

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church of Marion, Iowa

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 802 12th Street

not for publication

city, town Marion

vicinity

state Iowa code IA

county Linn

code 113

zip code 52302

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 00

4. 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. See continuation sheet

David L. ...
Signature of certifying official

6/12/92
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.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Delores Byers
Signature of the Keeper

7/29/92
Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Octagon

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Limestone

roof Asphalt

other Wood/Stained Glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet attached

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1885

Significant Dates

1885

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Ellis, Frank M.

Builders: W. W. Dawson (stonework)

L. E. White (carpentry)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheet attached.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Stearns, Benjamin. The History of the First Pesbyterian Church Building. 1984. Unpublished. Copies available from First Presbyterian Church, 802 12th St., Marion, IA 52302

Oxley, Myron. History of Marion, Iowa. 1927. Unpublished. Bound volumes on file at Marion Carnegie Library, 1298 7th Ave., Marion, Iowa 52302-3405.

History of Marshall County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1878.

Marshalltown, Iowa, City Directory. 1878/1879, 1881/1882, 1882/1883, 1884/1885.

Fowler, Orson S. The Octagon House; A Home for All. New York: Dover Publications, 1973. (Originally Published by Fowler & Wells, 1873.)

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

Iowa Site Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 15 616120 4654320
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The precise boundaries of the property in the city of Marion, Iowa, are those which contain Lots 7 and 8 of original Town Block 3, plus the area on the west which was originally a narrow alley. The property is located at the NW corner of Eighth Avenue and Twelfth Street in Marion. The building occupies the east 100 feet of the property.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are those of the lots which have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lawrence V. Johnson
 organization Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of Marion, Iowa date _____
 street & number 130 26th Street Court telephone (319) 377-4478
 city or town Marion state Iowa zip code 52302

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DESCRIPTION

Occupying nearly half of a block in downtown Marion adjacent to City Hall, the First Presbyterian Church is a two-story tall octagonal edifice constructed of limestone quarried in Stone City, Iowa, and cut on site. The masonry load bearing walls are 22 inches thick from foundation to second floor level and 18 inches thick from there to the roof. Entrances are located at the northeast and southeast corners with the latter being part of the 95 foot tall tower which rises from grade and is visible from the surrounding countryside. Octagonal in plan form, there are no internal columns to support the ceiling and roof. Inside, this provides the sanctuary with a feeling of openness, while at the same time a sense of community is imparted by a semi-circular seating arrangement. Started in 1884 and completed in 1885, the church was designed in Gothic Revival style by Marshalltown architect Frank M. Ellis. The Gothic influence is most evident in the use of corner wall buttresses, utilization of the pointed arch for window and door openings, and the installation of stained glass tracery and rose windows, which are contained in large projecting gables on three sides of the building. Although integrity was impacted somewhat in 1954 with the addition of the Education Building, the addition is at the rear, massed partially below grade, and connected in a rather unobtrusive fashion.

The congregation, established in 1842, occupied two earlier locations in Marion before moving to Eighth Avenue and Twelfth Street, where the present edifice has stood since construction began in July 1884. The setting was a residential neighborhood just north of the central business district lining Seventh Avenue. In March 1884 the building committee had acquired one and one-half city lots for the site. The one-half lot immediately to the west was occupied by part of a livery stable. The elevation at grade is 850 feet above sea level, and the terrain slopes off gently to the north, west, and south, resulting in the spire being readily visible from the surrounding area.

The two-story building with its external entry stairways occupies overall plan dimensions of 87.5 feet east-west by 98 feet north-south. The internal wall-to-wall dimensions of the sanctuary are 56 feet east-west by 69 feet north-south. The plan form is a modified octagon, with the diagonal walls each 16 feet long. The lower story repeats the plan form of the second floor sanctuary.

The sanctuary level is free of any interior walls or columns, as the roof and ceiling loads are transferred through a steeply pitched timber structure to the masonry walls. This leaves the entire space undivided, and this combined with the high ceiling makes for an unconfined, open atmosphere. The lower level, which is partly below grade, utilized cast iron columns to support the floor structure of the sanctuary. This level provides internal access to the sanctuary by a stairway in the southeast corner.

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In terms of architectural design this building is a fairly pure example of Gothic Revival style. Although the church appeared somewhat late in the period during which this style flourished, the building retained much of the simplicity of earlier designs. This is evident in the exclusive use of local native limestone for the walls, producing an overall monochromatic effect which is typical of Gothic Revival.

The masonry walls extend approximately 4 feet below grade. The wall thickness of 22 inches from that point to the belt course of dressed stone about 4 feet above grade provides a foundation capable of bearing the weight of the stone upper walls, which are 18 inches thick. The architect's original plans called for wood framing and brick veneer above the lower level; however, on July 12, 1884, the building committee decided to change to all stone construction. The stonework is laid in rock-faced coursed ashlar fashion; dressed stone is used in the belt course, in the trim on the stepped corner wall buttresses, and in the keystones and corbel stops associated with each of the pointed arches.

At the square tower, located on the southeast diagonal of the octagon, the stonework continues above the roof line to the base of the pyramidal spire. At that point there is a molded wood cornice supported by five brackets per side with frieze boards having a recessed flattened trefoil between each bracket. The trefoil device is repeated in the frieze boards on a triangular wooden louver halfway up each side of the spire. Each louver is topped by a small finial which is repeated on a larger scale at the tip of the spire.

Four identical gables which project from the highly pitched hip roof also have stonework which continues above the roof line to near the peak of the gables. The vertical surfaces just below the gable peaks are finished with triangular wooden inserts carved or milled in a diamond pattern.

A notable feature of the church is the symmetry of the north, east, and south faces of the building, each including a pointed arch stained glass window set in a projecting gable, with multiple arch and rose window tracery within the main arch. Two pointed stonework arches occur in each face, one outlining the window and another similar in shape but wider and taller; both project slightly from the surface of the adjacent stonework. Stained glass lancet windows flank the large pointed arch windows on each of the three faces. The fenestration of the sanctuary level provides fairly uniform lighting and contributes to the feeling of openness.

Pointed arch stained glass windows with tracery are used on three sides of the tower just below the spire, and each of the entrances features a smaller pointed arch window above the door opening. There is a lancet window on the northeast and southwest sides of the tower at entry level, and there are two lancet windows on each of the diagonal walls of the building at the northwest and southwest. Light for the lower level is provided by single pane double hung windows with dressed stone lintels and sills.

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Gothic Revival style wood trim is used in the sanctuary interior to frame the three large stained glass pointed arch windows located in the gables. The fourth gable, which houses the choir and the organ, is similarly framed. At the intersections of the eight sloping planes which form the ceiling, ornamental beams extend from a point on the wall to a central horizontal rectangular ceiling area in the center of the sanctuary.

A number of alterations have been made in the 106 years since completion of the original building, none of which have materially compromised its architectural integrity. The original gas lighting and coal-fired floor furnace heating have been replaced with electric lighting and hot water heating systems. A hand-pumped pipe organ was installed in 1886, and subsequently replaced in 1953 with a modern Moller organ. The original slate roof was replaced with asphalt roofing, and over the years as reroofing was applied, three chimneys shown in early photographs, one on each of three gables, were removed, as were the cresting on the gable ridges and the ridge of the hip roof and small ornamental dormers on the slopes of the roof. The chimney on the west gable is intact and functions in the present heating system. Another external change was the removal of a wooden louver on each face of the spire immediately above the cornice. The original elaborate finial at the peak of the spire has been replaced by a smaller and simpler version.

In 1954 a new Christian Education building was erected as an addition directly west of the original 1885 church building. To provide direct access between the two, openings were cut through the west wall of the original structure at both the sanctuary level and the lower level. The doorways were reinforced with steel members to maintain the structural integrity of the masonry walls. The lower portion of the projecting west gable was in effect enclosed by the U-shaped plan of the addition. This resulted in the partial covering of two lancet windows on each side of the area behind the altar. The newer building is flat roofed and of low profile.

In 1968 the sanctuary was remodeled. This work consisted of shoring up the entrance areas, plastering walls, painting the ceiling, laying new carpet, replacing the original 1885 pews, installing a cloth screen in front of the organ pipes, and removing the lower portion of the wooden trim at the intersection of walls and ceiling. These activities had minimal effect on the architectural content of the building. Additional work in the sanctuary was implemented in 1978: the screen over the organ pipes was replaced by a finished structure consisting of sixteen vertical wooden members joined at the upper ends in pointed arches, with grill cloth applied between the verticals members.

No changes have been made since 1978. In 1991 an extensive restoration of the stonework was done, consisting of interior and exterior tuck pointing above and below grade, consolidation and waterproofing, caulking, installing tile and sump for the foundation, and gutter repair, at a cost in excess of \$180,000.

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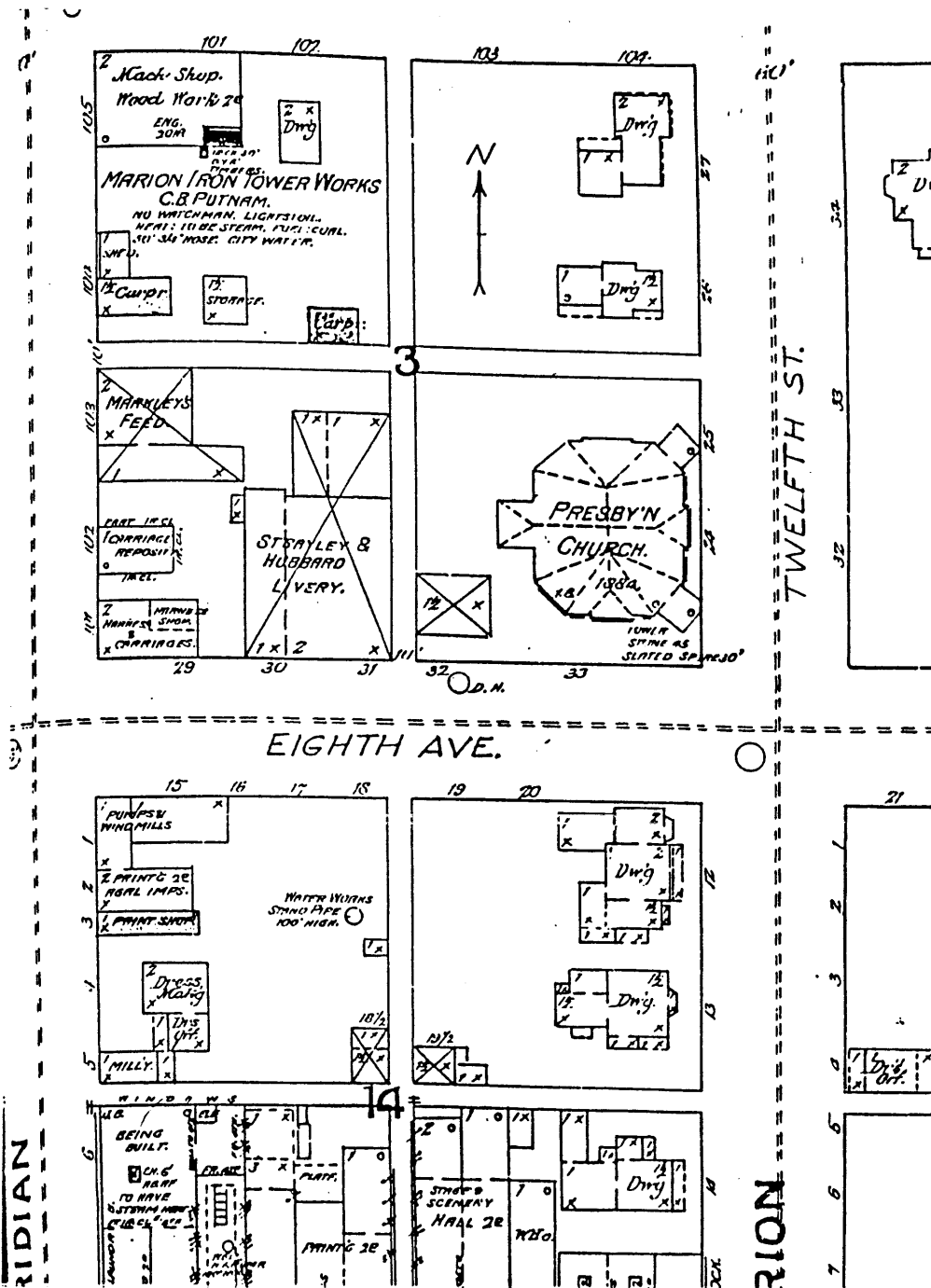
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CFN-259-1115

First Presbyterian Church, Eighth Avenue and Twelfth Street, Marion, Iowa

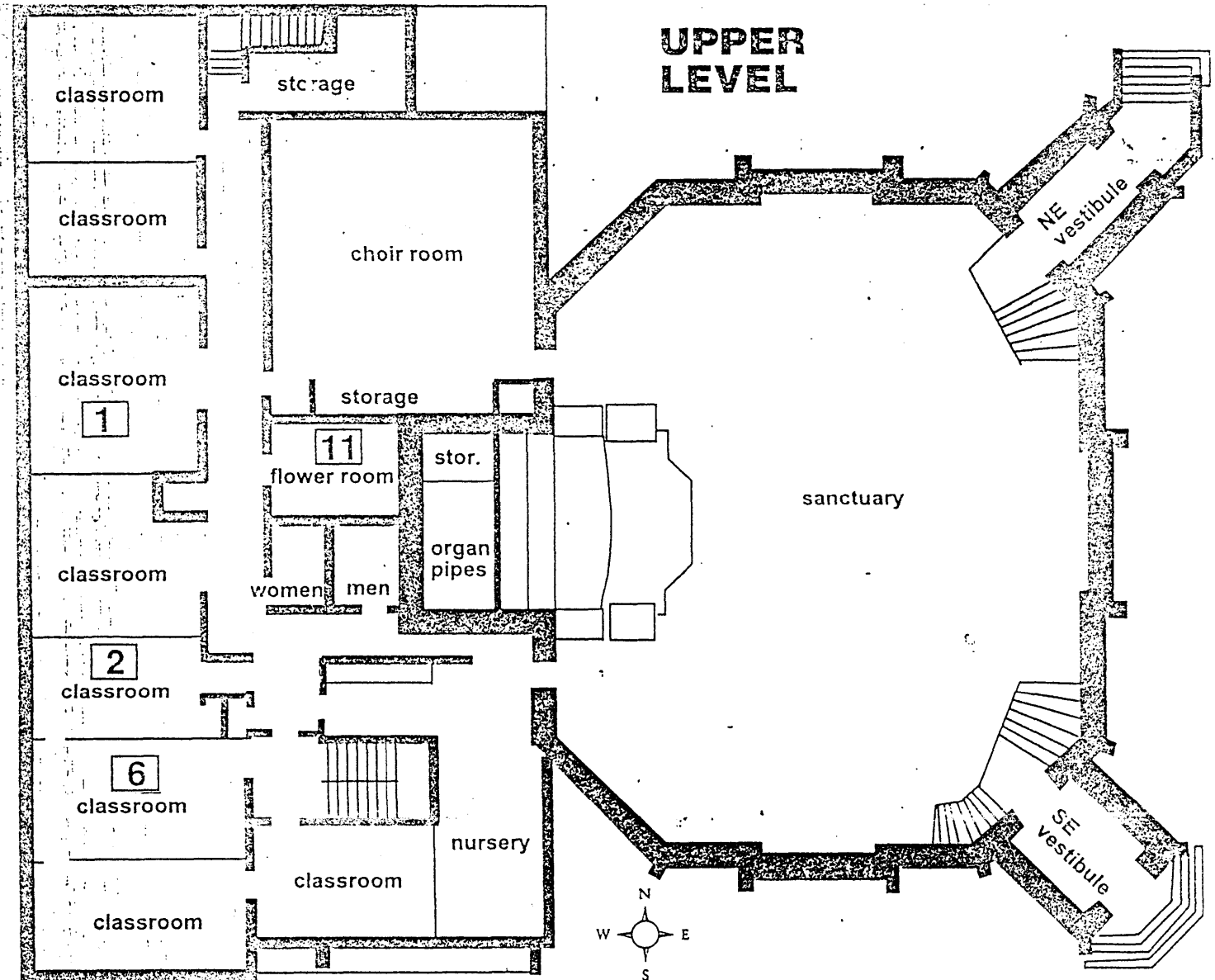
1885 Insurance Map



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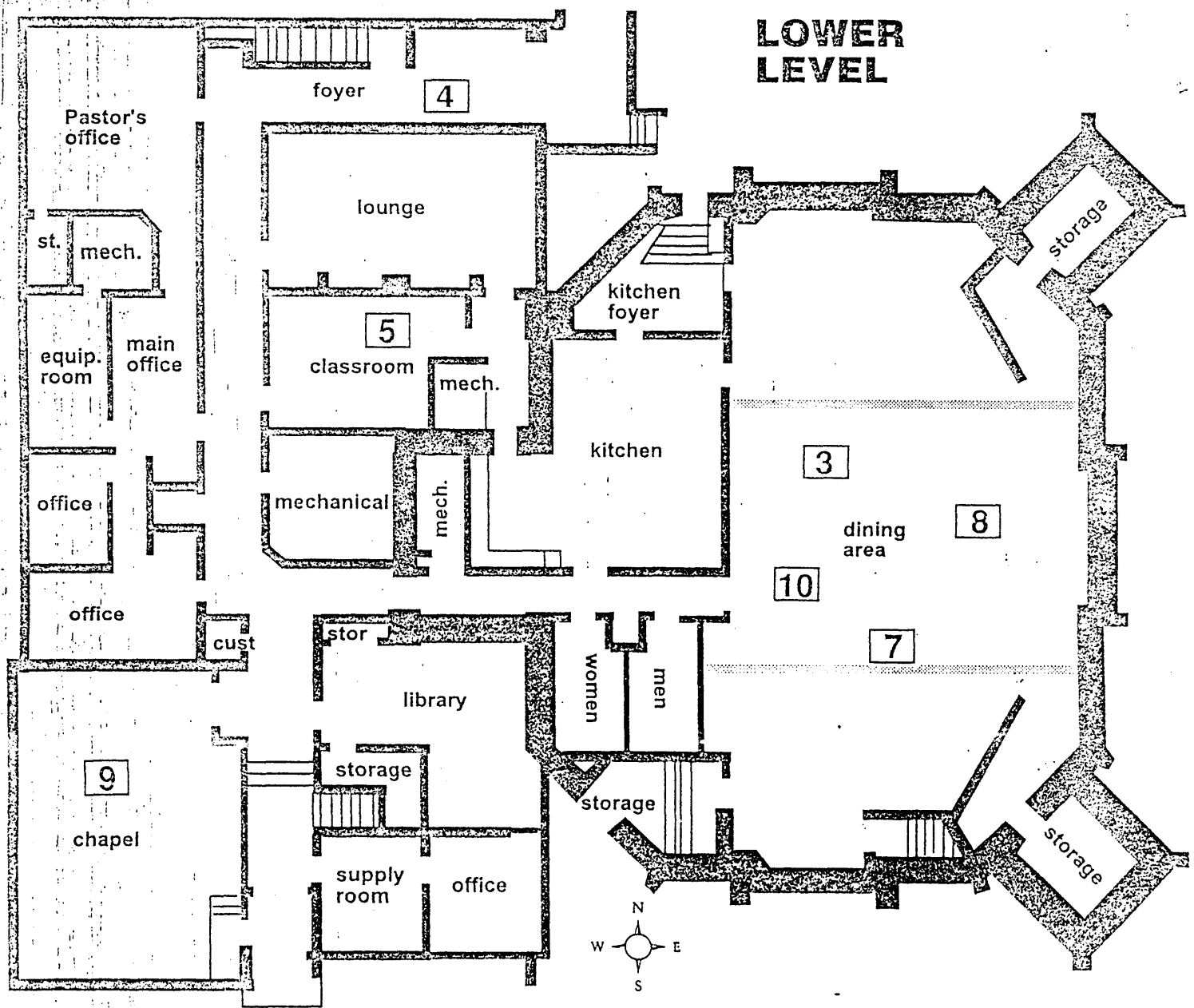
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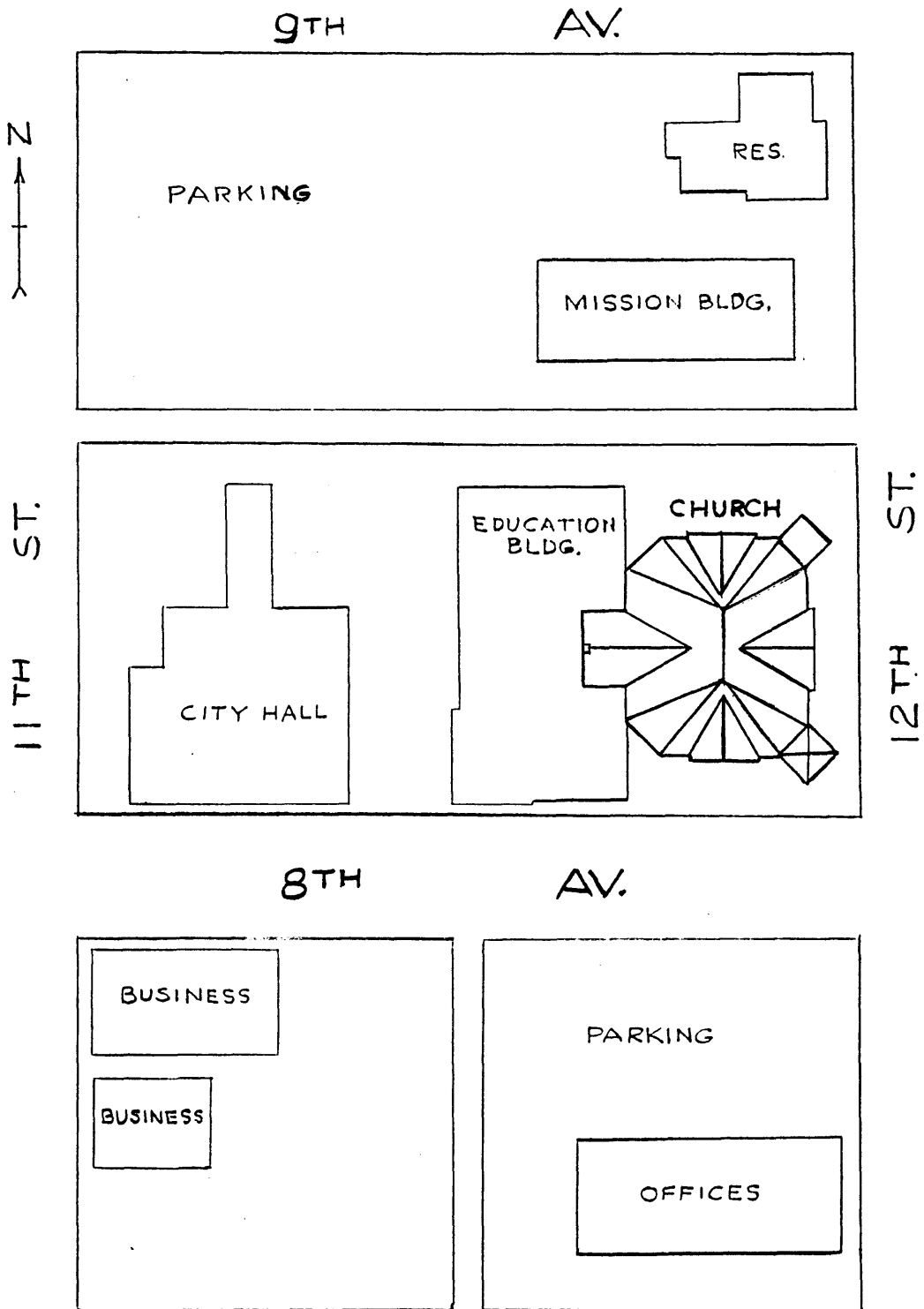


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SKETCH MAP: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MARION, IOWA



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INTRODUCTION

The First Presbyterian Church is locally significant under Criterion C as one of the most outstanding examples of Gothic Revival design in Marion, the best preserved example of an octagonal building in the community, and to date the only known example in town of the work of Frank M. Ellis, an important late 19th century Iowa architect; Ellis specialized in church, theatre, hotel, and school design, and received numerous commissions in Nebraska, Dakota Territory, Minnesota, and Illinois, as well as Iowa. The Presbyterian Church is one of two known octagonal plan buildings in Marion, but is the best preserved and the only one that retains most of its original detailing. Octagonal buildings as a class are a rapidly dwindling resource in the state with probably fewer than 50 remaining. Octagonal plan churches are very rare, and this example is by far the largest and most ornate identified in the state to date. Under Criteria Consideration A, the property is a church significant for architectural values.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The period of the early 1880's in Marion was characterized by prosperity and economic growth, spurred by the three railroads and the commercial activity which they brought to the area. There were nearly 90 business establishments in the town, including two banks, two newspapers, four hotels, three drygoods stores, two blacksmiths, and a book store. Sixty-five houses were built in 1883. The leaders of the Presbyterian Church saw this as a favorable time to erect a new and larger church building to accommodate a rapidly growing congregation. The building committee interviewed several architects and were impressed most favorably by the presentations of Frank M. Ellis of Marshalltown. They subsequently visited Ellis's Baptist Church of Waterloo and recommended to their congregation a similar Gothic Revival design.

The city of Marion contains few buildings of recognizable Gothic Revival style. Some structures have one or more Gothic Revival features, such as wall dormers, bay windows, gingerbread vergeboards, and pointed arches, which are tacked on to buildings which are either of vernacular style or a mixture of late 19th century styles. The Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, has an integrity of style which makes it an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture. The adaptation of Gothic principles and forms is unambiguous, and the Gothic theme is reinforced by the symmetry of the three principal faces of the building and enhanced by the graceful spire. The overall effect is one of unity and completeness. As Marion Oxley put it (History of Marion), "In the matter of architecture, the most creditable of all our public buildings was erected in the summer and fall of 1884. It was the Presbyterian Church edifice, and it was built for centuries of service, not merely decades." There have been no buildings erected in the interim to invalidate that statement.

Note: Erection of walls and roof was complete at the end of 1884. Interior finishing, and installation of pews, windows, lighting, and heating were completed in 1885. Dedication ceremonies were held on September 27, 1885.

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As noted above, the Presbyterian Church building was designed by Frances M. Ellis, an architect who came to Marshalltown, Iowa, in 1876. He was born in Cortland, New York, in 1837, where he learned the trade of architect and builder. He subsequently moved to Pennsylvania, where he lived for eleven years, and then went to Chicago. During five years in that city he "was architect and superintendent of many fine buildings there." (History of Marshall County, Iowa). After moving to Marshalltown, he took a leading position in his business, which extended over a large area of central Iowa. He had listings in the Marshalltown City Directories for the years 1878 through 1885. One advertisement read "Architect and Designer of Public and Private Buildings; School Buildings and Churches a Specialty. Estimates Made for Insurance Companies." Another said "Architect and Building Superintendent. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Opera House and School Work a Specialty."

Ellis was elected to the American Institute of Architecture in 1884 and became a member of the Architectural Association of Iowa in 1885. He was also a charter member of the Western Association of Architects. He moved from Marshalltown to the Omaha area in 1885. He was very active, particularly in Iowa, during the decade of the 1880's, with a variety of building types to his credit. These included residences, schools, churches, opera houses, insane asylums, stores, bank and office blocks, hotels, and courthouses. He was not limited to Iowa, however, having performed architectural design and supervision for buildings in Peoria, Warsaw, and McComb Illinois; Beatrice, Lincoln, and Norfolk, Nebraska; Brainard, Minnesota; and Huron, Canton, and Alexandria, in what was then the Dakota Territory and is now South Dakota. Among his larger projects in terms of cost were a Council Bluffs Methodist Church; the Green Opera House in Cedar Rapids, seating 2,000; an insane asylum and the Lancaster County Courthouse in Lincoln, Nebraska; a school in Anamosa, Iowa; and a Methodist Episcopal University building in Ordway, Dakota Territory.

A novel feature of Ellis's Presbyterian Church design not readily visible is the original space heating arrangement. Coal burning furnaces were installed on three sides of the lower level below the sanctuary. Venting the smoke and combustion gases to the outside required three brick chimneys, but the flues could not go directly upward because of the the large pointed arch stained glass windows centered in the gables on each wall above. The solution was to run two chimneys in each of the three walls alongside the windows to a position above the ceiling of the sanctuary. At this point the chimneys were made to slope toward each other and to join into one outlet just below the roof line. A single chimney then projected above each of the gable roofs.

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A highly significant feature of the Marion Presbyterian Church building is its eight-sided plan. There is another church building in Marion which has a short octagonal steeple open to the inside of the sanctuary, but the plan of the building is rectangular. To the writer's knowledge there are no other octagonal or partially octagonal buildings in Linn County, Iowa.

Although the four diagonal walls of the nominated building are somewhat shorter than the other walls, the visual effect as you face the front of the sanctuary leaves no doubt that the building is of octagonal plan form. The containment of the entrances within the diagonals at the rear allows the use of the large pointed arch stained glass windows in three of the long walls of the sanctuary. Together with the high pitched ceiling, this results in a definite feeling of spaciousness and openness.

Orson S. Fowler, an early enthusiast and backer of octagonal buildings in this country, cited a number of advantages for the use of the octagonal plan in churches. He stated that it facilitates the "congregation seeing each other, and the interchange of friendly and benignant feelings toward each other... The benign smile of recognition and good feeling enkindled...will spread from face to face." He said that the plan "accommodates those who wish to see and be seen" and that "audiences will feel the difference between the square and the octagon, most delightedly in favor of the octagon."

Perhaps the effect is not as dramatic as Fowler portrays it, but there is a feeling of community and togetherness engendered by the design of the sanctuary and the angled pew arrangement. A parishioner who suffered the tragic loss of a young son in a farm accident, in acknowledging the support and caring of the church members, alluded to the way that the sanctuary arrangement made him and his family feel surrounded by the love and solicitude of the congregation.

Some additional significance may attach to the church because of its location in relation to nearby buildings of note, such as the residences immediately to the east on Eighth Avenue. Some of these are of Italian Renaissance, Queen Anne, Second Empire, and other styles of the period following the construction of the church. Two blocks northwest of the church is the Granger House Museum, a beautifully restored 19th century brick and frame home which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Property: First Presbyterian Church of Marion, Iowa

The following information is the same for all of the photographs submitted:

Photographer: Lawrence V. Johnson

Date: Nos. 1 - 14, May 1991; nos. 15 - 24, February, 1992.

Location of original negatives: First Presbyterian Church
(Historical Committee Archives)

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1.	From SE, showing principal facades and surrounding area.
2.	From SE, showing closeup of tower and adjoining facades.
3.	From SW. Closeup of south wall and SW face of tower.
4.	From S. South and SW walls and SW and SE faces of tower.
5.	From E. Tower, east facade, and NE entryway.
6.	From SE. Closeup of tower entry and east face of structure.
7.	From NE. NE face of tower, east facade, and NE entryway.
8.	From N. Shows north face of structure and NE entryway.
9.	Interior from E. Shows west gable and ceiling trim.
10.	Interior from W, showing east gable with pointed arch window.
11.	Interior from W. Closeup of glass and tracery in east gable.
12.	Interior from N. Shows south gable, ceiling trim, and SE and SW octagonal walls.
13.	Interior from S. Shows north gable, ceiling trim, and NW and NE octagonal walls.
14.	Interior from NW. Shows east and south gables, ceiling trim, and SE octagonal wall.

(Continued on page 2.)

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Photographs listed below show the external and internal connections between the original building and the 1954 Education Building.

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
15.	Exterior from S. Shows Education building on left.
16.	Exterior from S. Closeup of connection between buildings.
17.	Exterior from N. Shows Education Building on right.
18.	Exterior from N. Closeup of connection between buildings.
19.	Interior: View from Education Building into sanctuary at NW entry.
20.	Interior: View from sanctuary into Education Building at NW entry.
21.	Interior: View from Education Building into sanctuary at SW entry.
22.	Interior: View from sanctuary into Education Building at SW entry.
23.	Interior: View from Education Building toward entry to dining area in lower level below sanctuary.
24.	Interior: View from dining area in lower level below sanctuary toward entry to Education Building.