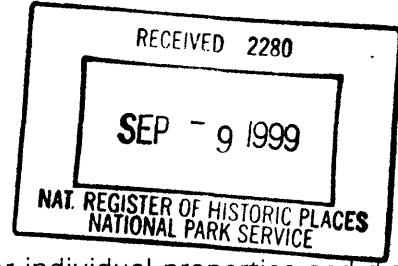


SEP - 1 1999

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1240



**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 Baptist Church of West Union

other names/site number Regular Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number Main and Vine Streets not for publication N/A

city or town West Union vicinity N/A

state Iowa code IA county Fayette code 065 zip code 52175

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.)

Patricia Chenkin
Signature of certifying official

9-2-99
Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | Signature of Keeper | Date of Action |
-

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)Cat: Greek Revival Sub: _____

_____	_____
_____	_____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)foundation STONE/Limestoneroof ASPHALT, METALwalls BRICKother WOOD

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

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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1867

Significant Dates

1867

1906

1911

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Crosby, Ezra

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Fayette County History Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>597190</u>	<u>4757180</u>	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 David C. Andersonorganization N/A date _____street & number 169 Lundy Bridge Drive telephone (319) 382-3079city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

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

(This item must be completed.)

name First Baptist Church of West Union, c/o Eva Reeder, Treasurerstreet & number 6073 Echo Valley Road telephone (319) 426-5259city or town Elgin state Iowa zip code 52141

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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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

First Baptist Church
of West Union
Fayette County, IA

Section 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The First Baptist Church is a 37 by 58 foot, single-story brick edifice located on the easterly 90 feet of Lot 6, Block 5 in the Original Town Plat of West Union, Iowa. This is at the corner of Vine and Main streets diagonally across the street from the Fayette County courthouse, which occupies the Public Square in the heart of the city, which today has a population of about 2,500. The church also owns the adjoining Lot 5, where a parsonage dating from 1909 is located. This is not included in the present nomination.

The church purchased Lot 6 in 1867; construction began that August and was essentially complete by the end of the year.¹ In 1939 the westerly 40 feet of Lots 5 and 6 were sold to the Bell Telephone Co., which still owns the property (U.S. West Communications).

The contract for the construction of the church went to Ezra Crosby, a brick mason who had come to West Union from the state of Maine.² The walls are of solid brick construction, and these rest on a limestone foundation. There is a partial basement under the west end where the furnace is located, along with three massive limestone and brick piers which support the large baptismal tank above. A 1 by 5 inch tongue-and-groove floor is laid on sawn oak 2 by 10 joists which are supported by a series of hewn timbers and the foundation walls. There are single windows on the west and south sides and an entrance leading up out of the basement on the west end. These all appear to have been cut into the original walls after initial construction, as was the back door.³

The walls were built with soft brick laid in common bond, with a flat continuous surface on the west wall and gable end and Doric pilasters set out from the walls and frieze on the other three sides.⁴ The east end (front) has three bays below a pediment that includes a date stone with "1867" in relief.

There are stained-glass windows in openings with segmental arch heads in each bay on the long sides and in each bay flanking the front entrance. These were installed in 1906.⁵ The simple frieze projecting only slightly from the walls rests on a dog-tooth course of brick suggesting dentils.

The eaves include enclosed rafters with wood bed molding, and the gable ends are set out with hewn purlins mortised and pegged into the end rafters, which construction can be seen from the attic. A wood roof, presently clad in asphalt shingles, rests on rafter trusses built up with sawn lumber. The bell tower and spire are also of wood construction and the spire is clad with sheet metal and painted white.⁶

An historic photo from 1902 indicates that the front entrance door and porch were added at some point thereafter. This porch is similar to the one on the back and may have been put on at the same time. This photo suggests also that some minor changes in the bell housing have been made since and that there was a contrasting color scheme on the painted surfaces (windows, roof elements, and bell tower). Today these elements are all painted white.

The bell, which is still in place, was installed in 1913.

Just inside the front entrance there is a vestibule with an office to the north, and on the south side a stairway leading to a gallery above and a door leading to the main body of the church. Here wooden pews are arranged diagonally

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First Baptist Church
of West Union
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Section 7 Page 2

with a pulpit, chairs, piano, and organ occupying a low stage in the northwest corner next to a deep baptismal tank in front of a two-story baptistry.

There is also a gallery on the west end supported by hollow wooden columns. Both galleries have balustrades, although the west gallery and baptistry date from 1911 when the church interior was repaired and remodeled after a fire.⁷ Church records and news reports indicate that the east balcony was in place before the fire, but whenever it was built it blocked off portions of the full-length windows on the three sides at the east end. The pressed steel ceiling dates from 1930, and the plywood paneling dates from 1977 as does the carpeting.⁸

Original woodwork still in place includes beaded-board wainscoting on both long sides and wide wood window frames, rectangular in shape with crossette moldings. These elements are all finished with false wood graining, which probably dates to 1911, since there is no indication in church records that anything was done to change these surfaces since 1911.

Aside from the plywood sheets of faux paneling and the carpet, the church remains essentially unchanged since its remodeling and repair in 1911. The building has been well maintained over the years and it is in excellent condition.

¹Book 3 of Deeds, p. 498. Office of County Recorder. The early plats of West Union are also located here as are the instruments relating to the other land transfers mentioned. Records of the church congregation go back to 1852 when it was first organized, but they are not continuous. All of the data regarding the church's construction were found in local newspaper reports. It was in use early in 1868, but formal dedication did not take place until 1870. See the *West Union Gazette* from 6-27-67, 12-28-67, 9-26-67, 5-23-68 and 6-29-68. News items from 6-27-67 and 8-29-67 issues of the *Fayette County Union* are also relevant. The Fayette County History Center also has a file of clippings and other material about the Baptist Church.

²*Fayette County Union*, 8-29-67, and 9th U.S. Population Census (1870), West Union Twp.

³The back door and porch date from 1911. See note #6 below.

⁴So the pilasters are not "peripteral" as stated by David Gebhard in his *Buildings of Iowa* (N.Y., 1993), p. 453, in his short discussion of this building.

⁵Church records, entry for April 7, 1906. The windows (Style #2215) were manufactured by the Pittsburgh Glass Co.

⁶When this metal cladding was installed is not known. An historic photo from 1902 shows it in place by that time.

⁷Details of the fire, which was limited to the northwest corner of the building, and subsequent repairs and remodeling can be found in a news account (9-7-11) located in the Baptist Church file at the Fayette County History Center, West Union, and in June Anderson's short history of the church.

⁸ibid.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

First Baptist Church
of West Union
Fayette County, IA

Section 8 Page 3

SIGNIFICANCE

The First Baptist Church is eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C (Architecture) as a good example of the Greek Revival style which was brought to the midwestern U.S. by pioneer settlers with origins in New England, the Mid-Atlantic states and Ohio. The church is considered to be the only structure with historic integrity still standing in West Union which can be associated with the initial settlement and development of the city, which was first platted in 1850.

Fayette County is located in northeast Iowa one tier of counties south of Minnesota and in the second tier of counties west of the Mississippi River. A large segment of eastern Iowa was first opened for Euro-American settlement in 1833 after the conclusion of the Black Hawk War. An exception was a 40 by 200 mile strip of land (the "Neutral Ground") set aside for the Winnebago Indians, which was opened in 1848 when they were removed to Minnesota. This zone included approximately the northwest one-half of Fayette County, where West Union is located.

Settlement of this area proceeded rapidly after the removal of the Indians, especially in those areas near the Neutral Ground boundary and along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Important population and commercial centers closest to Fayette County that had been open for settlement since 1833 were Elkader, Guttenberg, and McGregor in neighboring Clayton County and Dubuque; all but Elkader being located on the Mississippi River.

U.S. Census figures tell this story of population growth as follows, and it is clear that the presence of Indians in the Neutral Zone retarded settlement even in the areas outside it, e.g. southeast Fayette and Clayton Counties. Fayette County went from 825 in 1850 to 12,073 ten years later and 16,973 in 1870. By comparison, Clayton County went from 3,873 to 20,728 (1860) to 27,731 in 1870. West Union had grown to 1,489 by 1870 but in 1880 only a few more residents were recorded: 1,551.¹

The city of West Union was platted by the time the township in which it is located was created in 1850 (West Union). Its importance and future development were fairly well ensured when it became the county seat the next year. This was an attractive area for settlers wishing to establish farms, since the soil was fertile and both timber and water were plentiful.

Federal census reports for 1870 and early county histories indicate that the first settlers of West Union, Fayette County and other adjacent areas came from a variety of places, mostly other locations in the U.S., but also from Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany and Norway.²

In West Union, as of 1870 most inhabitants had been born in New York or Pennsylvania, followed by Ohio and then Indiana, Illinois, and various northeastern states. The least well represented were the southern states.

It is apparent that the next thing the pioneers did after organizing local government and commencing business activity was to form religious congregations. The Baptist, Methodist-Episcopal, Presbyterian, and United Brethren all had congregations established by 1855. These reflect the American origin of the pioneers; the Catholics and Lutherans were not present until after 1860.

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First Baptist Church
of West Union
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The Baptists and Methodists were the leading Christian groups in the U.S. between 1800 and 1960, and while the Methodists were the most numerous in Iowa until 1900, they fell off rapidly thereafter. Baptists made many converts in frontier areas, including the Midwest, at this time even though their main strength has always been in the southern states.³

The "First Regular Baptist Church in West Union Fayette County Iowa" was organized in October of 1852, and the next year a small wood frame building was put up for worship services. This continued in use until 1866 when it was sold to a Lutheran congregation, after which the Baptists commenced building their current facility. The first church is no longer extant.⁴

The Baptist congregation started out small, with 11 charter members. Membership figures are difficult to ascertain since the early records are not complete and distinctions between established members and new ones are often not clearly made. The first unambiguous figure is from 1880: 80, and in 1906: 144.

The places of birth of the organizers and other early members whose names appear in the records reflect the pattern outlined above. Perhaps the best known individual among these was Lorenzo Dutton, who was the first settler in West Union township, arriving here in July 1848 at the age of 22. Earlier the same year he had left Utica, NY for Buffalo by train, thereafter by boat to Chicago, on foot to Beloit, WI, thence by wagon to Galena, IL, Dubuque, Colesburg, Elkader, and finally West Union, having followed a route no doubt more or less the same as numerous other early settlers.⁵

Among other notable figures who were charter members of the Baptist Church was Thomas Woodle from Pennsylvania, who was the first County Judge and a dry goods merchant until his untimely death in 1854. M. V. Burdick was the first County Attorney, and Friend Dayton owned one of the first hotels in town. By the time the present church was built, most of these founders were either dead or had moved on to new frontiers. Lorenzo Dutton lived into the 20th century, and his wife, also a founding member, died in 1868, after helping to organize the Fayette County Historical and Pioneer Association the same year.

The architectural character and setting of the church provide a visual expression of its association with the pioneer days of West Union and the American origins of the early settlers. News items collected in the County History Center files indicate that the significance of this property has been appreciated for some time. A 1942 clipping is titled "'Christmas Card Church' Notes 90th Anniversary." In a feature article in the Des Moines *Sunday Register* (2-10-63), the church is referred to as "An architectural gem of the 19th century . . . out of an early New England tradition (built by) an unknown contractor steeped in the best of the early American tradition."

We now know that the church was built and probably designed by a brick mason from Maine, one of two brick masons listed in the 1870 Federal census. It is a vernacular version of the Greek Revival, which is perhaps the first readily identifiable American style widely distributed in the Midwest during the middle years of the 19th century. It was already the leading architectural fashion east of the Mississippi when the frontier was extended into Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. As Talbot Hamlin put it, "the manner called 'Greek Revival' . . . moved westward with the advancing frontier and is seen . . . in localities which were wilderness but a few years before."⁶

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First Baptist Church
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The Greek Revival was used for public, domestic, and religious buildings, and many early examples of building types in this style became prototypes for later work by both architects and vernacular builders. For example, the association of banks and governmental buildings with this mode was established in designs for the state capitol in Richmond, VA (1785-98), the Federal capitol in Washington, DC (1793 onward) and the Old Customs House in New York City. This incorporation of Greek and Roman forms in architecture was a deliberate attempt to link up the fledgling American Republic with those ancient predecessors whose cultural legacy we took on as our own.

The church type of which West Union's Baptist is a small and simplified example has its origins in London, England with James Gibbs' St. Martin-in-the-Fields (1721-26), itself based on Christopher Wren's smaller churches, also in London. St. Martin's is a two-story rectangular structure with Greek pilasters on three sides, a porch with freestanding columns, and a large bell tower and spire over the front entrance. Gibbs published this plan and others in his *Book of Architecture*, which was widely circulated among professional and amateur architects in the U.S.

A large number of American versions large and small were built in the eastern and southern U.S. from the late 18th century onward.⁷ Many of these were designed by well-known architects of the time, such as William Strickland, whose St. Mary's at Nashville, TN is an example. In time, the type took on a more American flavor and eventually became a vernacular type characterized by the elements described, but including also features from earlier American architecture, especially the Georgian style. An example of this is the Merchant's Hope Church in Prince George County, VA, characterized by red brick construction, white exterior trim, tall multi-light double-hung sash, and no bell or tower. Until 1906, the West Union church had windows of this kind and still has crossette moldings framing the windows inside.⁸

Many examples of the vernacular Greek Revival in churches lack these Georgian elements, and are of clapboard-sided wood frame construction, painted white, while sharing other key features with the West Union church.⁹

Although vernacular architecture was not widely known as such in 1949 when Hamlin's treatise on the Greek Revival in America was first published, he clearly saw this as a kind of building that had architectural distinction and was widely distributed. In Chapter 7, "The Provincial Greek Revival: The New England States," he writes:

It has become the custom to accept the greater amount of American architecture outside the large cities as the work of a sort of folk culture, the spontaneous creation of unknown craftsmen. . . .

Yet, Much of the most delightful and interesting Greek Revival work in Rhode Island is anonymous country work (e.g., the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church in Exeter), with its simple panelled pilasters, its austere graceful square belfry, and its fret in a panel over the door.

And in Ohio, from whence a large number of West Union's pioneers came, "scattered over the state are a tremendous number of small Greek Revival churches as satisfactory as they are simple."¹⁰

The Greek Revival elements of the First Baptist Church, including the small porches with Doric columns and the rectangular bell tower and polygonal spire, red brick and white trim (even if not part of the church as originally built) all served to link together the frontier of the time with the pioneers' places of origin, important figures in American history, religious tradition, and the ideology of the founding fathers of the U.S.

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Because of all this plus its location next to the public square and seat of local government, the Baptist Church has been recognized as a significant part of the city's heritage both locally and by visitors, lay and professional alike.

¹Population figures from the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th U.S. Census reports. 1910 County History, p. 84.

²County histories which include biographical information were published in 1878 and 1910. See Bibliography. Less useful is *Portrait and Biographical Album of Fayette County Iowa* (Chicago, 1891).

³Gaustad, E. G. *Historical Atlas of Religions in America* (N.Y., 1962), pp. 55-59. In the 1800s, there were two separate Baptist denominations, the "Regular" and "Free Will," which later merged.

⁴A photo of this structure was published in the October 21, 1942 edition of the West Union *Argo-Gazette*. It was located several blocks south of the city center where the water tower now stands.

⁵The church records are currently in the possession of Mrs. June Anderson, Clerk of the Board of Trustees. This account is the most complete itinerary found of how early settlers made their way to Fayette County. It is in the 1910 History, Volume I, pp. 94-108.

⁶Hamlin, xviii.

⁷Many examples from diverse locations in North America including Canada and Alaska are illustrated and discussed in Kalman.

⁸Whether the Merchant's Hope Church is 17th or 18th century is in dispute. Morrison, p. 154 and fig. 261. This building is also discussed and illustrated in Kalman.

⁹For example the First Methodist Church in Taylors Falls, MN, also on the frontier when it was built in 1860. Illustrated in Kalman, p. 138.

¹⁰These quotations are on pp. 159, 183, and 287, respectively, of the 1964 edition.

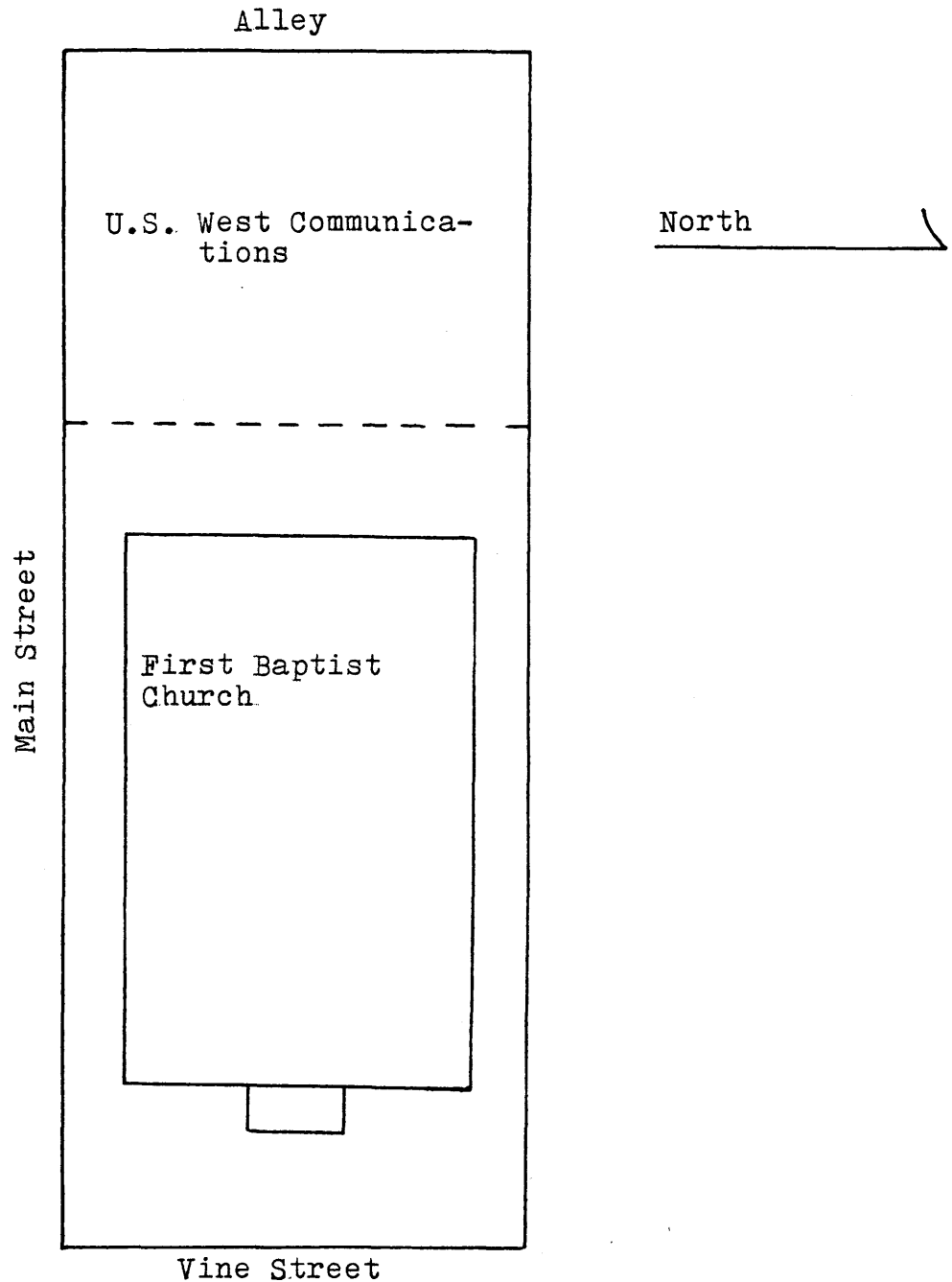
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CONTINUATION SHEET

First Baptist Church
of West Union
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Section 8 Page 7

Site Plan - Lot 6 of Block 5
Scale: 1" = 20'



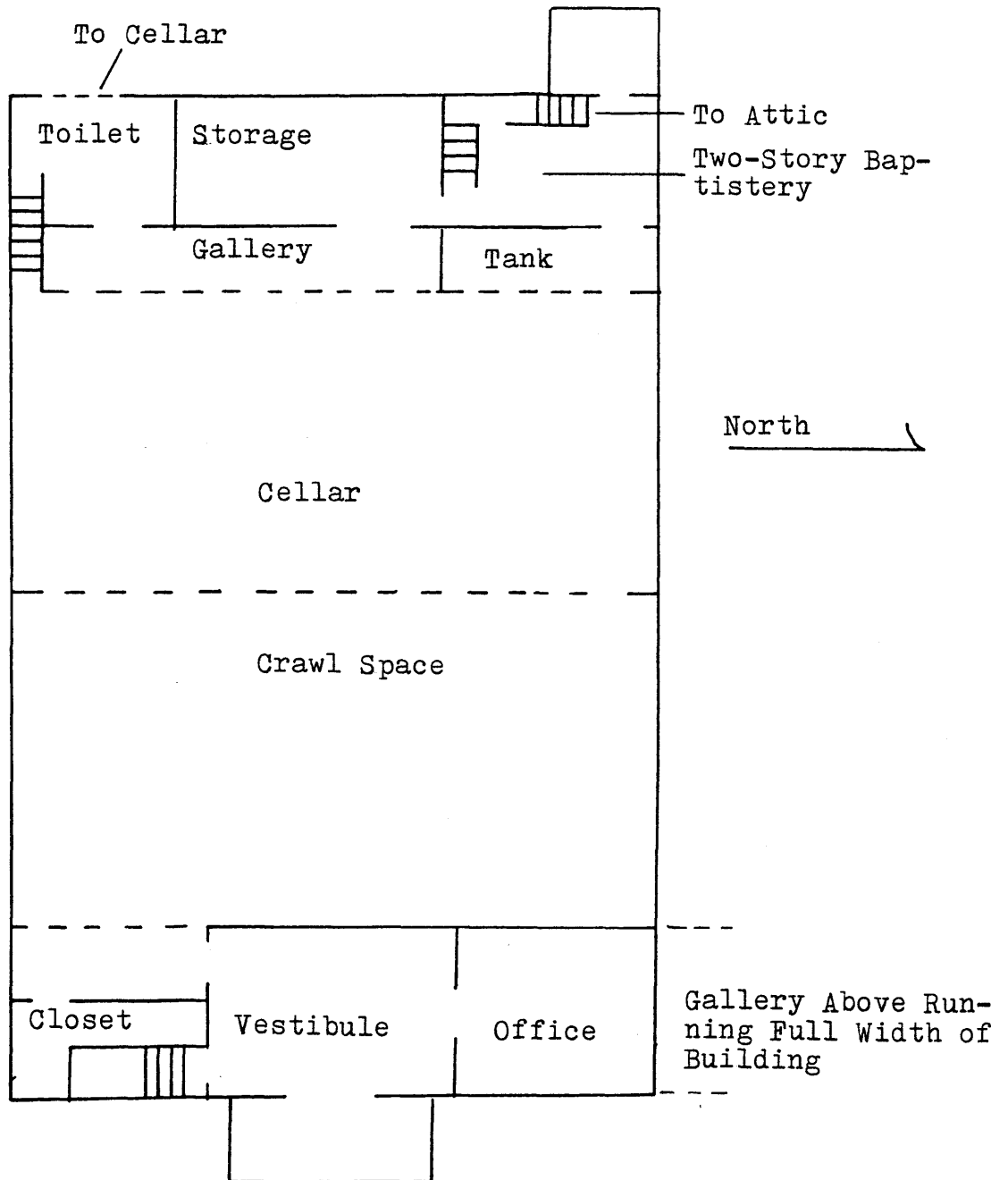
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First Baptist Church
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Floor Plan
1" = 10'



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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The First Baptist Church occupies the easterly 90 feet of Lot 6, Block 5 in the Original Plat of the City of West Union, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Except for the westerly 40 feet, which was sold to the Bell Telephone Co. in 1939, this city lot has been associated with the church since its construction in 1867.

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Section Add'l Page 10

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: D. C. Anderson Date: November 23, 1998

Location of Negatives: D. C. Anderson

All are First Baptist Church of West Union

"Camera Facing"

- No. 1 - N, Interior, View Toward Pulpit
- 2 - E, Interior
- 3 - S, Interior, Upper Window Detail
- 4 - SW, Interior
- 5 - SE, Rear Entrance
- 6 - NW, South Side
- 7 - NW, General View
- 8 - SW, General View
- 9 - NE, Bell Tower and Spire
- 10 - S, Detail of Upper North Wall
- 11 - NW, View from Courthouse Square