

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000567

Date Listed: 6/2/94

Property Name: St. Scholastica Catholic Church

County: Sanborn State: South Dakota

none
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

June 2, 1994
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Significance

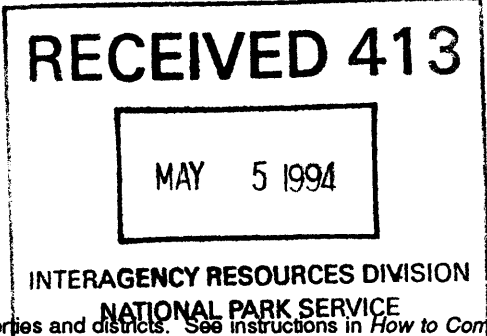
Criterion consideration A is hereby entered to indicate that the building was built and used by a religious institution during its period of significance.

"1924" is hereby removed as a significant date since it lies outside the period of significance.

Melissa Dirr, National Register coordinator for the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on June 2, 1994.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 an 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 (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Scholastica Catholic Church

Other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: RR not for publication

City or town: Letcher vicinity

State: South Dakota Code: SD County: Sanborn Code: 111 Zip code: 57359

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] SD 5470 4/20/94
 Signature and title of certifying official Date

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 the Keeper Date of Action

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Ronda McVellard 6/2/94

St. Scholastica Catholic Church
Name of Property

Sanborn, SD
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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 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.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1900

Significant Dates

1900 (construction)

1924 (tornado)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

St. Scholastica Catholic Church
Name of Property

Sanborn, SD
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| <u>1</u> | | 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)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS
Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation Poured Concrete
walls Wood Clapboard

roof Asphalt Shingles
other brick (chimney)

Narrative Description

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

St. Scholastica Catholic Church
Name of Property

Sanborn, SD
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 114 151619141210 1481610151010 2
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
3 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: Bobby and Rene Pruitt with tech assistance from SHPC staff
Organization: N/A Date: 3/24/94
Street & Number: p.o. Box 96 Telephone: (605) 996-6140
City or Town: Letcher State: SD Zip code: 57359

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

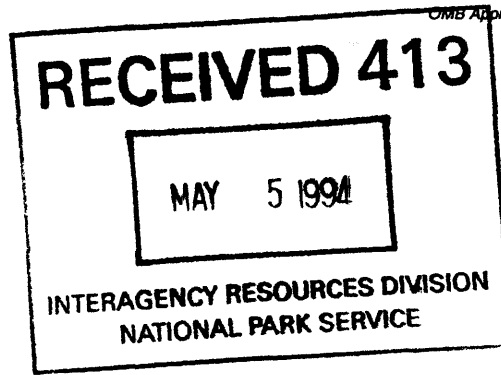
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Bobby and Rene Pruitt
Street & Number: P.O. Box 96 Telephone: (605) 996-6140
City or Town: Letcher State: SD Zip code: 57359

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.

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Narrative Description:

The Saint Scholastica Catholic Church is located on the west side of Fourth Street between Wisconsin and State Streets in the town of Letcher, Sanborn County, South Dakota. The building faces east on to Fourth Street and is situated two blocks south of the central business district. The building is cruciform in plan and is of standard balloon frame construction. Stylistically, St. Scholastica can be classified as a vernacular example of Late Gothic Revival architecture. Narrow clapboard walls rest on a high poured concrete foundation which has numerous single pane half windows allowing light into a full basement. The roof is of the front gable type with lower side gables projecting over the transepts. There is also lower gable roof projecting over the apse at the rear of the building

The principal elevation faces Fourth Street to the east. It is dominated by a central square entry tower which rises well above the ridge line. The main entry is located in the east side of the tower and is reached via set of poured concrete steps with feature plain iron railings. The entry features replacement doors which appear to date from the 1960's. The second level of the tower features a large gothic arch window with tripartite tracery and fixed stained glass. This level of the tower is differentiated from the area below by a molded belt cornice. The wall fabric of the tower flares to meet the top of this cornice projection. There is an identical molded belt cornice located above the window. The tower continues to rise above the ridge line. A decorative paneled belt course separates the tower proper from the belfry which features a gothic arched opening on all four elevations. The belfry is capped by another molded cornice which provides a transition to a broached hexagonal spire which features decorative triangular dormers. Immediately to the north of the tower is a small shed-roofed leanto which provides cover for the basement entry. To the south of the tower on the main elevation is a single gothic arch window with double hung 4-over-4 sash.

The south side elevation is dominated by a gable roofed transept. This element which projects from the main body of the building toward the rear of the south side. The transept is dominated by a large gothic window which features tripartite tracery and fixed stained glass. Forward of the transept in the nave wall are three identical gothic arch windows with 4-over-4 double hung sash.

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The north elevation is identical to the south side save for the presence of a shed roofed sacristy located to the rear of the transept. The sacristy features a secondary entry with a modern door and a single gothic arch window with 4-over-4 double hung sash. The entry is achieved via a flight of wooden stairs which is partially protected by an open porch with a simple shed roof.

The rear of the building consists entirely of the back of sacristy and a square gable roofed apse. The apse features two small gothic arch windows with fixed stained glass flanking a narrow brick chimney.

The interior of the building is quite plain. The main entry opens into a small vestibule which leads to the nave via a pair of original paneled doors. To the north of the vestibule are a flight of stairs which communicate to the choir loft above. The Choir loft retains a decorative wooden railing and is supported by two wooden columns. The sanctuary retains simple wood trim in the form of flat window surrounds, baseboards and a chair rail. The original narrow hardwood flooring is exposed and in excellent condition. All other original fixtures and furnishings have been removed.

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Narrative Statement of Significance:

St. Scholastica Catholic Church is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as embodying the distinctive type, period or method of construction. Specifically this building is a well preserved example of vernacular church construction which incorporates elements of the Gothic architectural tradition. St. Scholastica is also an example of the fast disappearing "first generation" of church building in South Dakota. Under the State Historic Preservation Plan it relates to the context labelled IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement (1858-Present), H. Religion.

Background

St. Scholastica is located in the town of Letcher, Sanborn County, South Dakota. Letcher was founded in 1882 by agents of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad and was the first railroad community in what was to become Sanborn County. Letcher enjoyed a brief boom until the loss of the county seat to Woonsocket in 1884. The town grew modestly during the early 20th century reaching a peak population of approximately 300 in 1930. As with most small rural communities in the state, Letcher has seen a gradual decline in both it's population and prosperity since the Great Depression.

The first Catholic services were held in the Letcher School in 1888. Due to the economic and climactic difficulties of the 1890's, however, it was not until 1900 that it was feasible to construct a church building. St. Scholastica achieved parish status, and a resident priest, in 1913. In 1924 a tornado knocked the building from it's foundation. Due once again to difficult economic times, the existing structure was repaired and replaced on its foundation. St Scholastica served the Catholic community of Letcher until it was closed in 1979. It has since been converted into a residence.

Architectural Significance

Stylistically the St. Scholastica Catholic is a well preserved example of a vernacular Gothic church. The use of Gothic idioms in vernacular church design can be traced to the immense popularity of high style Gothic Revival architecture in the middle years of the 19th Century.

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In 1850 the prominent Gothic architect Richard Upjohn created a simple wooden church plan based on the large Gothic church designs of the Upjohn firm. This particular design was widely utilized during the rest of the 19th Century. Moreover, local builders and carpenters began to incorporate Gothic features into local church buildings. Standard church pattern books of the time also touted the use of a Gothic motif. As the 19th Century drew to a close, newer stylistic influences began to influence vernacular church design. Queen Anne, Shingle, and Classical elements all found their way into church construction. The Gothic mode persisted, however, and enjoyed a significant resurgence in the early 20th century. St. Scholastica is an excellent example of this vernacular Gothic tradition carried over to the turn of the 20th century. Its simplified gothic windows, prominent central tower, and broached steeple are all typical elements of wooden gothic architecture.

St. Scholastica is also an increasingly rare example of a "first generation" church. The development of church architecture in South Dakota follows an identifiable progression which applies across most ethnic, sectarian, and regional boundaries. Following initial settlement of an area, religious functions were typically conducted in any convenient space, such as a school house, town hall or private home. As soon as funding and denomination membership would allow, a church building would be erected. These "first generation" structures were typically simple buildings designed and built by local craftsmen and or paritioners. They were almost always of inexpensive wood frame construction and incorporated only minimal stylistic elements. As a parish expanded and as its members prospered, a second edifice would be built. The new "second generation" structure would typically be of masonry construction, be architect designed, and incorporate many elements of current high style architectural taste. In most cases the first generation building would be sold or torn down for scrap. Other factors, such as church consolidation and closure, have also led to the loss of many of the first generation buildings. This process was especially true for the Catholic church which appears to have placed a great emphasis on large parish membership and accordingly large and imposing church buildings. St Scholastica parish never achieved either the membership or the prosperity to replace its original building. Indeed, when presented with a opportunity to do so following the 1924 tornado, the parish could not muster the financial resources to build new and simply repaired their existing building. Thus, while many such structures have been destroyed, St Scholastica remains as an excellent

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example of both it's particular stylistic type and it's broader architectural context.

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Bibliography:

Erpsted, David and David Wood, An Architectural History of South Dakota, unpublished manuscript, South Dakota State Historical Society, (1989)

Brown, Alice and S.S. Judy, Sanborn County History, 1873-1963, published by the authors, (1964)

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The St. Scholastica Church resides on Lot 1 of Block 21, Lawlers and Crennans Addition to the city of Letcher.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the church includes the lot historically associated with the building.