its post office to Monroe, Nebraska a neighboring town where the institution remains today. It may be no coincidence that the first written records of the church other than their association articles begin in the same year. The Welsh community registered in the church was recorded at 42 when these records began with a peak population of 45 in 1910. Even without its post office, the community stabilized and continued improvements

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Continuation Sheet

First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery

Name of Property

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in the church. These included the purchase of an organ in 1905, the formation of the Ladies Aid, and hosting the 1920 Quarterly Presbyterian Synod meeting. The Synod meeting was undoubtedly one of the historical highlights of the community with tents for food preparation and housing erected on the church grounds to house all the visiting dignitaries.

Between the years of 1902 and 1922 services were held regularly at the church. A change occurred in 1914 when the original Methodist organization was changed to Presbyterian to better meet the organizational needs of the congregation. It was after this change and between the years 1914 and 1922 when the church was most active. It hosted many visiting ministers, community socials, and involved many young people in weekly events. After 1922, the regular pastor left the church and regular services ceased at that time. Special events like baptisms, marriages and funerals were held in the building and occasional services were provided by visiting ministers from neighboring towns. However, regular Sunday school programs were active well into the 1960's.

Two highlights of the community's history were the Presbyterian Quarterly Synod meeting in 1920, and the funeral of Sergeant Robert O. Parry who lost his life during World War I, and is buried in the cemetery. Parry lost his life in France in 1918 during the battle of Argonne Forest. His funeral did not take place until September 1919 when his body was returned to the community. News accounts indicate that nearly 2,000 people attended the service with more than 240 automobiles.

With the lack of regular services at Postville the Presbyterian Synod decided to divest themselves of the building. The church was saved by its members when they discovered the building was never legally deeded to the Presbyterian Synod. So after this threat in 1948, the members withdrew from the Synod, paid no further dues and the church became known simply as the Postville Welsh Church.

The church has been continually cared for and governed by the families who are descendants of the original founders of the community and the congregation. When it was built in 1884 it was a place where the Welsh community could go to pray, socialize as a community, and bury their loved ones. Today the church is the sole remnant of Postville. The cemetery bears the names of the original founders and the families that continue to maintain the property.

CRITERIA EVALUATION

The church is locally significant under criterion A for its contribution to the Welsh settlement in this area and as a gathering place for the local Welsh community. It remains the only extant building from a small but concentrated community. Criteria consideration A also applies to this building because it represents a religious institution. However, the church is significant for other than its religious purpose. The Postville Church is a representative of the Welsh settlement, and illustrates the broad impact a religious or community building may have on the history, settlement, and organization of local communities. Though not in regular use today, the building conveys its significance to the community through simple architectural form and lack of ecclesiastical detailing. This simplicity relates well to the somewhat somber Calvinistic beliefs. The Postville Church retains a high degree of historic integrity, and is the only historical physical manifestation of the Welsh community in Howard County. The cemetery is also considered a contributing site to this nomination. It has been historically associated with the church and in fact helped determine the site of the building from the earliest graves. Most of the founders of the church are buried in the cemetery.

Overall, the First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and Cemetery retains a high degree of historic integrity, is significant under criterion A, and is the only remaining illustration of the small community of Postville.

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First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church & Cemetery  
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Church records, unpublished books.

Curry, Margaret. The History of Platte County, Nebraska. Murray and Gee, Culver City, CA, 1950.

Guenther, Richard L. *A History of the Welsh Community of Carroll, Nebraska*. Nebraska History, September 1965.

Platte County Deed Records.

The Welsh Quarterly, unpublished newsletter, various series, Nebraska State Historical Society Files.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The First Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and Cemetery is located in Joliet Township, Platte County in the northeast ¼ of section 26 in township 19 north, range 3 west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the church and cemetery reside on the lot historically associated with them.