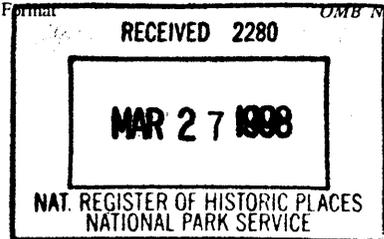


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



380

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" on the appropriate line 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 (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name TRINITY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

other names/site number Trinity United Methodist Church; Trinity Church

2. Location

street & number 1548 8th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Signature of certifying official Patricia Churkin DGMP Date 3-11-98

Signature of certifying official Patricia Churkin Date 3-11-98

State or Federal agency and bureau IOWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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 the property is :
[X] 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 Keeper Edson W. Beall

Date of Action 4.23.98

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

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

Towards a Greater Des Moines (Amended 1997)

0

**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)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other Glass  
Wood

**Narrative Description**

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

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" on one or more lines 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" on all the lines 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1911

**Significant Dates**

1911

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson

**Narrative Statement of Significance** - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**9. Major Bibliography 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):**

- previous determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Record
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 447645 | 4606200 |  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

2 | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

**Boundary Justification**  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

3 | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

4 | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian; Joanne R. Walroth, Project Associate  
organization River Bend Neighborhood Association date May 31, 1997  
street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285  
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313

**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 Trinity United Methodist Church  
street & number 1548 8th Street, Post Office Box 41005 telephone 515-288-4056  
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50311

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

This is a 2-story, brick building completed in 1911 from architectural designs by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, architects of Des Moines. The building rests on a brick foundation and is situated on only one building lot. The integrity of this building is outstanding, having few alterations from the time of its original construction.

**EXTERIOR**

Roughly speaking, the footprint of this church consists of a rectangle, which measures approximately 130' x 82' (width by depth) and which directly abuts the public pedestrian walks. Visually, it possesses two sections, a 2-story section on the west and a 1-story section on the east.

The north facade of the building serves as its primary facade. The building's main entrance, located in the center of the facade, is signaled by an arched doorway, surmounted by a slightly projecting entrance covered with a gable roof. The west wing is conceived as a series of five bays on each of the two stories, surmounted by a simple cornice and plain parapet. The eastern portion of the north facade forms the sanctuary.

More precisely speaking, the footprint of the eastern portion of this building is laid out in a cruciform configuration. Each of the three sides to the cross are delineated projecting from the main block, with small, 2-story stairhouses situated within the ells formed by them. While the north and the south elevations of the church are embellished with a series of four windows on their lower levels and a rose window on their upper level, the east elevation lacks such a rose window. All three of these elevations are surmounted with a cornice of corbels and a parapet situated at a higher elevation than that of the west wing.

This building features a wide variety of brick-worked patterns. For example, each of the rose windows is surrounded on the exterior by brick laid in diagonal patterns within a framework of rectilinear shapes. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.) The east facade provides another example. Here, the smooth surface of the brick wall is accented with brick ends slightly projecting in regular patterns.

The original architects' elevations also included an even wider array of brick-worked patterns. They included panels below and above the west wing's first floor windows and a series of "clip courses" (brick-worked horizontal bands) embellishing the exterior walls. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.) Although these drawings also pictured 8/8 double hung windows for the west wing, 1/1 double hung windows were employed. A tall cross, situated above the dome, was also proposed by the architects. If this decoration were implemented, it was removed before the 1930s. (A similar design idea, implemented on Proudfoot & Bird's First Methodist Church in Des Moines, remains extant today.) Cost probably restricted the implementation of these amenities as proposed by the architect.

The building is covered with a series of gable roofs configured around an octagonal-shaped dome. The gable roof over the west wing contains a skylight. This roof is covered with built-up materials.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

Although the interior and the exterior of the church need some general maintenance, their overall condition is very good.

**INTERIOR**

On the interior, the main floor of Trinity Church, which is situated about one-half story above grade, is divided into three areas. A stair hall is located in the middle of the building. It is accessed from the main entrance to the building on College Avenue. The stair hall contains a set of interior stairs to and from the street, a hallway, and flights of stairs to the second floor and to the basement. The two other areas of the first floor are the sanctuary to the east and classrooms and a parlor to the west.

The sanctuary is the largest room of the church and located on the first floor. The congregation faces to the east and sits in rows of pews slightly curvilinear in their layout. The altar area is situated at the east end of the sanctuary and is flanked on both sides by enclosed stairs to the basement. The sanctuary features stained glass, rose-shaped windows on the north and south elevations and a stained glass dome over the central portion of the sanctuary. The wall finishes are plaster. The pews and other woodwork are built of oak stained in natural finishes, which remain extant. Although the sanctuary was originally embellished with stenciled bands of decorative painting, these features have been subsequently painted over. The balance of the first floor is given over to classrooms and a parlor.

The second floor (or balcony floor, as it is described on the architects' drawing) contains a balcony within the sanctuary and Sunday school rooms in the west wing. When originally built, a portion of the west wing was open between the first and the second floors so that both floors could be used as one auditorium. (Compare Continuation Sheets 7-10 and 7-11.) This design was one variation on the Akron plan for churches. It was subsequently altered at Trinity by flooring the opening between the two floors.

The basement is given over to a large dining room underneath the sanctuary and several other rooms underneath the building's west wing. These rooms include a serving room, kitchens, women's and men's restrooms, a small gymnasium, and the boiler room. The basement features a concrete floor and finished walls. The church office and the pastor's office are located in separate rooms on the east side of the basement. A small corridor is also situated here with a door to the exterior.

When first completed, a local newspaper reported that Trinity Church possessed 26 rooms and "one of the largest pipe organs in the city." (*Register and Leader* 1911)

**PIPE ORGAN**

Trinity Church possesses a pipe organ installed in the church at the time of the building's construction in 1911. This is a small instrument, built along a standardized design by John Hinners of Pekin, Illinois.

The instrument features the following:

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**STOP LIST**

**SWELL (under expression)**

Violin diapason 8'  
Stopped Diapason 8'  
Salicional 8'  
Aeoline 8'  
Voix Celeste 8'  
Oboe 8'  
Flute Harmonic 4'  
Flageolet 2'  
Tremolo

**GREAT**

Dulciana 8'  
Melodia 8'  
Open Diapason 8'  
Flute d'Amour 4'  
Principal 4'  
Viola D'Gamba 8'

**PEDAL**

SubBass 16'  
Swell to Pedal  
Bourdon 16'  
Sw. Bd. Bass 16'  
Sw. Bd. Treble 16'

**COUPLERS**

Great to Pedal  
Swell to Pedal  
Swell to Great  
Swell Octave to Great

Both the console and the pipes of this instrument are located in the front of the sanctuary on its east wall. The console is constructed of oak and retains its original natural finish. The console's pedal boards do not conform to standard American Guild of Organist (AGO) dimensions, the pedals being narrower than standard. The swell and the great keyboards and the foot board feature tracker action. The organist faces the east when seated at the console and can view the congregation from mirrors. A series of exposed pipes are located above the console, arranged in symmetrical order according to length. The rest of the pipes is situated behind these ranks.

This pipe organ remains very much as originally built. It has been maintained over the years and necessary repairs have been made to it, but the instrument itself remains basically unaltered. One of the few alterations concerns the organ's source of power. Originally, a hand-pump bellows supplied the wind for the pipes. A few congregation members can remember boys fulfilling this need during church services. Sometime in the past, an electrical motor was installed to fill the instrument's windchest, and this is usually employed. The hand-pump remains, however, extant.

The acoustics of Trinity Church's sanctuary are very good. The sound of this organ when played in solo resonates in this space. These acoustics also contribute to a rich musical sound during congregational singing and are particularly resonant in the balcony.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**SITE**

This church is situated on Lot 13 of the Official Plat of Fink's Addition Plat No. 2 in the City of Des Moines, Iowa. Lot 13 measures 56.5' x 130' (width by depth). This lot is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of College Avenue and 8th Street. The church stands on the west side of 8th Street. Although its street address is given officially as 1548 8th Street, the main entrance to the building is accessed from College Avenue.

The church is the only improvement on this site. The footprint of the building abuts the pedestrian walks adjacent to College Avenue and 8th Street. This edifice gives the overall impression that it occupies its entire site, although the city lot on which it is situated possesses a narrow strip of vacant land on the south side and a portion on the west side of the building.

The immediate surroundings of the church are generally level in topography with an upward undulation of land to the west. Moulton Elementary School and playground is situated across 8th Street to the east, and 6th Avenue is situated two blocks to the east. College Avenue is a collector street for motorists within the neighborhood and serves as an east-west link for some cross-town traffic.

The presence of Moulton School and Trinity Church notwithstanding, the feeling of this area is residential. The William A. and Etta Baum Cottage (NRHP) is located two doors north of Trinity Church at 1604 8th Street and the Julius Scheibe Cottage (nominated to the NRHP within this MPL) is located diagonally across the street from the church at 815 College Avenue.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

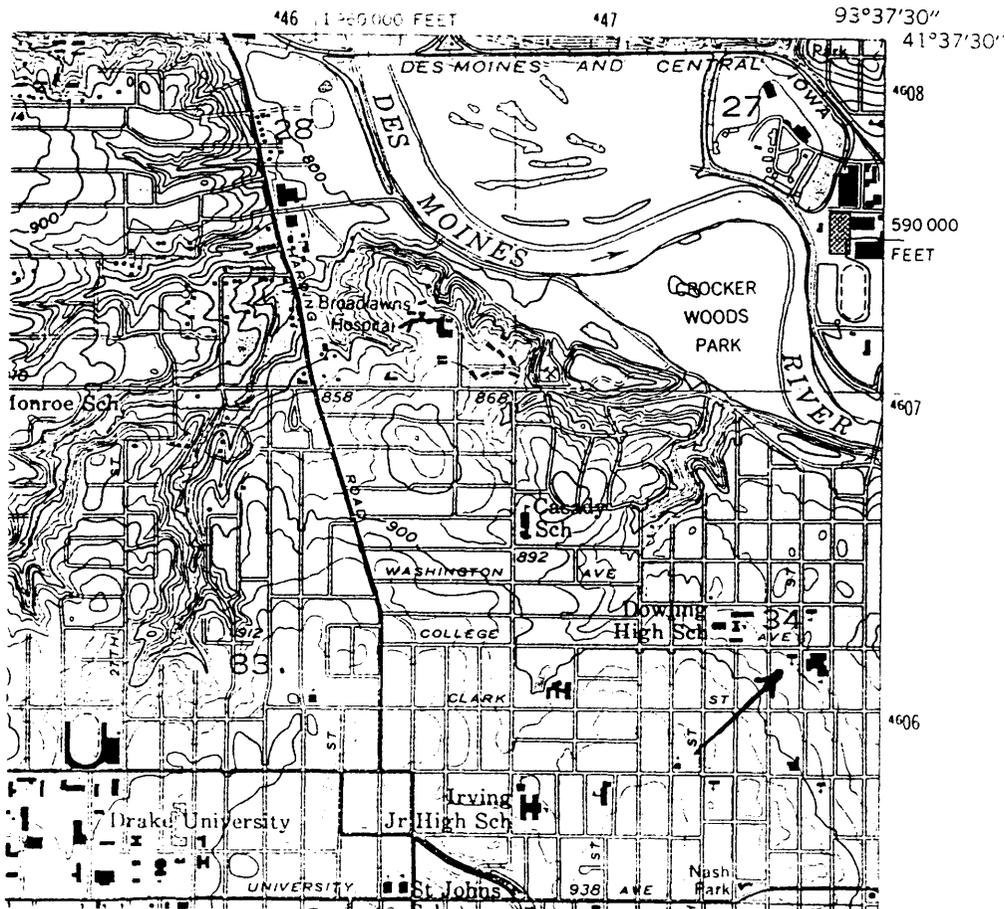
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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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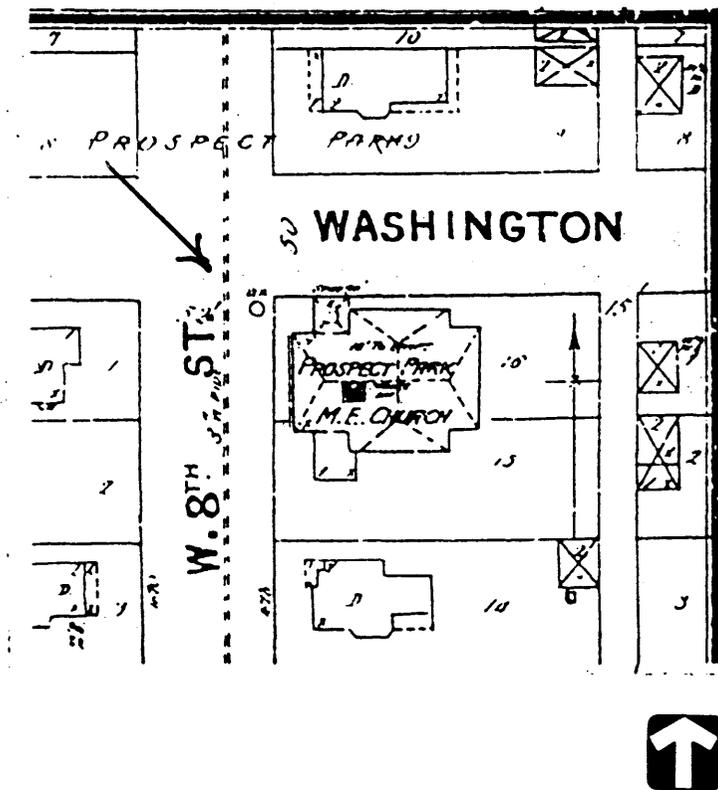
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CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1891 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES ORIGINAL BUILDING AT 8TH AND WASHINGTON



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

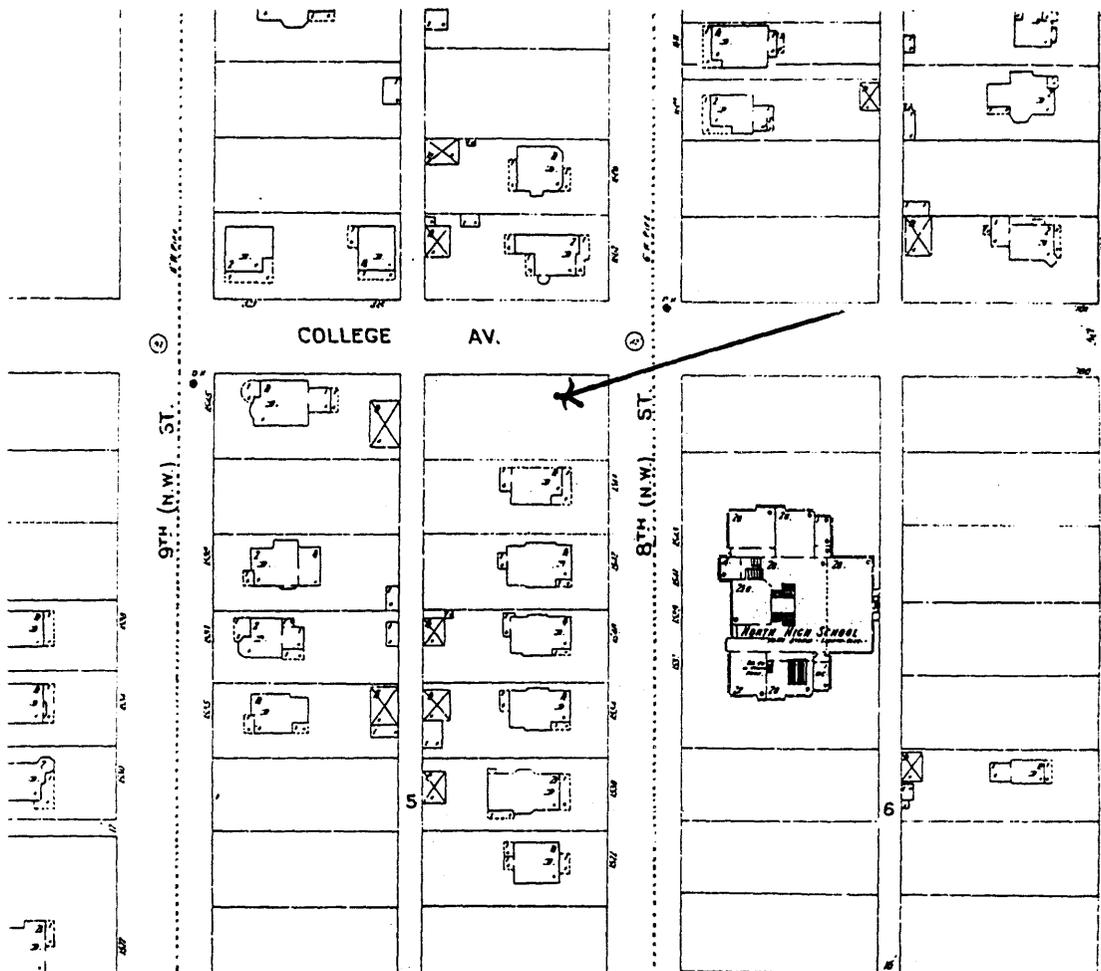
Section number 7 Page 7

CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1901 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES UNIMPROVED SITE



Source: Sanborn Map Company, Des Moines, 1901.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

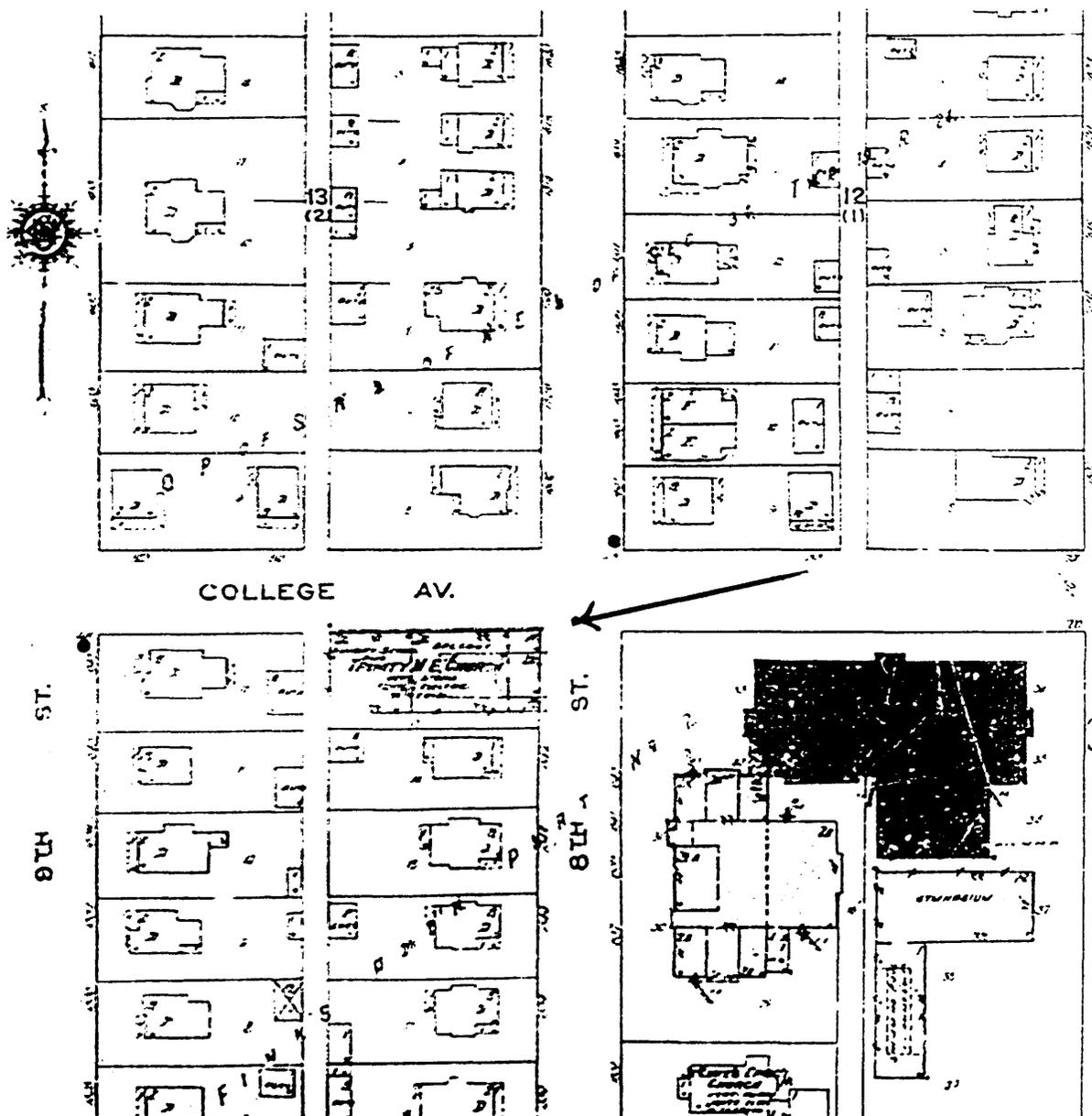
Section number 7 Page 8

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1920 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PRESENT BUILDING



Source: Sanborn Map Company, Des Moines, 1920.



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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

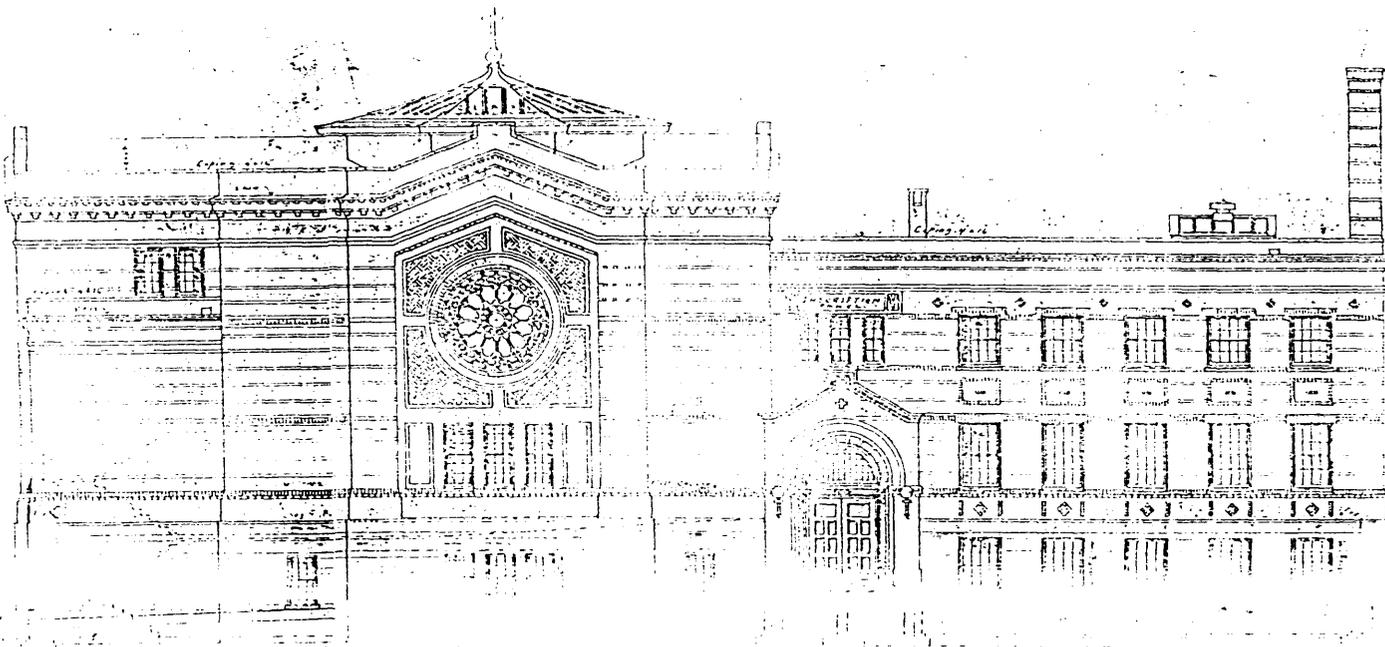
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CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## NORTH ELEVATION

ORIGINAL PROUDFOOT, BIRD & RAWSON DRAWING



The poor quality of this image reflects the difficulty in photocopying large drawings darkened with age.

Source: Archives, Brooks Borg Skiles Architects Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

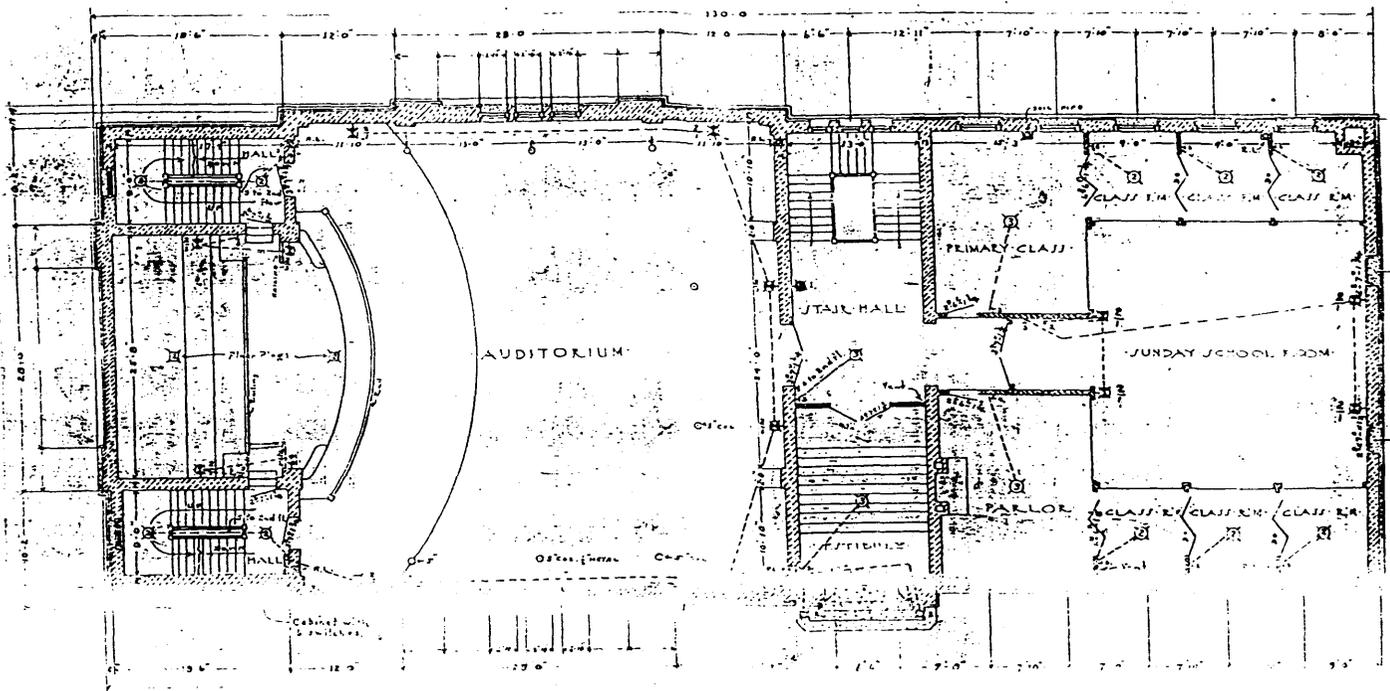
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CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ORIGINAL PROUDFOOT, BIRD & RAWSON DRAWING



The poor quality of this image reflects the difficulty in photocopying large drawings darkened with age.

Source: Archives, Brooks Borg Skiles Architects Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa.

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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

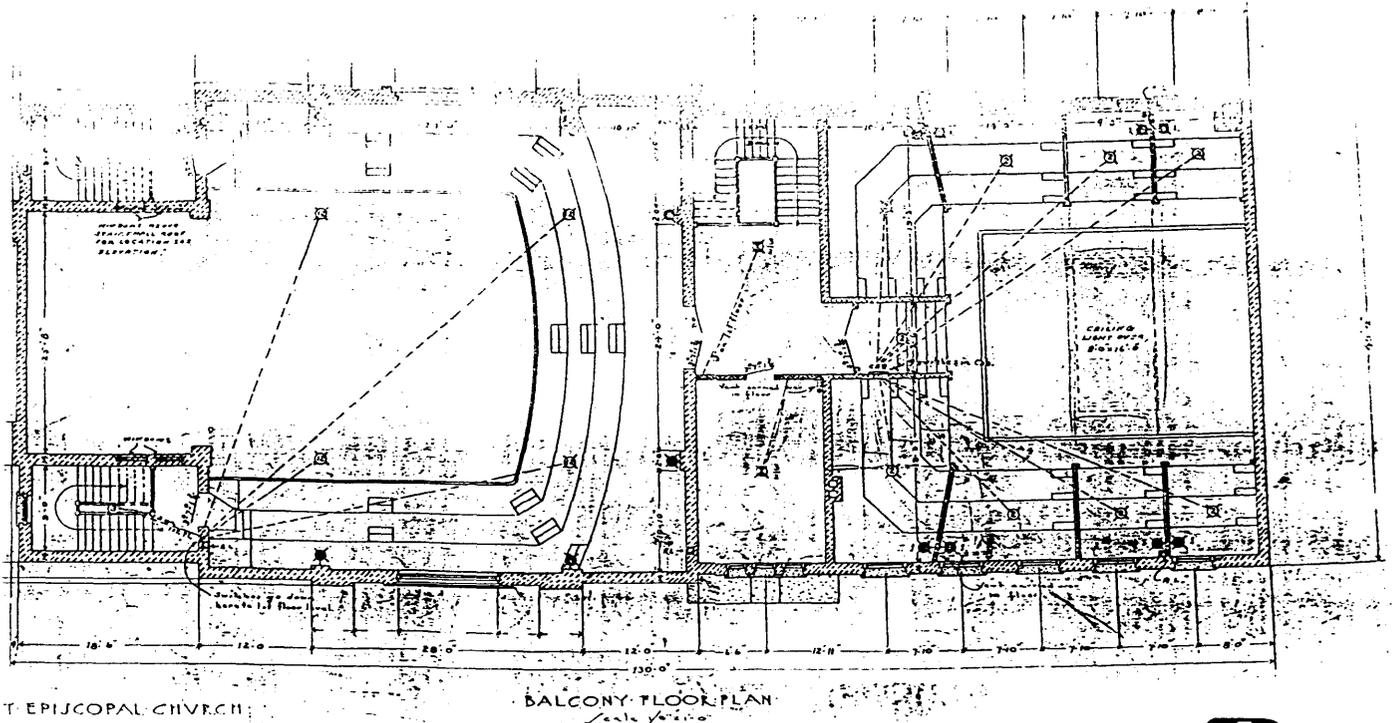
Section number 7 Page 11

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## SECOND (BALCONY) FLOOR PLAN

ORIGINAL PROUDFOOT, BIRD & RAWSON DRAWING



The poor quality of this image reflects the difficulty in photocopying large drawings darkened with age.

Source: Archives, Brooks Borg Skiles Architects Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa.

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

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CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Built and first occupied in 1911, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church is significant, under National Register Criterion C. The building was designed by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, one of Iowa's leading architectural firms during the era. Trinity Church is significant within its opus because it calls attention to late 19th and 20th Century Revival styling as practiced by that firm and applied to an institutional building situated on a small site.

Adding to the church's significance is a 1911 pipe organ in its sanctuary. Designed and constructed by John Hinners of Pekin, Illinois, this instrument stands as a good representational example of Hinners work and retains a high level of integrity, having few alterations since its original installation in the church.

The period of significance, under Criterion C, for Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church is 1911, the year in which the building and the pipe organ were completed.

Criteria Consideration A has been satisfied because this property derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction.

The property contains two resources for this nomination--the church building and the pipe organ. The church is classified as a building and contributes to this nomination. The pipe organ is classified as an object and also contributes to this nomination.

**BACKGROUND**

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church was first organized in Des Moines in 1887 as Prospect Park Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation built a substantial brick church on the southeast corner of 8th and Washington Streets. (See Continuation Sheet 8-18.) (The city directory of 1899 incorrectly identifies this location as the northwest corner of that intersection. [City Directory 1899:595]). The construction of this building by a newly-formed, albeit ambitious, congregation shows the respect for good architectural design, which the congregation would later reassert.

The location and the name of the congregation call attention to a new residential tract by the same name then opening up for development in the City of North Des Moines. Prospect Park Methodist Episcopal Church was established to serve that area. The building was sufficiently significant as a semi-public meeting place to be included in an inset map by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company in 1891--one of the few such inserts. The significance of this building is further underlined by the Prospect Park plat proprietors employing a drawing of it on a promotional broadside for this tract.

The development of Prospect Park (the tract of land) progressed somewhat slower than anticipated. It appears that, by about 1900, the congregation of this church had decided to broaden its horizons for membership. In that year, the name of the parish was changed to North Des Moines Methodist Episcopal Church. (*The Register and Leader* 1911) The church building itself remained at its same location.

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

Chicago, Illinois. (Ochse:299) In 1879, he moved to Pekin, Illinois, and worked for two years for a reed organ builder there before establishing his own organ manufacturing business in partnership with U. J. Albertsen. (*Ibid.*) In 1890, the firm of Hinners & Albertsen began building pipe organs. The partners believed an American market existed for pipe organs of a small size, designed and built along standardized lines, and costing less than big, custom-built instruments. Their business, based upon this concept, flourished. One organ scholar has noted that:

The instrument built by Hinners was indeed as much an innovation in pipe organ building as the Model T produced by Henry Ford was to the automobile industry. Ford brought the passenger car to the common man while Hinners brought the pipe organ to the small church. (Coleberd quoted in Ochse:300)

Another organ scholar has modified this interpretation:

Actually, other builders also engaged in this sort of production, e.g., Felgemaker and Roosevelt, but there were still over three thousand customers waiting for Hinners's organs. (*Ibid.*:300)

Albertsen retired from the firm in 1902. It was subsequently incorporated as Hinners Organ Company. The firm survived Hinners' death in 1906 and was taken over by Arthur W. Hinners (1873-1955), his son.

The Hinners firm published a mail-order catalog to market their products. They employed no sales force. Their catalogs were printed in both English and German, and a substantial amount of Hinners' work was for German congregations located in the Midwest. The firm's central location in the Midwest worked to their advantage in this regard.

The referral between Trinity Church and the Hinners Organ Company is not known. The instrument was installed in the sanctuary in 1911 and was featured during the dedication of the church in that year. At that time, a local newspaper reported that:

The pipe organ, which has been installed, is one of the largest in the city. (*Register and Leader*)

The Hinners instrument at Trinity Church features tracker action and 17 ranks of pipes. The pressure from the organist's fingers and feet drives all the mechanical action of a tracker (or direct action) organ. When originally installed, the windchest of this instrument was filled by hand-activated bellows. Although an electric motor has subsequently replaced this mode of power, the hand pump remains extant.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

The pipe organ at Trinity Church in Des Moines is large in size by comparison with other instruments built by Hinners. Most of their instruments possessed only one manual and a restricted number of stops. By comparison, for example, the Hinners instrument built for the German Methodist Church in St. Joseph, Missouri, was "larger-than average. . . boasted two manuals and thirteen stops." (*Ibid.*) A photograph of this instrument shows a similar design in its console and exposed pipes to that at Trinity in Des Moines. As can be seen from the stop list printed above, Trinity's instrument is also comparable to that instrument in terms of its size.

The Hinners firm experimented with several organ building techniques. For example, they introduced a tubular-pneumatic action in 1910. In 1916, the firm introduced an electro-pneumatic instrument. In spite of these newer developments, the firm built about six times as many tracker action organs (like Trinity in Des Moines) than both the tubular or electro-pneumatic instruments combined. The firm produced a total of approximately 3,000 instruments. (*Ibid.*:302)

The significance of Trinity's venerable instrument is augmented by its present integrity. Although many organs have been expanded over the years with the installation of additional ranks and/or console alterations, the Trinity Church instrument remains virtually unaltered since its original construction.

Recently, the significance of this instrument was underlined by its selection to participate in the 100th anniversary celebration of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). The AGO was founded in 1896 to promote good church music. In 1996, the Central Iowa Chapter of the AGO chose Trinity Church as the site of a recital to celebrate the organization's centennial. The historical character of Trinity's organ was thought most appropriate for this celebration. On April 14, 1996, participating soloists from Central Iowa played selections from the standard organ repertoire, as well as popular pieces by lesser known American composers. (Recital Notes) This recital called the public's attention to the musical quality of the Trinity organ and the acoustics of its sanctuary (*Des Moines Register*).

#### SITE

The site of Trinity Church is notable for its urban site plan. Consisting of only one building lot, this site measures approximately 56' x 130', and the footprint of the church building itself occupies most of this area. The northern and the eastern elevations of the building are situated directly next to the pedestrian sidewalks in the public right-of-way. As discussed above, the restricted size of this lot posed challenges to the architects of the building.

Although similar site plans are frequently found in major metropolitan areas of the nation, such as New York City and Chicago where space is at a premium, they are rare in Des Moines. Only two churches in Des Moines possessing such site plans have been identified to date: Trinity United Methodist Church and University Christian Church (now First Christian Church), located at 2500 University Avenue. Even Des Moines' downtown churches possess a little lawn between their buildings and the sidewalks. It should be noted that the earlier building associated with this Trinity Church, known as Prospect Park Methodist Church and located at 1631 8th Street, possessed a similar urban site plan. (See Continuation Sheet 8-18.)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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CFN-259-1116

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

### REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church was surveyed in 1989 as part of Barbara Beving Long's multiple property survey, *The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940*. In the cover document for this survey of resources, Long states that the firm constructed four churches in Des Moines. Although she provided brief sketches of commercial, educational, and residential architectural types, she made no attempt to characterize these four churches. They remained unnamed in the cover document, which provided no further details about them. (Long 1989, E-6) With few examples of other church architecture in her data base with which to compare the resource, and hampered by lack of time and budget constrictions, Long found Trinity Methodist ineligible for the National Register. It should be emphasized, however, that Long's evaluation of Trinity Methodist was based solely on an exterior survey of the resource, and she was comparing it to Proudfoot & Bird's "more ornate examples." (Ralph J. Christian Informant Interview). Unfortunately, the individual Iowa Site Inventory form for Trinity Methodist was not available for perusal at the SHPO.

Patricia Eckhardt's 1990 dissertation, *Proudfoot and Bird, Campus Architects: Building Facilities for a Professional Education at the University of Iowa, 1898-1910* identified four churches designed by Proudfoot & Bird but did not discuss Trinity Methodist because it postdated that firm. Although the focus of Eckhardt's study was the campus designs in Iowa City, she did attempt to categorize Proudfoot & Bird's other designs. According to her:

Proudfoot and Bird did not design many churches, but the four designed during this period, St. Paul's Episcopal Church of 1899 in Harlan, Trinity Presbyterian Church of 1900 in Indianola and St. George's Greek Orthodox Church and First Methodist Church in Des Moines of 1906, are each as inventive as they are individual. (Eckhardt:132-133)

According to Eckhardt, each of these buildings evidences the influence of Colonial Revival or Neoclassical styling on its design. All were constructed of brick except First Methodist Church. Although Eckhardt did not evaluate the National Register eligibility of these buildings, it is evident that churches played a minor role in the firm's opus. Long's conclusions also substantiate the fact that churches played a minor role in the total opus of this firm through 1940. Given that this firm designed so few churches, it is difficult to make comparisons between them. Each should be evaluated for its own merits, as Eckhardt recommended above.

This church was also surveyed in 1994 as part of the "Towards a Greater Des Moines" reconnaissance survey of Des Moines' Victorian suburbs. As one resource within the intensive survey of the River Bend neighborhood, (another part of this project), this church was evaluated as not eligible, under Criterion C, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. (Page and Walroth:1994) The authors of that survey were influenced by Long's work. It was subsequently learned that this work was based only on the exterior of the building and did not address the significance of the pipe organ. Since that time, additional information has come to light to sufficient to warrant a reevaluation of the building, including the building's urban site plan, the significance of the pipe organ, and the fact that the Long survey treated the edifice only in reconnaissance fashion.

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

The site's potential for archaeological significance is very limited. Whatever materials from previous occupations of the site would have been virtually destroyed during the construction of the present building.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The pipe organ instrument at Trinity Church should be evaluated within the context of the Hinners Organ Company and the surviving works of its production.

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National Park Service

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## NONEXTANT TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

CIRCA 1888



PROSPECT PARK M. E. CHURCH.

This drawing is printed in the right hand margin of a promotional plat map published by the Polk County Homestead & Trust Company to advertise their new Prospect Park residential development. The building pictured stood at 1631 8th Street.

Source: State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines), *Plat of Prospect Park*, Circa 1888.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

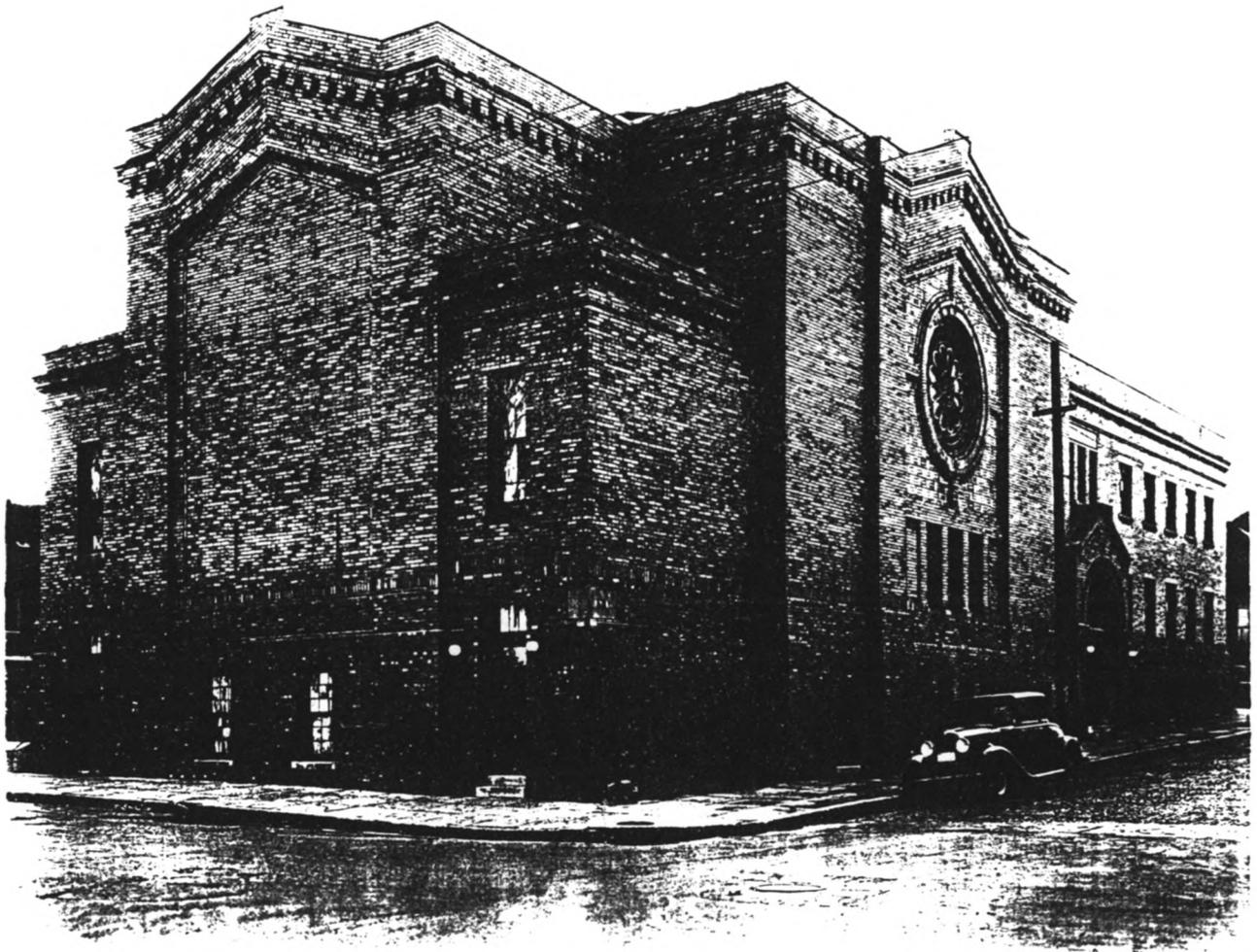
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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## TRINITY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CIRCA 1935



This image, dating from circa 1935, pictures even more clearly than the previous page the urban character of Trinity Church's site plan. This undated photograph was made by the Woltz Studio of Des Moines.

Source: Archives, Trinity United Methodist Church.

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National Park Service

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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to Section I of the Multiple Property Documentation Form for complete bibliography.

### PRIMARY

Brooks Borgs Skiles Architects Planners; Des Moines, Iowa. The archives of this firm-- successor of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson--contain the following architects' drawings of Trinity Episcopal Church. The author is grateful for the firm's permission to use them.

1. Basement plan.
2. First floor plan
3. Balcony floor plan.
4. Roof plan.
5. North elevation.
6. West and east elevations.
7. South elevation.
8. Cross sections.
9. Longitudinal section.
10. Window details.

The following drawings are not numbered within the sequence above:

Detail of brick and stone.  
Detail of inscription panel.  
Grades.

*Centennial Committee Minutes*; September 19, 1987. Archives of Trinity United Methodist Church; Des Moines, Iowa.

*Des Moines News, The*; "Trinity Church, Pastor Evans and Interior View of Church; October 23, 1916. Discusses Trinity as an example of "family, or community churches." Includes an exterior photo of the building, one of the sanctuary, and a photo-portrait of E. M. Evans, pastor.

*Des Moines Register*; April 6, 1996. "Small but steadfast church has accented community service to its neighborhood."

*Minutes of Official Board of North Des Moines M. E. Church*; 1906-1912. Archives of Trinity United Methodist Church.

"Moved that Church Committee be authorized to allow the Seven Day [sic] Adventists the use of our church if necessary . . ." October 25, 1909.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Polk County, Iowa.

**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
1548 8th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Looking southwest  
William C. Page, Photographer  
March 31, 1997
2. Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
1548 8th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Looking northwest  
William C. Page, Photographer  
March 31, 1997
3. Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
1548 8th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Looking southeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
March 31, 1997
4. Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
1548 8th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Interior view of chancel & organ looking northeast  
Mark Mickunas, Photographer  
February 28, 1998
5. Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church  
1548 8th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Interior view of sanctuary looking west  
Mark Mickunas, Photographer  
February 28, 1998