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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Boniface Historic District

other names/site number St. Boniface Church & Rectory, St. Boniface School

2. Location

street & number 703 W. 5th St., 515 Cook St., 700 W. 6th St. N/A not for publication

city or town Sioux City N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Woodbury code 193 zip code 51103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 Sullivan King DSHPD 9-29-98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Edson A. Beall 11.5.98
Signature of the 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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church-related residence

RELIGION: church school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church-related residence

RELIGION: church school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other _____

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.)

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

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1910-1948

Significant Dates

1910

1911

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Darscheid, Brother Leonard

Steele, William LaBarthe

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

St. Boniface Historic District
Name of Property

Woodbury County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.29

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 14 712200 4708440
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

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 Timothy T. Orwig
organization SiouxLandmark Corp. date 26 September 1998
street & number 30 Stewart Ave. telephone 712-274-5333
city or town Sioux City state Iowa zip code 51104

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 St. Boniface Church
street & number 703 W. 5th Street telephone 712-255-3577
city or town Sioux City state Iowa zip code 51103

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.

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7. Narrative Description

Descriptive Summary Occupying an entire city block west of downtown Sioux City, Iowa, the St. Boniface Historic District is notable for its collection of buildings built by German immigrant parishioners, under the guidance of Franciscan fathers, in two architectural styles: a large Romanesque Revival church and rectory complex designed by Brother Leonard Darscheid, and a complementary school, and residence and heating plant, both designed by noted Prairie School architect William LaBarthe Steele. The district contains 3 buildings which are significant as a nearly-intact complex of religious buildings dedicated to the spiritual, social, and intellectual improvement of a diverse neighborhood. The district is in a moderate-income west side residential neighborhood with significant commercial infill, which was bisected by a four-lane boulevard in the 1960's; the church's steeple can be seen for miles and is a local landmark. The church fronts onto Omaha Street, but is addressed to W. 5th Street., where the rectory fronts. The church occupies the highest point of the block, the corner of W. 5th and Omaha, while the lowest point is the corner of W. 6th and Cook. On the northern half of the block, which is lower in elevation, the residence and heating plant is addressed to Cook Street, while the school fronts onto W. 6th Street. The buildings are all also accessible through rear doors from a central blacktopped parking lot, the site of a convent which was razed after a fire. The rest of the block is lawn and playground. The buildings are in good condition and have been well-maintained, although the school building has been altered from its original appearance.

Unifying Features Although the buildings in the district are of two distinct architectural styles, there are a number of unifying features, mostly attributable to how the sensitive modern revival designs of Prairie School architect William LaBarthe Steele complemented the traditional designs of Brother Leonard Darscheid. All buildings are brick, built within 13 years of each other. The major buildings have significant three-part organization of their facades. The decorative stone-capped stepped buttresses of the church are repeated in the rectory and the school building. The school also has three decorative arched windows which echo the windows of the church. The main entry of the school is round-arched and topped with a stone cross, as is the main entry of the church and of the rectory. Both Prairie School influenced, the residence and heating plant and its contemporary, the school, are united by their horizontal lines, flat roof, and contrasting concrete coping. The strong horizontals of these two buildings complement the east facade of the rectory, with its rectangular windows, exaggerated stone lintels, and strong horizontals. The tall chimney of the heating plant provides an odd counterpoint to the taller steeple of the church.

Building List The buildings are all within one city block. The streets in this area of Sioux City align with the river and the original 1854-55 platting, and do not run true north and south. For ease

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of description, facades are named after the predominant direction that they face. The church and rectory are one single building complex addressed to W. 5th. Street, although the church itself fronts onto Omaha Street, and was labeled as 500 Omaha St. on some early maps.

1. 703 W. 5th St. **St. Boniface Church and Rectory.** KEY Contributing. St. Boniface Church is a two-story brick, Romanesque Revival church with front gable roof and central 162 1/2 foot tall spire, which at the time of completion in 1911 was the highest in Sioux City. The roof, originally finished in slate, is asphalt shingle. The building, designed by a Franciscan architect, Brother Leonard Darscheid, features round and half-round arched windows, a stained-glass rose window, clerestory windows, stepped buttress supports, and rib-vaulted interior with stenciled walls and ceilings. The church is connected to the rectory by an enclosed two-story walkway. The rectory, located on the east side of the church, is a two-story brick building with a front gable roof, originally finished in slate but now asphalt shingle.

The church was constructed of Buffalo brick and Bedford limestone and is 160 feet long and 80 feet wide with an interior ceiling height of 54 feet. Buffalo brick are actually solid brick pavers 4 1/2" wide x 9" long x 4 1/2" thick. They were manufactured in Buffalo, New York and touted as the hardest brick one could purchase. Following the dedication ceremony, the *Sioux City Journal* reported that the new church was "one of the most imposing and costly churches"¹ and the largest church in Iowa.²

The building features a front-gabled symmetrical west (front) facade which is vertically divided into three bays by stepped wall buttresses with decorative stone caps. The bays also are divided horizontally by decorative limestone banding that runs along all facades of the building. Decorative arched corbel brickwork supports each of the running limestone bands, and corbel tables support the front gable. Within each of the front bays is an arched entry door, each with arched transom and inset round window. The arched door surround is comprised of decorative limestone banding and pilaster supports topped by cushion capitals decorated with carved leaves.

¹ "Dedicatory Services Will Be Held Today at this Large New Church and Monastery," *Sioux City Journal* 4 September 1911, pg. 8.

² "Bishop Dedicates Church," *Sioux City Journal*, 5 September 1911, pg. 7.

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The center entry on the west facade is the building's main focal point. Contained within this bay is the arched doorway which rises to the limestone banding and comes to a gable peak topped by a stone cross. The cross rises to a tall rose window, above which is arched brickwork and horizontal limestone banding. Above the banding rests a decorative arched limestone nook, and another corbel table below the gable, which is also topped with a cross. The two side bays mirror each other in appearance. Each side bay contains an arched entrance with decorative limestone door surround and pilaster supports. Above the door is decorative arched brick work topped by limestone banding. Resting on the limestone band is an arched stained glass window. Above the window is decorative arched brickwork topped by horizontal limestone banding.

The tent steeple rises from the gable peak of the front (west) facade. It is an eight-sided, highly decorated tower that includes tall, arched, louvered openings rising to gable peaks and capped by a tall eight-sided steeple. The steeple, which has a copper roof, rises steeply to a point topped by a third cross, covered in gold leaf.

The north and south facades feature four decorative gable dormers each, decorative horizontal beltcourse banding and arched corbel brickwork, and tall, arched stained glass windows. The west end of each of these facades repeats the three-part organization of the center front bay, with a short projecting bay framed by wall buttresses topped by square corner pinnacles. Above this is a small rose window topped by a corbelled wall dormer, again flanked by wall buttresses topped by square corner pinnacles. Each of the pinnacles has a blind window inset topped by an arch on all four sides. Most of the windows in the church have a simple half-round hood molding, stone sills, and are often, particularly in the clerestory, three-part: a single large window flanked by a pair of smaller windows. The north and south facades also each have two quatrefoil windows on the first floor.

The building's east facade angles eastward, tapering into a large east bay that extends out to contain the high altar on the interior. This bay is topped by a corbeled half-conical roof with a metal-covered wood cross at the top. The south corner of the east facade is a squared two-story flat-roofed structure, with a side sacristy on the second floor and a street-level entrance to the basement fellowship hall below. Attached to the north corner of the east facade is a two-story hipped-roof walkway leading to the rectory. The walkway features a series of arched windows.

The church interior is as impressive as the exterior. The full basement serves a variety of social and school functions, while the nave currently seats 464 (originally 750). Sixty-six stained glass windows provide light into the vaulted nave. These "Munich Glass" windows were handmade in

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Germany in 1910, and duplication cost was recently estimated at \$500,000 to \$1,000,000.³ Decoratively stenciled, 54 foot tall ceilings and brightly colored walls lend a light and airy feeling to the large, imposing space. Upon entering the nave, the worshiper feels his or her gaze drawn upward from the base of the columns to the ribbed ceiling, then forward along the ribs of the ceiling to the high altar. The high altar and the side altars are original to the church and have never been modified. The wood for the altars cost \$2300 and was donated by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Meyers, who also donated other fixtures. The altars were carved by a Franciscan brother. The high altar contains wood statues of St. Boniface and St. Patrick. The two side altars contain statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of St. Joseph. Located along the two side aisles are hand-carved oak confessionals, two on either side, and Stations of the Cross. The northwest confessional has been converted into a lift, although the woodwork has been retained to disguise it. The Wick pipe organ was installed in the rear choir loft in 1955.

The attached rectory, like the church, is constructed of brick and Bedford limestone. It is a 2 1/2 story, front-gabled building with dormers, and 2 over 2 double-hung rectangular windows with transoms. The building continues the brick and limestone detailing found on the church: limestone banding, hood molds, and arched corbel brickwork. The south facade has a small brick entryway (added in 1955) attached to the wall buttresses which frame the front door. The different function of this part of the building is evident in the Richardsonian windows, which are smaller and rectangular, particularly on the east facade, with exaggerated thick stone sills, lintels, and transom bars. Also on the east facade are two wall buttresses topped by gabled roof dormers, and a side entrance to the former garden. On the north facade are two square chimneys and a lower 2 story addition with hipped roof. The interior has a number of original details, including transomed doorways, varnished woodwork, and pressed tin ceilings in the hallways. The stained glass window over the rectory door depicts the Franciscan coat of arms. Originally the lawn to the east of the rectory was surrounded with a high brick wall, enclosing a meditation garden cloister for the Franciscans. The deteriorated wall was removed in 1991.

2. 515 Cook St. **Residence and Heating Plant.** Contributing. This small, plain, two-story rectangular brick building, approx. 60 x 36 feet, was designed by Prairie School architect William LaBarthe Steele, who designed the neighboring school which was also completed in 1924. The original blueprints for the building are in the collection of the Sioux City Public Museum.⁴ The

³ "Stained Glass Window Information," *St. Boniface Quarterly Report*, April 1993.

⁴ *Boiler House and Janitors Quarters for St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church, Sioux City, Iowa., Wm. L. Steele*

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building has a small one-story brick entrance extension. The plain walls are punctuated with simple one over one windows, and topped with a concrete coping and a flat pitch gravel roof. Directly behind the building, and attached at the basement level, is a large concrete smokestack (98 feet tall). Individual branch steam lines extend to the school and church and rectory. The current boiler was installed in 1957 and will need replacement soon.⁵

3. 700 W. 6th St. **St. Boniface School.** Contributing. This three-story rectangular fireproof brick building, 153 x 66 ft., was designed by Prairie School architect William LaBarthe Steele in a revival style designed to complement St. Boniface Church. A drawing of the building, published at the time of the foundation work, shows Steele's original concept for the building, "constructed of reinforced concrete, with stone trimmings to correspond with the church building."⁶ It cost \$95,000 to build. Both it and the residence and heating plant were completed in 1924. The long horizontal lines of the banded windows and sills are crossed by strong vertical lines of narrow wall buttresses, stepped and capped with ornamental stone as in the church. The north and south facades have three parts, a form which derives from the interior function of three classrooms on each side of a central hall corridor. Each bay on each floor has three sets of three windows, three vertical panes over three vertical panes. The projecting center bay of the north facade has a single set of steps leading up to a front-gabled compound entryway with a recessed double doorway topped by an arched transom and hood mold with an impost course. The gable is surmounted by a plain stone cross. At each end of the north facade are small bays, blank except for a ground-level double door with arched transom, brick hood molding, and an impost course. The east and west facades are blank except for two pairs of windows on each floor. The building has a flat pitch gravel roof.

This building is the most altered of the buildings in the complex. Many windows have been covered over. Several decades ago the north facade of the brick exterior was encased in a thick rubberized waterproof coating which has begun to peel in patches. The decorative work around the arch of the front door is spalled in places. The interior details of the bottom floor have been

Architect, Drawn by WWH, Rev. July 11th 1923, Fl. Church #2, Blueprint Collection, Sioux City Public Museum.

⁵ *Structure Analysis of St. Boniface Church & Rectory*, Duffy Ruble Mamura Brygger, Architects and Engineers, Sioux City, 1993.

⁶ "West Side Catholic Parish Starts to Build New School," *Sioux City Sunday Journal* 27 May 1923.

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completely reworked. Restrooms were added on all floors during renovation, but the original woodwork and terrazzo floors remain on the upper two stories.

While the school may not currently be architecturally contributing due to alterations, it is still essential to the history, function, and unity of the district. The building has been well-maintained in many respects, and the parish is interested in restoring it. For example, the main entrance to the school was dismantled and completely reconstructed, as originally designed, by the W.A. Klinger Company in 1993. William "Bill" Cullen, born and baptized in St. Boniface parish in 1930, was the job foreman. He and Ronald Smith relaid all of the original brick and stone, replacing and repairing weather damaged and improperly weatherized materials only as needed. Cullen graduated from St. Boniface school in 1945 and served his apprenticeship under two Katzenberger boys, whose grandfather was one of the founding families of the parish. Cullen died in September of 1996.

Alterations Alterations to both the church and rectory have been minimal. In 1968 new doors were added, and the church was tuckpointed in 1993-94. In the 1950's a garage was located on the south side of the complex and tucked in the "U" formed by the church, walkway, and rectory. Although the garage does not conform to the building in style, it is not intrusive and does not destroy the character of the church and rectory. A car-port and storage area were added on the north side of the "U" after 1973, with similar disconformity and effect. Other alterations to the buildings include the removal of the crumbling slate roof and replacement with asphalt shingles. While no historic photos of the residence and heating plant are known to exist, there is no apparent alteration. The structure seems to correspond with the recently-discovered blueprints.

One significant structure has been razed: a three-story brick convent which originally stood at 510 Omaha Street. Contemporaneous with the church and rectory, it was designed by the same architect, Brother Leonard Darscheid, and matched the church and rectory in style. After a fire in 1992, the convent was razed and replaced by a parking lot in 1993. Also, a non-contributing temporary classroom building was removed in 1998. It was a modern one-story trailer with wooden siding which sat in the playground courtyard at the northeast corner of the block. It is still shown on the attached site plan which was completed in 1997. An interesting Model T-sized garage, immediately west of the residence and heating plant, was removed in the 1960's.

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8. Statement of Significance

Occupying an entire city block west of downtown Sioux City, Iowa, the St. Boniface Historic District is locally significant under Criterion C because it contains three buildings which are important as a nearly-intact complex of early 20th Century religious buildings. The complex features exceptional buildings by two noteworthy architects: a large Romanesque Revival church and rectory complex designed by Brother Leonard Darscheid, and a complementary revival style school, and residence and heating plant, both designed by noted Prairie School architect William LaBarthe Steele. St. Boniface Church and Rectory was constructed in 1910 and dedicated in 1911, while St. Boniface School and the residence and heating plant were dedicated in 1924. These years are the three significant dates, while the period of significance begins in 1910 and continues until 1948, fifty years ago. The district meets Criteria Consideration A because, although it is owned by a religious organization and used primarily for religious purposes, it is significant for its historic and architectural importance. The district is significant under Criterion A for its association with the first settlement by an order of holy brothers in the Sioux City Diocese and the first Franciscan settlement in the state of Iowa, dedicated to the spiritual, social, and intellectual improvement of a diverse neighborhood. The buildings are in good condition and have been well-maintained, although the school building has been significantly altered from its original appearance.

History of the Sioux City Diocese A number of Catholic missionaries traveled through Sioux City on their way to Indian settlements along the upper Missouri River, receiving supplies and resting before continuing their journey. Father Pierre DeSmet was one such prominent visitor in 1850; he celebrated the first mass and baptized 14 children.⁷

The Catholic community was organized in Sioux City in 1857, three years after the city was founded, when a number of the Irish Catholic residents decided to form a congregation, with Rev. Jeremiah Treacy as visiting priest. During Sioux City's growth and expansion years from approximately 1857 to 1893, Sioux City was a supply town for settlements and military outposts in the Dakotas. By 1862, the group purchased a lot on the corner of West 7th and Perry streets, and constructed their first church. By 1867, the small church received its first resident pastor. The

⁷ Several secondary sources were consulted for this background information: *History of St. Boniface Parish* (unpublished, undated mimeograph); "Centennial Directory"; "A Catholic Presence in Northwest Iowa for 150 Years: 1995 Sioux City Diocesan Annual Report"; "Five Bishops Lead in 95 Years," *Sioux City Journal* 8 October 1997, A12; and Joanne M. Fox, "Catholic Parishes in Sioux City," *The History of Woodbury County, Iowa* (Sioux City: Woodbury County Genealogical Society, 1984), pp. 142-144.

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following year, with the completion of the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad, new settlers migrated to Sioux City. The small church on West 7th Street saw an increase in membership which resulted in a building expansion project. The congregation continued to grow as other rail lines were built through Sioux City.

By 1873, it was clear that the small church on West 7th Street could not meet the needs of Sioux City's ever-growing Catholic population. In 1875, the congregation began constructing a new church on the northwest corner of 6th and Pierce Streets, and dedicated it as St. Mary's Catholic Church. In 1888, land for a third St. Mary's was purchased at 10th and Douglas Streets. During these formative years, northwest Iowa was part of several dioceses, the last being the sprawling Archdiocese of Dubuque. But on January 15, 1902, the Diocese of Sioux City was established, encompassing the 24 counties in the northwest corner of the state. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Philip J. Garrigan (1840-1919), vice-rector of the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., was its first bishop. As one of his first actions in 1902, Garrigan renamed the third St. Mary's as the Cathedral of the Epiphany.

Since its founding nearly a century ago, membership of the Diocese of Sioux City has doubled, and in response the diocese has built dozens of religious structures.

At the time of the diocese's founding, its total Catholic population numbered 50,000 people spread over a wide expanse of territory. The growth of the general population of Northwest Iowa in the early years of the Twentieth century was paralleled by a growth in the Catholic population. By 1920 the Catholic Population grew to nearly 75,000.⁸

In 1995, the Diocese of Sioux City had 128 parishes and over 100,000 Catholics.

St. Boniface Parish In the years between 1880 and 1890, Sioux City experienced phenomenal population growth, from 7,000 in 1880 to 39,000 in 1890. To meet the spiritual needs of its Catholic residents, the church established new parishes in Sioux City. St. Boniface became the second parish in Sioux City. Its namesake, Bishop Boniface, was born in England in 675, became a missionary to Germany, and died a martyr in 754. He is sometimes called the "Apostle of Germany."

⁸ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone: The Ecclesiastical Designs of William LaBarthe Steele, 1907-1928* (A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree Master of Architectural History, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, May 1994), pg. 31.

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In December, 1885, twenty-three German-speaking families met and organized the new parish. The following year, this small group purchased two lots on the corner of West Fifth and Main Streets. A full year after their initial organizational meeting, Reverend John A. Gerleman was appointed pastor of St. Boniface parish and 6 months after that, work began on a combination church and school building. The Franciscan Sisters of Dubuque sent teachers for the new school. The congregation built a parochial residence in 1889. As Sioux City's population continued to grow so did its churches. St. Boniface bought more property and expanded the church and school. In 1894, the Sisters of Christian Charity, from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, took over the school. Father Herman J. Schleier became the second priest in 1902, and began a building fund. In 1906, Bishop Garrigan transferred Schleier to Leeds to found St. Michael's and gave control of the rapidly expanding German parish to the Franciscan Fathers.

Franciscans Come to St. Boniface In 1906, Bishop Philip J. Garrigan invited the Franciscans from the Province of the Sacred Heart to take over St. Boniface parish and church. St. Boniface was the first of three Franciscan friaries in Iowa, followed by Holy Trinity in Dubuque (1910) and a third in Waterloo.⁹ The story of the Franciscans' arrival is recounted in *Heralds of the King*:

In January, 1906, Bishop Garrigan personally went to St. Louis to ask the Franciscans to make a foundation in his diocese; and on August 1 of that year Father Seraphin Lampe, accompanied by Brother Samuel Rieschel, arrived at Sioux City to take charge of St. Boniface parish and to open a friary in the rectory. At this time the parish consisted of 320 souls. Father Seraphin continued to gather funds for a new church, and purchased property for it as well as for a projected separate parish for the Polish Catholics of the city. The present large brick church of St. Boniface, with a parish hall in the basement, was built in 1910-1911 by Father Raban [Rabanus] Thill, who, with Father Honoratus Bonzelet as assistant, succeeded Father Seraphin in 1909. Father Honoratus in turn followed Father Raban as pastor from 1911 to 1916.¹⁰

⁹ Fr. Marion Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pp. 314-18.

¹⁰ Fr. Marion Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 315.

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Correspondence concerning St. Boniface, from the Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City, sheds more light on the reasons that the Franciscans were asked to come. In a letter to Rome, Bishop Garrigan asks for “blessing upon this the first Franciscan Mission in the State of Iowa.”¹¹ He noted that “the congregation is largely German, but many English-speaking Catholics also attend this church.” In a draft of a letter to the offices of the Province of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, he argues,

There is not a religious body of priests in my whole diocese, and I am anxious to introduce a Community of Franciscans, Friars Minor, into the diocese and into our Episcopal City. I would like to give them charge of a little German church and quasi parish. They are much needed as Confessors for female religious communities, and for the secular priests, who often come to this city on business. Moreover they may be able to provide for Slavic and other Catholics of a foreign tongue, many of whom are in our midst but will not attend the English-speaking churches. These Franciscans will serve many good purposes of religion. . . .

Therefore I humbly pray . . . to transfer . . . this German church and the care of its people and temporalities.¹²

While these reasons are compelling arguments, they are only part of the story.

Garrigan’s action was met by resistance from the German parishioners of St. Boniface, who presented a petition opposing the transfer. They argued that St. Boniface had always been a German parish, and that the transfer would mean that Italians, Bohemians, and Poles would become members of the parish:

A brief reference to the history . . . of our parish will disclose that the same was founded and established, and at all times maintained as essentially a German parish. . . . Established on this fundamental (sic) idea of preserving to its members the German Language and character, it confined and restricted its membership to those Catholics of the German Nationality, Birth, Parentage, Extraction or Descent, and it has at all times been under the spiritual guidance of priests of German birth or descent.¹³

¹¹ Letter from Bishop P.J. Garrigan to the Father General of the Friars Minor, Rome Italy, March 20, 1906, Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City.

¹² Letter draft in the Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City.

¹³ Petition to the Right Reverend Philip J. Garrigan, undated, Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City.

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Garrigan did not yield to the petition, and the transfer went through. Although no other statement by Garrigan is known to exist, he must have wanted to better assimilate this German “quasi parish” so that it was responsive to other ethnic minorities. What better way than to assign it to an outside mission of German Franciscan brothers? The Articles of Agreement for the transfer of St. Boniface, which are in the archives of the Diocese of Sioux City, are dated April 26, 1906. Fr. Seraphin Lampe arrived in Sioux City on August 1 to take over the new parish.¹⁴

Ethnic Parishes in Sioux City The basis for the debate between Bishop Garrigan and the parishioners was whether St. Boniface was an ethnic parish or an ethnic based “quasi parish,” which would be responsive to other ethnic traditions. Like any rapidly growing city of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Sioux City was home to a diverse mix of ethnic groups. Facing St. Boniface School for many decades was a synagogue built by Russian Jews. At the height of the Eastern European immigration, Sioux City had seven synagogues, and the city has always had a proportionally high ethnic population, when compared to other Iowa cities.

Some of the pressure for integration of other groups into St. Boniface was relieved when the Franciscans of St. Boniface established a separate parish for Poles. “The parish of St. Francis of Assisi, founded in 1907 for the Polish-speaking Catholics of Sioux City, has been attended ever since by a Franciscan of St. Boniface Friary.”¹⁵ St. Francis parish dedicated its first church, also built under the direction of the Franciscans, in the packinghouse district, in 1910. The Franciscan fathers continued to operate that parish until the 1960s.

Bishop Garrigan continued pressing to change St. Boniface from its ethnic identity to a neighborhood identity. In 1910, he formalized the change in church status by establishing parish boundaries. The *Sioux City Journal*, reporting on the new boundaries, was almost confrontational in its wording of article subtitles, although the article itself was mostly a listing of street boundaries:

BISHOP GARRIGAN TELLS CATHOLICS WHERE TO WORSHIP
MUST GET PERMIT TO CHANGE

¹⁴ “Franciscans Take Parish,” *Sioux City Journal* 2 August 1906, pg. 5; “Franciscans Arrive,” *Sioux City Tribune* 2 August 1906, pg. 5.

¹⁵ Fr. Marion Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 316.

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Parishioners Cannot Go from One Parish to Another Without Letter of Consent from Pastor--New Rule is of Importance.¹⁶

These new boundaries supplemented boundaries which were already in place for other parishes: Cathedral, Sacred Heart, St. Michael's, St. Joseph's, and Immaculate Conception. With this change, only St. Jean the Baptist and St. Francis were ethnically identified. By 1913, Father Honoratus Bonzelet of St. Boniface noted in a letter to Bishop Garrigan that the prevailing nationality of the parish was Irish, and that only one third of the parish remained German.¹⁷

Nationally, the trend throughout the first half of this century and beyond has been for ethnically-based parishes to slowly lose their ethnicity and become more defined by parish boundaries and other factors. This trend has been encouraged by church leaders eager to help new immigrants assimilate, and to consolidate administrative structures. Thus we have seen the rise of the "triple melting pot." Marilyn Chiat, a scholar studying the history of religious architecture in the United States, describes the process:

By the mid-Twentieth Century, third-generation Americans were coming of age and, according to scholars studying the sociology of religion in the United States, were transforming the nation from a "land of immigrants" into a "triple melting pot" restructured into three great faiths: Protestant, Catholic, Jew. Unable or unwilling to recover their grandparents' foreign culture, it was argued, they chose instead to identify with their religion, but now in a form that was viewed as American with shared ideals and values. As would be expected, not to identify with one of the three faiths was to be an outsider.¹⁸

Besides St. Boniface, four other Sioux City Roman Catholic parishes were ethnically identified when they were founded: St. Jean Baptiste (1889-1967) for French Catholics, Annunciation (1912-1955) for Italians and Syrians, St. Francis of Assisi (1907-1998) for Poles, and St. Casimir (1915-1998) for Lithuanians. With the first two churches long razed and the latter two closed by the Diocese in 1998, St. Boniface is the only ethnically-based Catholic church remaining in Sioux City, quite possibly because it lost its ethnic identity early in its history.

¹⁶ "Dividing Lines Are Drawn," *Sioux City Journal* 5 April 1910, pg. 6.

¹⁷ Letter from Honoratus Bonzelet, O.F.M. to Bishop Garrigan, July 7, 1913.

¹⁸ Marilyn J. Chiat, *America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community* (New York: Preservation/John Wiley, 1997), pp. 16-17.

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However, this trend may be reversing, somewhat, on a national basis. Chiat notes the tension that remains between these two movements:

As the century progressed, it became increasingly apparent that although most religions have been influenced to some degree by the nation's pervasive Protestant ethos, many religious institutions have quite consciously attempted to maintain their native traditions--architectural, liturgical, and cultural. The "triple melting pot" has evolved into a many-hued mosaic. . . . Ethnicity and religion in the United States remain intertwined and continue to identify who people are, and even guide where they live.¹⁹

It is unlikely that that reversal will take place in Sioux City.

Overview of the Franciscan Presence at St. Boniface During the eighty years that the Franciscans controlled St. Boniface, 16 men served as the head pastor:

1906-1909	Fr. Seraphin Lampe
1909-1911	Fr. Rabanus Thill
1911-1917	Fr. Honoratus Bonzelet (also, briefly, in 1939)
1917-1930	Fr. Alphonse Bergener
1930-1931	Fr. Josaphat Kraus
1931-1936	Fr. John Curry
1936-1939	Fr. Albert Limacher
1939-1950	Fr. Frederick Beck
1950-1951	Fr. Oswald Gaspar
1951-1954	Fr. Cloud Billig
1954-1956	Fr. Phillip Koehler
1956-1963	Fr. Ralph Scherrer
1963-1968	Fr. Donulus Wunderlich
1968-1975	Fr. Odoric Akwick
1975-1982	Fr. Sylvester Micek
1982-1986	Fr. James Keefner

Between 1906 and 1981, 103 other Franciscan men worked at St. Boniface.²⁰

¹⁹ Marilyn J. Chiat, *America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community*, pp. 16-17.

²⁰ *Commemorating 75 Years of the Franciscans in Sioux City, Iowa, 1906-1981*.

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The Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart was founded in 1858 in Teutopolis, Illinois, by nine friars from the Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross in Paderborn, Westphalia, Germany.²¹ An additional group of friars arrived at Teutopolis from Germany almost every year after that until 1876. Their ranks were swelled by other Franciscans leaving Germany because of the Kulturkampf, beginning in 1875. The province was canonically established by Rome in 1879. Originally its territory extended from Ohio to California and Louisiana, and the Franciscans established a number of friaries, seminaries and colleges. Today, their mission outreach extends to Alaska, Brazil, China, and Zaire. The province website notes:

Living together as brothers, we have a particular affinity for the poor and disadvantaged. We desire to walk with those who feel they are powerless, to speak with those whose voices often are not heard, and to associate with those who are neglected and rejected in our society.²²

Because they have limited personnel and resources, the Franciscans often reevaluate their missions in light of these goals. In 1986 the Franciscans announced that they were leaving Sioux City. Father Dismas Bonner, Minister Provincial of the Franciscan Friars of the Sacred Heart Province, outlined the reasons for their departure in a letter to the parishioners:

The downward vocation trend, coupled with the loss of active priests and brothers through sickness, death and just plain aging, leads to a constantly shrinking pool of able-bodied friars to meet our commitments. . . . Our primary vocation is not to be priests, but to be Franciscan Friars. Taking our cue from St. Francis, who so loved the poor, we friars have pledged to give special preference to those who suffer from poverty and injustice and to minority peoples. Thus you will find our friars seeking to serve Native Americans, Hispanic peoples and the black community or in a foreign mission context.²³

²¹ "Province of the Sacred Heart." Sacred Heart Franciscan Province Home Page. <http://www.quincy.edu/shp-friars/history.html>. 2 November 1997.

²² "Province of the Sacred Heart." Sacred Heart Franciscan Province Home Page. <http://www.quincy.edu/shp-friars/history.html>. 2 November 1997.

²³ "Franciscans to Leave Diocese in June," *The Globe*, 13 February 1986.

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With the congregation of St. Boniface thoroughly integrated into Sioux City culture, the Franciscans sought missions elsewhere. Since the Franciscans left in 1986, three diocesan priests have served as the primary pastor at St. Boniface: Fr. Don Ries (1986-1993), with Fr. Richard Sitzmann, assistant; Fr. Marvin Boes (1993-1998); and Fr. Kevin Richter (starting in 1998).

The Building of St. Boniface Church and Rectory In 1907, Father Seraphin Lampe, St. Boniface's Franciscan pastor, purchased six lots a block west of the church on West Fifth Street, between Cook and Omaha Streets, for \$9000. The Franciscans began plans to build a new complex of brick buildings to replace the crowded frame structures on the northwestern quarter block at West Fifth and Main. On April 5, 1910, Brother Leonard Darscheid, a Franciscan architect, arrived to design and supervise the construction of a new church, the Franciscan residence (rectory), the convent, and a tall brick wall to conceal a private garden adjacent to the rectory.²⁴ Contracts for the work were to be let within two weeks after Brother Leonard's arrival. When the complex was finished, a St. Boniface pamphlet bragged, "Nowhere west of Chicago can be found a more complete community of buildings devoted to the spiritual and mental guidance of the old and the young."²⁵

Excavation for St. Boniface was begun on May 2, 1910, by a Mr. Mooney.²⁶ John Williams of Chicago was the contractor for the brick and cement work and Dan Egan of Ashland, Wisconsin, was contractor for the carpentry. According to current church members, the Franciscan brothers made up the actual construction team erecting the entire church complex, but this cannot be verified. The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1910, by Bishop Garrigan, and contained a glass case with a document, in German, Latin, and English, explaining the history of the day. Five hundred people processed from the old church to the site of the new, and sermons were preached in German and English from a platform erected near the cornerstone.²⁷ Bishop Garrigan then preached a main address on the compatibility of the church and the government.²⁸ The last services were preached

²⁴ "St. Boniface Church Will Be Built Soon," *Sioux City Daily Tribune* 5 April 1910, pg. 7.

²⁵ *Instructions for Members of St. Boniface's Parish, West Fifth and Omaha Streets*, 30 pp., c.1915.

²⁶ *St. Boniface Church Year Book 1930*. St. Boniface Church, Sioux City, Iowa.

²⁷ "Bishop to Place Stone," *Sioux City Journal* 3 July 1910, pg. 5.

²⁸ "Services at Laying of Stone Beautiful," *Sioux City Tribune* 4 July 1910, pg. 8; "Corner Stone in Place," *Sioux City Journal* 5 July 1910, pg. 5.

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in the old church on Holy Saturday, April 5, 1911, and services moved to the basement hall of the new building for Easter Sunday and thereafter.

By May of 1911, St. Boniface had secured another quarter block, at the corner of W. 6th and Omaha, and construction on the buildings was nearing completion. A newspaper account notes, "Three-quarters of a valuable block on the West Side have been devoted to church purposes, and is being improved upon with modern brick structures."²⁹ Construction of the complex of three structures was overseen by Brother Darscheid:

A new friary at the rear of the church and a sisters' convent were constructed at the same time as the church. The plans for these buildings were made by Brother Leonard Darscheid, who also superintended their construction.³⁰

The rectory was dedicated on April 24, 1911.

By September of 1911, the church was ready for dedication, its spire decorated in flags and bunting.³¹ Although a piece of the altar had not yet arrived, dedication went forward as planned on September 4, with 1000 men marching from the Knights of Columbus Hall downtown to St. Boniface for the three-hour ceremony. After a procession of clergy and laypeople circled the church, sprinkling it with holy water, over 1500 filled the church and listened to sermons in German and English. A journalist noted, "The three buildings of uniform color and material form a striking picture."³² The church cost \$94,000 and the rectory \$33,000.³³ The school and convent building was dedicated September 18, 1911, and cost \$22,800.³⁴ The sisters were unable to move in, however, until October 30, 1911.³⁵

²⁹ "Franciscans Hope to Dedicate St. Boniface Church in July," *Sioux City Tribune* 6 May 1911, pg. 2.

³⁰ Fr. Marion Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 315.

³¹ "Dedicatory Services Will Be Held Today at this Large New Church and Monastery," *Sioux City Journal* 4 September 1911, pg. 8.

³² "Fine New Edifice Dedicated with Due Ceremonies," *Sioux City Tribune* 4 September 1911, pg. 1.

³³ Letter from Honoratus Bonzelet, O.F.M. to Bishop Garrigan, July 7, 1913.

³⁴ Letter from Honoratus Bonzelet, O.F.M. to Bishop Garrigan, July 7, 1913; *St. Boniface Church Year Book 1930*, St. Boniface Church, Sioux City, Iowa.

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The total debt burden for the parish was over \$150,000. Bishop Garrigan became very concerned when Father Rabanus Thill was transferred in November of 1911. He wrote the province office, begging them to reconsider:

But the conditions there are far from being a settled and well-organized parish. It takes time to do this and it takes a man of his character to do it. This is all important in view of the heavy debt of the parish which is now between \$90,000.00 and \$100,000.00. Now, the responsibility for this debt is on my shoulders as all the property there is in my name, and I cannot see how another man taking hold of the parish at this stage of the work can control the debt and improve the social, educational and religious life of the parish. I am unwilling to assume the responsibility for all this formative and financial condition, and had I known that this would happen, I could not in conscience have allowed the work to go ahead on such a large scale.³⁶

Schmidt wrote back to Garrigan that Father Rabanus had been transferred because of concern for his managerial skills, and he assured Garrigan, "Be not the least alarmed concerning the financial responsibility. We consider the debt incurred in Sioux City our own."³⁷

Romanesque Architectural Style St. Boniface church and rectory were designed in Romanesque Revival architectural style. A style of European architecture containing both Roman and Byzantine elements, Romanesque reached its height in the 11th and 12th centuries in churches, when it was gradually superseded by Gothic architecture. Carole Rifkind notes how American ecclesiastical architecture gradually moved from Greek Revival to a revival of Gothic and Romanesque:

The feeling grew that pagan forms were hardly appropriate for Christian worship, that the intensely religious Middle Ages could provide more appropriate models. . . . In the 1840s and 1850s, the self-contained, horizontal, monumental, static mass of

³⁵ *History of St. Boniface Parish*, 1952, St. Boniface Church, Sioux City, Iowa.

³⁶ Letter from Bishop P.J. Garrigan to V. Rev. Benedict Schmidt, O.F.M., November 14, 1911. Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City.

³⁷ Fr. Benedict Schmidt, O.F.M., to Rt. Rev. P.J. Garrigan, D.D., November 16, 1911. Archives of the Diocese of Sioux City.

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Greek temple-church gave way to the irregular, vertical, picturesque, and lively forms of the Gothic and Romanesque Revival. . . . While the Gothic Revival was particularly favored by Episcopalian and Catholic parishes, the German or Italian Romanesque or early Renaissance style was generally preferred by Congregationalist, Methodist, Baptist, and other low-church groups. The distinguishing characteristics of the Romanesque was its use of the round arch for door and window openings and its distinctive rounded moldings. In mood, it was less spiritual than the Gothic, but more reasoned; less picturesque, but more serene.³⁸

As the century drew on, churches responded to the rapidly growing cities with larger and more elaborate variations on these two basic styles. "Within a larger configuration that included parish house, lecture room, day-care center, social hall, and gymnasium, the house of worship was but a constituent element."³⁹ Gradually this caused a change in massing in church complexes, and the meeting house church was replaced by entire districts like the St. Boniface Historic District.

This change in form was complemented by a qualitative change in the use of Romanesque and Gothic styles. By early in this century, "Twentieth-century church design is careful and correct in selecting historical details, and inventive in using them to fulfill modern requirements. . . . Proportions are generally horizontal, accentuated by tall tower or high dome. Ornament is generally selected from a single historical style."⁴⁰

Certainly another key to the choice of Romanesque was the German ethnic history of the congregation, and of the Franciscans of the Province of St. Louis. Throughout Eastern Iowa, Germans looked to the country of their origin for architectural inspiration:

The source of this style appears to be the Romanesque and Gothic churches of Germany where churches of this type have a long history and continued to be built into the 19th century. The type was brought to Iowa and the Midwest by German settlers, particularly by settlers who were architects. . . . There appears to have been

³⁸ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Plume/Penguin, 1980), p. 137.

³⁹ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Plume/Penguin, 1980), p. 146.

⁴⁰ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, p. 158.

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a church-building period in Germany in the late 19th century, the same time that similar churches were being constructed in America. This makes the Catholic churches of Eastern Iowa part of that European development.⁴¹

The use of a German-influenced Romanesque style was the ideal for St. Boniface, on the western edge of the state of Iowa, for a web of related reasons.

Romanesque Architecture in Sioux City Since Brother Darscheid was brought in from the Province Office to design the buildings, there is little connection to the local Romanesque tradition. Sioux City churches of the time were predominantly Gothic Revival, although Romanesque churches include the Danish Lutheran, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox, St. Casimir's Lithuanian Catholic Church, St. Thomas Orthodox Church, and First Congregational Church (razed). Sioux City's Romanesque tradition is richest in the Richardsonian Romanesque substyle of the 1880s and 1890s. "Sioux City (was) far and away the leading site of Richardsonian influence in Iowa. . . ."⁴² Two prominent Richardsonian Romanesque churches are St. Thomas Episcopal and St. Joseph's Catholic Church. While many of the Richardsonian Romanesque structures have been razed, nearly two dozen remain, including buildings in the Fourth Street Historic District, City Hall, Charles City College Hall at Morningside College, Central High School, Smith School, and the Sioux City Public Museum.

Brother Leonard Darscheid Brother Leonard Darscheid "designed the architectural plans for the building and supervised the construction,"⁴³ of St. Boniface church and rectory, and also the convent/school (razed). Leonard (Lawrence) Darscheid was born in Moselweis (Trier) Germany on July 12, 1858, and came to America after the Kulturkampf in Germany.⁴⁴ He was invested at

⁴¹ National Register Nomination. Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Johnson County, Iowa.

⁴² Paul Clifford Larson, "H.H. Richardson Goes West: The Rise and Fall of an Eastern Star," pp. 18-42 in *The Spirit of H.H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies: Regional Transformations of an Architectural Style*, Ed. Paul Clifford Larson (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), pg. 19.

⁴³ *Instructions for Members of St. Boniface's Parish, West Fifth and Omaha Streets*, 30 pp., c. 1915.

⁴⁴ The details of Darscheid's life come from documents provided by Denise Thuston, archivist of the Archives of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, 3140 Meramec Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63118: "Bro. Leonard Dies in 87th Year," obituary with no publication information; Brother Leonard's log (RG: 2.2.4); and his Bio-Sheet (RG: 2.2.4). Additional information is from Fr. Marion A. Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958). The Archives also provided two pictures of Brother Leonard: an early picture (dated 1885) taken shortly after

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Teutopolis, Illinois, in 1884, and continued in the order until his death on April 1, 1944, in Omaha, Nebraska; he is buried in St. Mary Magdalen Cemetery in Omaha. According to his obituary, "Many of the churches in the Sacred Heart Province of the Franciscan Fathers were designed, supervised and constructed by Brother Leonard."⁴⁵ Listed in the obituary are three Nebraska structures Darscheid designed: the Franciscan School at Tarnov, St. Anthony's Church in Columbus, and St. Joseph's Church, Omaha, where his funeral was held. Darscheid designed at least two other Nebraska churches: St. Mary's at Grand Prairie (1924-25)⁴⁶ and St. Bernard Friary at Lindsay (1908).⁴⁷ Darscheid also designed another complex of friary, church, and school for the St. George congregation at Hermann, Missouri,⁴⁸ and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the Poor Clare Convent in Chicago (1916).⁴⁹

Whether Darscheid had any formal architectural training in Germany, before emigrating to America, is unknown. At his funeral, Father Theobald Kalamaja, O.F.M., told the story of his life in a eulogy:

Over sixty years of his long life Brother Leonard spent in the convents of the Franciscan order of the Sacred Heart Province. He entered the order at the age of 26 as a Brother and because as a layman he had learned the carpenter trade, his superiors urged him to develop his talents in that line. In the course of time from an ordinary carpenter he became an architect of quite an enviable reputation. In that capacity he served a greater part of his religious life planning and supervising the erection of many convents, hospitals, schools and churches which today stand as evidence of his unusual talent and taste. . . . His genuine piety, his cooperation and

his investiture, and a later (undated) picture showing him holding the book *Die Christliche Kunst* (Christian Art). They are included in the "Additional Documentation" section.

⁴⁵ "Bro. Leonard Dies in 87th Year," obituary with no publication information, Archives of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart.

⁴⁶ Fr. Marion A. Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 296.

⁴⁷ Fr. Marion A. Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 308.

⁴⁸ Fr. Marion A. Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 256.

⁴⁹ Fr. Marion A. Habig, *Heralds of the King* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), pg. 430.

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unusual conduct, his charitableness and kindness to others was ever a source of edification to his co-religionists.⁵⁰

St. Boniface School and Residence and Heating Plant For years, school for St. Boniface pupils was taught in the convent, the basement of the church, private homes, and a frame building. As numbers of students increased, the situation became increasingly difficult. But because of the heavy debt from the original complex, plans had to wait until 1923, under Fr. Alphonse Bergener. The congregation had grown to 2200 members, and 125 students were enrolled in the school. The congregation bought the remaining quarter block and hired the well-known Catholic architect William L. Steele to draw up the plans.⁵¹ They broke ground on May 23, 1923. J.H. Keefe was the contractor and engineer, while V.J. Hagan subcontracted the plumbing and heating.⁵²

Construction took seven months and total cost for both buildings was \$125,000. It was hailed as "one of the largest and most modern parochial grade school buildings in the state."⁵³ The building held twelve classrooms, offices, and a large basement with a gymnasium, lunch room, and four bowling alleys. One thousand people attended the dedication ceremony on January 6, 1924, and classes began in the building the next day.⁵⁴

Prairie School architect William L. Steele also designed the residence and heating plant building, completed at the same time and meant to complement the design of the original complex:

Both the new buildings have been built of face brick to match the other buildings and it is said by those well informed, that with these two new buildings the St. Boniface parish has the finest equipment of any parish in the Sioux City diocese.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ "Bro. Leonard Dies in 87th Year," obituary with no publication information, Archives of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart.

⁵¹ "West Side Catholic Parish Starts to Build New School," *Sioux City Sunday Journal* 27 May 1923.

⁵² "Dedicate New School Today," *Sioux City Journal* 6 January 1924, pg. 24.

⁵³ "New Sioux City \$125,000 Parochial School is the Finest in the Sioux City Catholic See," *Sioux City Journal* 6 January 1924, pg. 24.

⁵⁴ "New School is Dedicated," *Sioux City Daily Tribune* 7 January 1924, pg. 5.

⁵⁵ "New Sioux City \$125,000 Parochial School is the Finest in the Sioux City Catholic See," *Sioux City Journal* 6

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In 1975 the Sisters of the Living Word replaced the Sisters of Christian Charity in running the school. In 1987 St. Boniface School consolidated with St. Joseph and Cathedral schools to become Holy Family School. Elementary school classes (K-5) still meet in the building, and the congregation continues its gradual restoration of the building.

William LaBarthe Steele (1875-1949) St. Boniface School and the residence and heating plant are two of dozens of buildings in Sioux City designed by the prominent Prairie School architect William L. Steele. Born in Springfield, Illinois, Steele earned his B.S. in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1896.⁵⁶ The most detailed discussion of his architectural training and experience prior to Sioux City is found in Allen:

He next entered the office of Louis Sullivan, of Chicago, who had gained considerable note as the architect for the Chicago Auditorium, the Chicago Stock Exchange Building, the old Schiller (now the Garrick) theatre and other important buildings. Mr. Steele served three years [1897-1900] as draftsman in that office, and then went to the office of S.S. Beman, of Chicago, the architect who designed the Pullman building and laid out the town of Pullman. Later Mr. Steele went to Pittsburgh and spent two years [1900-01] in the office of Thomas Rodd, who was the architect for the Westinghouse people. While there the Westinghouse buildings for Manchester, England, were designed, and Mr. Steele was one of the factors in drafting the plans. Subsequently he went with Alden & Harlow, of Pittsburgh, who were drafting plans for the Carnegie Institute, in which work he took an active part. Mr. Alden, of this firm, had been a pupil of Henry H. Richardson, the first American architect to gain a national reputation. From there Mr. Steele went into the office of Sidney F. Heckert [from 1902 to 1904], also of Pittsburgh, who specialized in church architecture, and here Mr. Steele was made head draftsman. In 1904, feeling that he had made sufficient preparation, Mr. Steele came to Sioux City and for a time was associated with Wilfred W. Beach, under the firm name of Beach & Steele.⁵⁷

January 1924, pg. 24.

⁵⁶ National Register nomination, Schulein, Ben and Harriet, House, Woodbury County, Iowa.

⁵⁷ Arthur Francis Allen, "William LaBarthe Steele," *Northwestern Iowa: Its History and Traditions 1804-1926* (Chicago: Clarke, 1927), vol. II, pp. 1042-43. The bracketed dates are from "Steele, William La Barthe," *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 2 (1950).

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Steele arrived in Sioux City to work for Beach in 1904, and was a full partner by 1905.⁵⁸ In 1907 he set up an individual practice. Steele began a brief partnership association with George B. Hilgers (his long-time draftsman) in 1926, and in 1928 became a partner in Kimball, Steele, and Sandham of Omaha. In 1946, he formed Steele, Sandham, and Steele with his son William La Barthe Steele, Jr. Steele was active in numerous community and professional organizations, serving as president of Iowa Society of Architects and the Iowa Chapter of AIA, and vice president of the national AIA. Steele contributed articles to *Architect*, *Ecclesiastical Review*, *House Beautiful*, and *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*. He died in Neillsville, Wisconsin.

With national recognition of the Woodbury County Courthouse growing, Steele's importance to the history of the Prairie School is currently being reassessed. But as early as 1964 his integrity and dedication to the ideals of Louis Sullivan and the "Chicago School" were recognized. Mark L. Peisch characterized Steele as "one of Sullivan's most devoted followers,"⁵⁹ and argued, "With the departure of Purcell in 1921 for the West Coast and the gradual withdrawal of Elmslie from practice, it was left chiefly to Steele to carry on the ideas of Sullivan."⁶⁰ Steele "remained faithful to the traditions of the Chicago group when many others reverted to traditionalism."⁶¹ Of Steele's Fairmount Public Library, Peisch wrote:

[Steele] continued to wage the battle for modern architecture during those difficult years when so many lost their courage. . . . Here again, the significant feature is the combination of specific function and general social service. . . . To be sure, it is not great architecture; but it represents a victory in the battle for a new architecture, which was fought not only in Chicago but in a number of other Middle Western

⁵⁸ "Steele, William La Barthe," *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 2 (1950). See also *Who's Who in Iowa* (Sioux City, 1922), pg. 72.

⁵⁹ Mark L. Peisch, *The Chicago School of Architecture: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright* (New York: Random House, 1964), pg. 80.

⁶⁰ Peisch, pg. 81.

⁶¹ Peisch, pg. 81.

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cities, even though without the drama and excitement which characterized it in the Loop and at Oak Park.⁶²

Steele continued to carry on the ideas of Sullivan even in what is often the most conservative of architectural contexts, religious architecture.

Religious Architecture by William L. Steele Steele designed a host of buildings for the Catholic church, and particularly the Diocese of Sioux City. Brian Hughes, in his dissertation on Steele's churches, *Sermons in Stone*, explains how Steele's career coincided with a great period of building for the Diocese of Sioux City:

By 1920 the Catholic Population grew to nearly 75,000. The expanding Catholic population necessitated new church buildings in a number of communities throughout the region. In the years [that] followed Steele's arrival in Sioux City, Bishop Philip Garrigan, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Sioux City, became one of his most important patrons. In addition to a number of Church buildings, Steele designed twenty-one Catholic Schools, four buildings for Trinity College in Sioux City, three hospitals, two orphanages, fifteen parish rectories and three convents, all commissioned by the Diocese of Sioux City or by institutions associated with the Catholic Church.⁶³

Steele consciously sought to raise the standards in church design for his patrons, Bishop Garrigan and his successor Bishop Edmund Heelan (1919-1948). At the height of his career, Steele wrote a number of essays on the application of architectural theory to everyday design. In "The Church and Its Architect," Steele advocated that each church built deserved good architectural planning:

The general average of ecclesiastical architecture in this country is distressingly low. The same denomination which boasts of a marvelous church in one city, designed, perhaps by Goodhue himself, houses its lesser privileged smaller congregations in "meeting houses," barren even of the culture and refinement which made plain churches of early American history admirable.⁶⁴

⁶² Peisch, 137-38.

⁶³ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone: The Ecclesiastical Designs of William LaBarthe Steele, 1907-1928* (A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree Master of Architectural History, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, May 1994), pp. 31-32.

⁶⁴ William L. Steele, "The Church and Its Architect," *Ecclesiastical Review* 8 (March 1928), 294-97, pg. 294.

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Few of Steele's commissions were from wealthy parishes, so Steele was repeatedly put to the test of designing good quality ecclesiastical architecture on a tight budget for parishes with little experience with or knowledge of architectural standards. Hughes believes that Steele succeeded in this daunting task:

William L. Steele designed a number of ecclesiastical projects which are a unique expression of the Prairie School in the rural Midwest. Between 1907 and 1928 Steele designed nearly thirty church buildings. The survey of a number of his church projects [exhibits] his attempt to integrate Prairie School idioms with the traditions of religious denominations with varied needs and tastes.⁶⁵

Steele's ecclesiastical work was a compromise between his personal architectural principles and the needs of his clients, particularly when he designed buildings for the Catholic church:

The projects which Steele completed for Roman Catholic communities expressed a different set of stylistic and social concerns. The strong, centralized administrative structure of the Catholic Church did not favor unique liturgical expressions, especially during the years prior to the beginning of the liturgical reform in the 1930's.⁶⁶

Steele had to contend not only with financial constraints, but also liturgical constraints that reduced the number of design options. However, Steele found greater freedom for his work in the Diocese of Sioux City than other Catholic architects enjoyed:

Bishop Philip Garrigan, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City and one of Steele's most important clients, was closely tied to the liberal, Irish prelates who proposed a Church life with a more American character. The issue concluded with a Papal condemnation of Americanism in 1900. In the years following, American Catholic ecclesiastical architecture almost exclusively employed the various revivals of European styles, especially the Gothic Revival. Against this background, the work of William L. Steele can be seen as an attempt to build church buildings which were part of the European Catholic tradition, and yet were expressions of the Prairie School, a uniquely American and Midwestern style of architecture.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone*, pg. 1.

⁶⁶ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone*, pg. 5

⁶⁷ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone*, pg. 6.

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The blend of styles Steele achieved in his St. Boniface School seems to epitomize this synthesis.

Hughes mentions Steele's schools only in passing, but clearly the same principles of design which characterized Steele's churches, practicality and invention, also characterize his school designs:

In Philip Garrigan, Steele found a client who remained steadfast to the church's traditions and yet permitted and even encouraged Steele to develop an American ecclesiastical architecture.⁶⁸

Furthermore, because the liturgical constraints were not a problem in the construction of schools, Steele enjoyed more latitude in his school designs than in his churches. In addition to his 21 parochial schools and academies, Steele designed 4 public school buildings, according to his professional vita.⁶⁹ The other two schools listed for Sioux City, Blessed Sacrament and Immaculate Conception, still stand. Blessed Sacrament was under construction at the same time as St. Boniface.⁷⁰ St. Boniface School is also listed as one of Steele's works in the earliest comprehensive biographical note, by Allen.⁷¹ All three Sioux City schools display similar characteristics:

In 1927 Prairie School idioms may not have been considered modern in New York or even in Chicago, but in Sioux City and other Midwestern locations the style still had the power to evoke the sense of contemporary design.⁷²

Ironically, this design lag time in the Midwest allowed Steele to experiment with Prairie School designs at a time when other architects shifted back to revival styles or forward to Deco and Moderne, and gave Sioux City a unique set of church-sponsored Prairie School-influenced buildings.

⁶⁸ Brian Charles Hughes, *Sermons in Stone*, pg. 48.

⁶⁹ "Vital Statistics and Professional Record of Wm. L. Steele, Architect, Omaha, Nebraska, Sept. 1941," Copy of ten-page typescript obtained from Northwest Architectural Archives.

⁷⁰ "1923 Building Record High," *Sioux City Daily Tribune* 28 December 1923, pg. 11.

⁷¹ Arthur Francis Allen, "William LaBarthe Steele," pg. 1043.

⁷² Brian Charles Hughes, "Building Upon the Land: William L. Steele and the Prairie School," *The Briar Cliff Review* Spring 1997, 46-52), pg. 51.

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Steele's Buildings in Other Styles While Steele is best known for his Prairie School designs, dozens of other structures dot Sioux City's landscape, ranging from water pumping stations and horse barns in the stockyards to monuments in local cemeteries. Major Sioux City structures in styles other than Prairie School include the National Guard Armory, the Commercial-style Crane Co. Warehouse (ca. 1910; razed), the Neoclassical First National Bank (1911; razed), the Gothic-influenced St. Vincent's Hospital (1916-17), the Italian Renaissance-style Woodbury County Poor Farm (1917-18), Hawkeye Truck Company day-light factory (1918), the Italian Renaissance-style Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church (1925), and the Tudor Revival-style Northside Branch Library (1929).

The Woodbury County Courthouse William L. Steele's claim to national architectural note stems from his masterwork, the Woodbury County Courthouse (1915-1918), which is "the only major civic building built by the architects of the prairie school."⁷³ Steele won the competition, then executed the design in association with William G. Purcell and George Grant Elmslie. All had worked in Sullivan's office and learned Prairie style from the originator, although Elmslie is often given the greatest credit for the Woodbury County Courthouse design. Prairie School historian H. Allen Brooks wrote in 1972, "The Woodbury County Courthouse is a landmark which has never--due to its geographical isolation--received the notice it so richly deserves. In many respects it summarizes the best in Midwest architecture of the previous quarter century."⁷⁴ After a return visit to Sioux City in 1993, Brooks wrote a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors. Excerpts published in the *Sioux City Journal* argued that the Courthouse was "certainly [Elmslie's] best work," and added, "There are few public structures anywhere in the United States that can match or surpass the quality of the Woodbury County Courthouse. . . . Had the courthouse been located in a major metropolitan center, I'm sure it would be mentioned in every history of American architecture."⁷⁵

⁷³ H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1972), pg. 298.

⁷⁴ H. Allen Brooks, pg. 301.

⁷⁵ "Powerful Ally Joins County Effort to Have Courthouse Recognized," *Sioux City Journal* 8 December 1993, pg. A18.

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Recently a number of national honors have been bestowed upon the building. In 1993, Gebhard and Mansheim featured it on the cover of their hardback edition of *Buildings of Iowa*, and Sydney LeBlanc identified it as one of the 200 key American buildings of this century, "a model of progressive architecture at a time when most prominent American designers sought inspiration in the past."⁷⁶ In 1996, G.E. Kidder Smith chose it as one of the 500 most significant buildings in the U.S., and characterized it as:

One of the United States' freshest public buildings of the early twentieth century. . . .

The rotunda (square) is, indeed, a triumph of terra-cotta; used with unity and appositeness, it produces a symphony, not a cacophony. . . . One of the finest examples of its architecturally groping time, and, indeed, the present.⁷⁷

The Woodbury County Courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, and in 1996, the National Park Service designated it a National Historic Landmark. With Steele's work gaining such national prominence, even smaller projects like those in the St. Boniface Historic District acquire greater significance.

⁷⁶ Sydney LeBlanc, *The Whitney Guide to 20th Century American Architecture: 200 Key Buildings* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1993), pg. 31.

⁷⁷ G.E. Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10th Century to the Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), pg. 343.

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10. Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property consists of all of Block 2 (Lots 1-12 and the alley), Sioux City Addition, Sioux City, Woodbury County, Iowa. The district is bounded by Omaha, West Fifth, Cook, and West Sixth streets.

Boundary Justification The St. Boniface Historic District is a single block on the west side of Sioux City, Iowa, which was purchased in 1907 by Franciscan Father Seraphin Lampe for the purposes of building a community religious center.

11. Photographs Tim Orwig was the photographer for all the photographs and has the negatives. Photos 1-7 date from 3 January 1997. Photos 8-11 date from 30 November 1997. Photo 12 dates from 7 March 1998. All photographed properties are located in the St. Boniface Catholic Church Historic District.

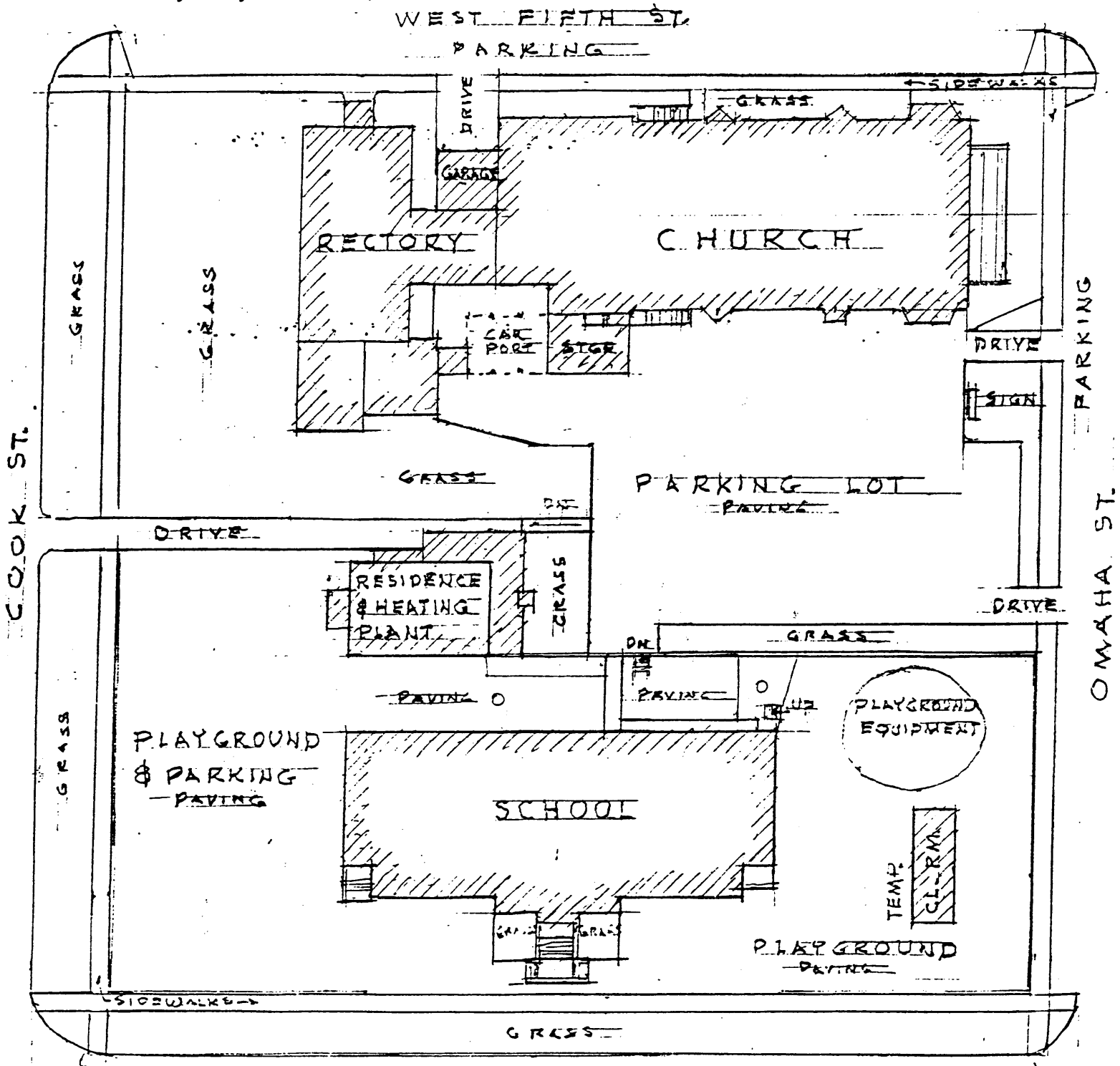
1. St. Boniface Church (703 W. 5th Street). Looking east.
2. St. Boniface Church (703 W. 5th Street). Looking northeast.
3. St. Boniface Rectory (703 W. 5th Street). Looking northeast.
4. St. Boniface Church and Rectory (703 W. 5th Street). Looking north.
5. St. Boniface Rectory (703 W. 5th Street). Looking southwest.
6. St. Boniface Church and Rectory (703 W. 5th Street). Looking west.
7. St. Boniface Church (703 W. 5th Street) and signboard. Looking south.
8. St. Boniface Church (703 W. 5th Street). Interior. Looking west.
9. Residence and Heating Plant (515 Cook Street) and smokestack. Looking north.
10. St. Boniface School (700 W. 6th Street). Looking west.
11. St. Boniface School (700 W. 6th Street). Detail of front entrance. Looking southwest.
12. St. Boniface Church (703 W. 5th Street). Interior. Looking east.

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Drawn by Henry W. Fachman, A.I.A.



SITE PLAN ST. BONIFACE CHURCH, SIOUX CITY, IA.

11-12-97

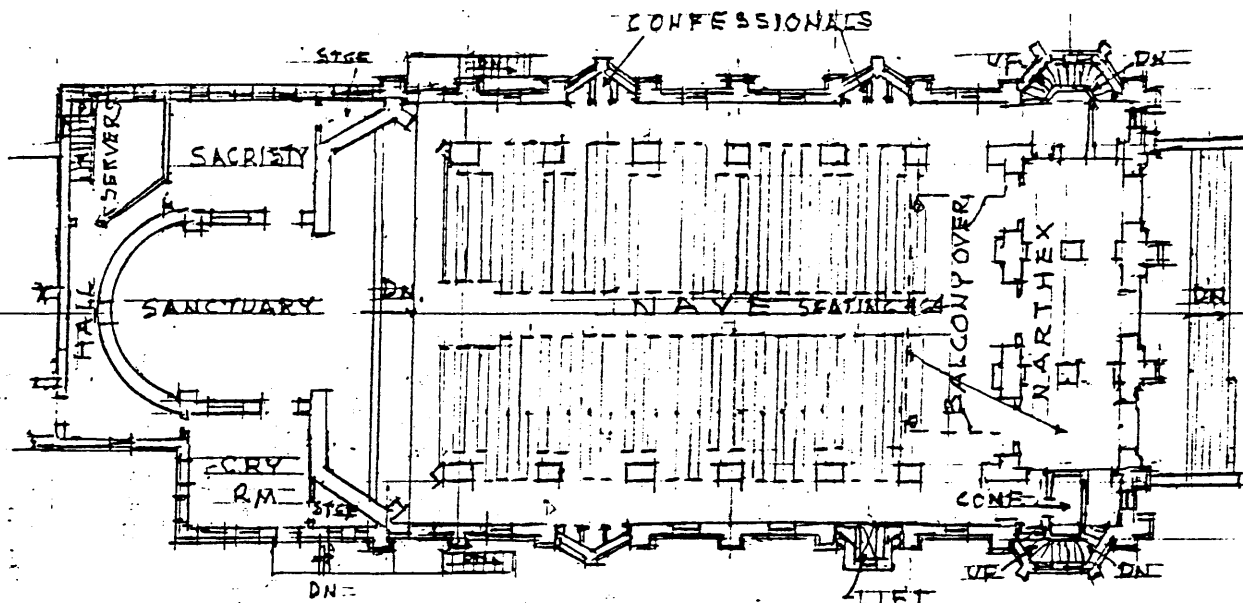
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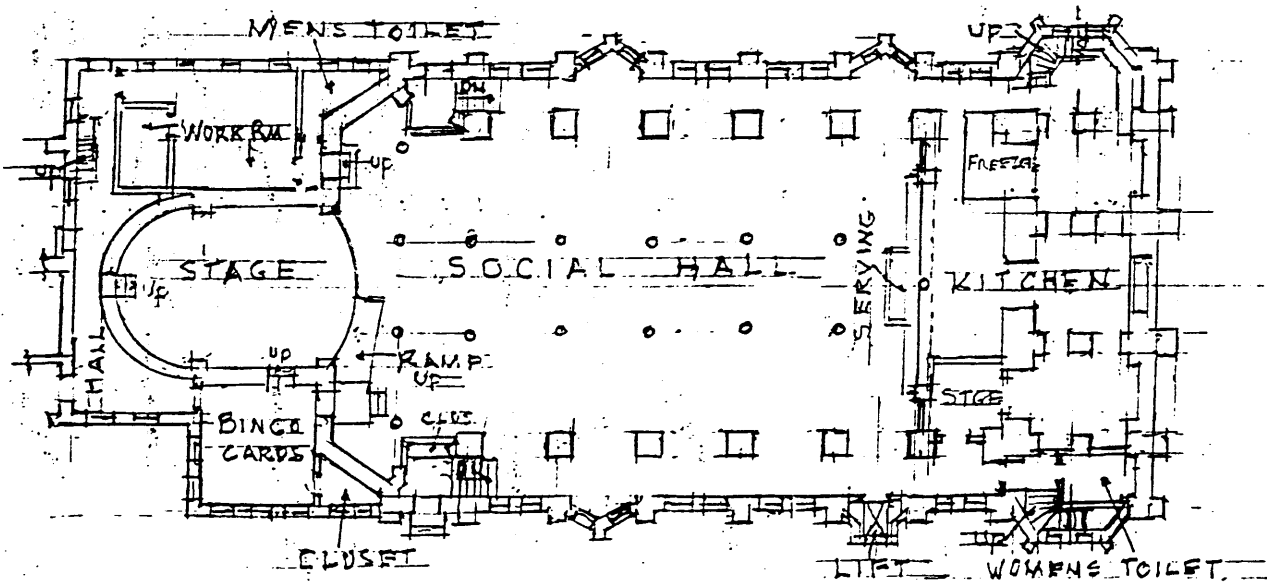
Section number 11 Page 34

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Drawn by Henry W. Fachman, A.I.A.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

PLANS ST. BONIFACE CHURCH, SIOUX CITY, IA.

SCALE: 1 INCH = 30 FEET

11-12-97

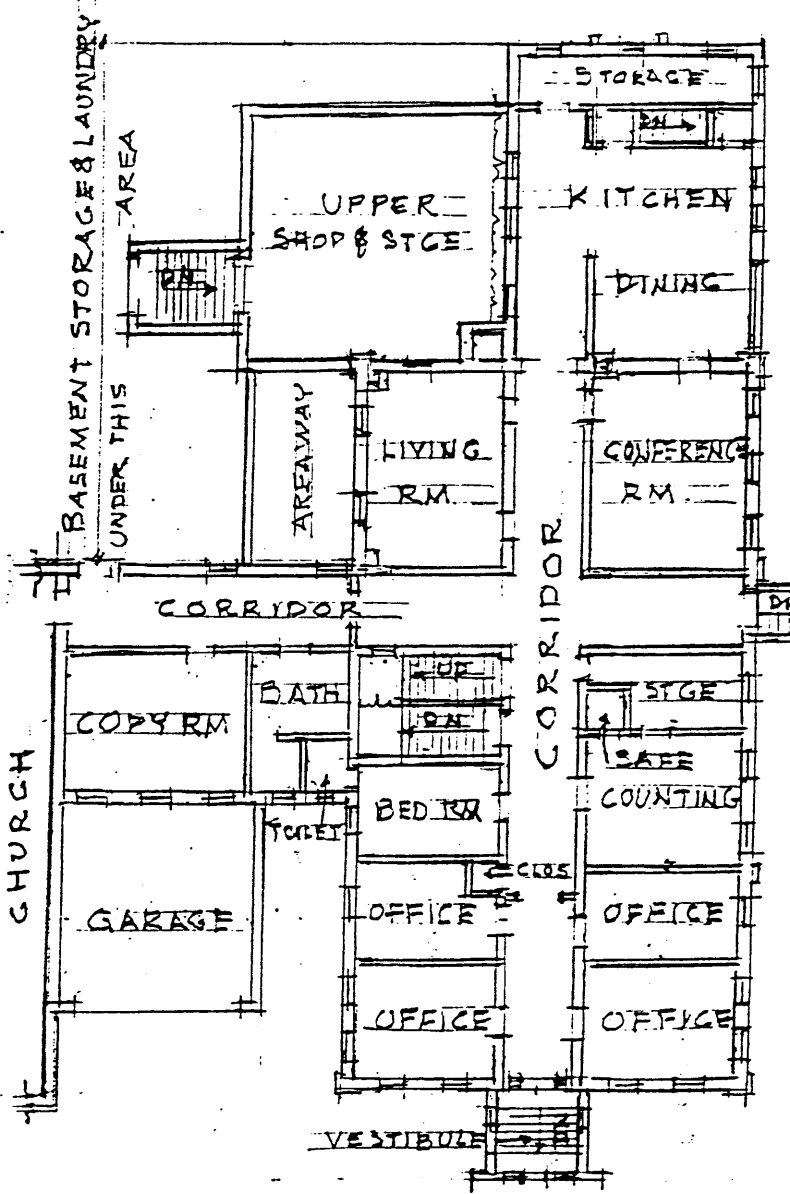
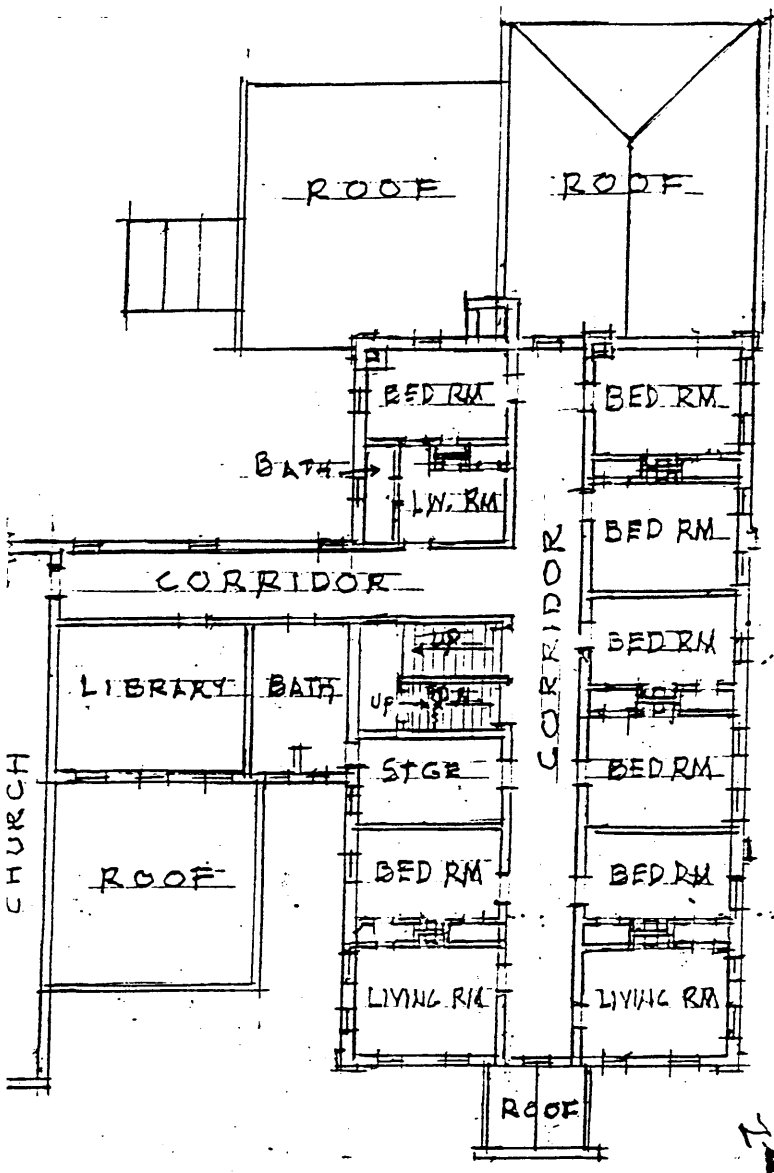


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SECOND FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PLANS ST. BONIFACE RECTORY, SIOUX CITY, IA.

11-12-97

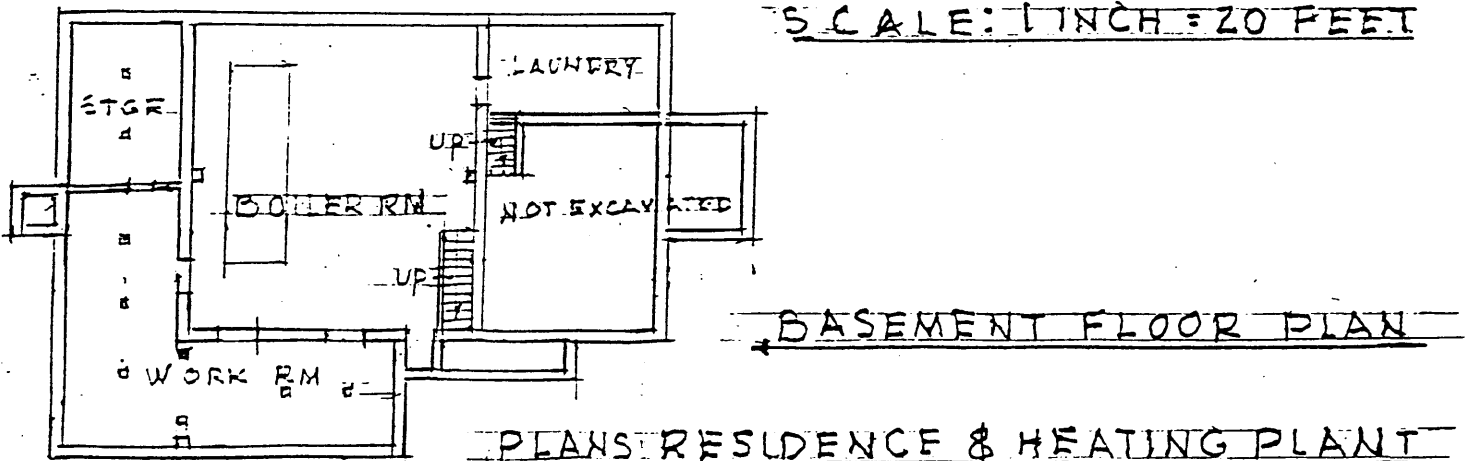
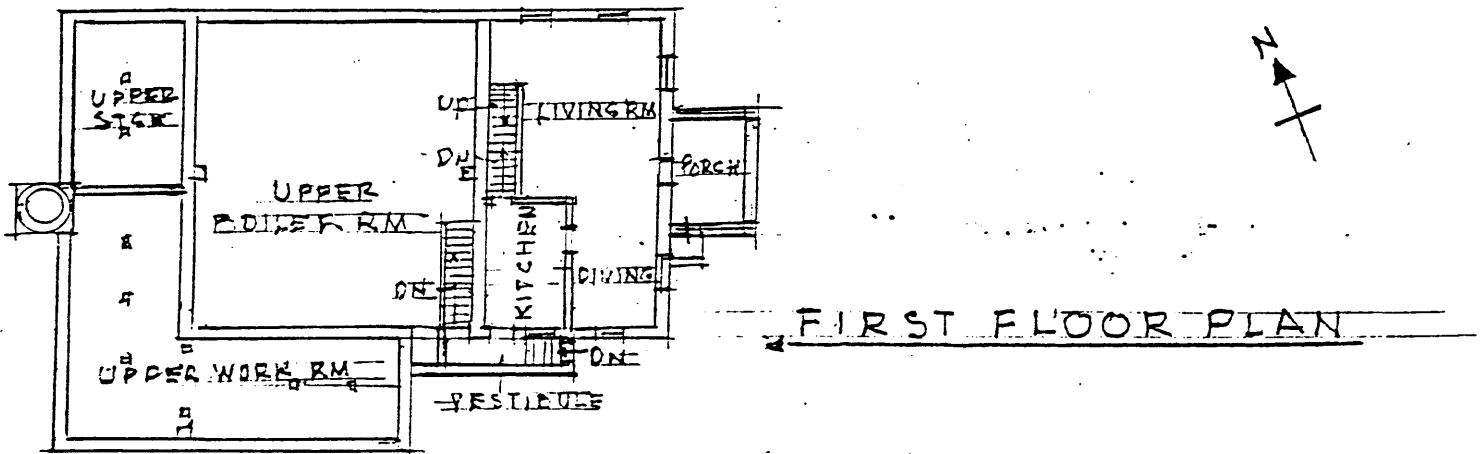
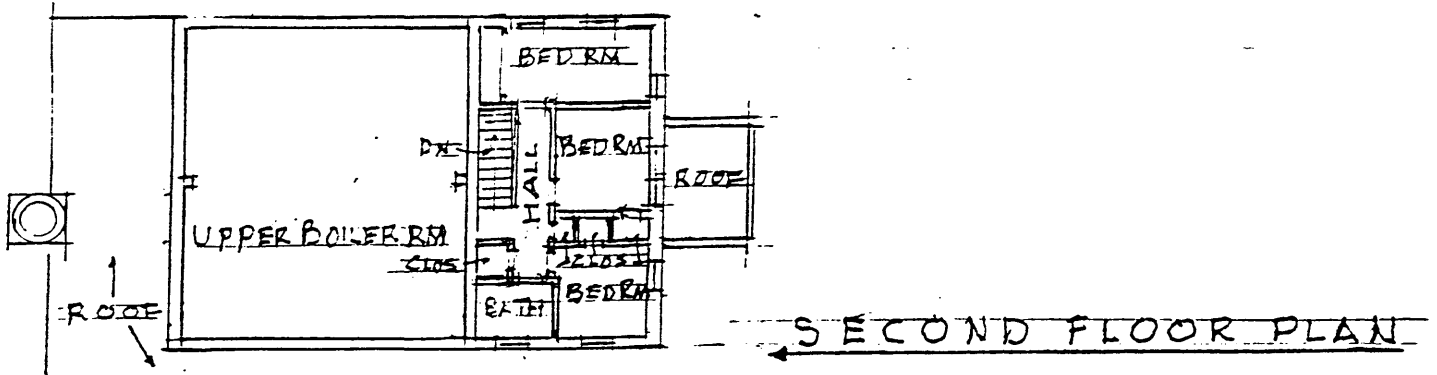
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Drawn by Henry W. Fachman, A.I.A.



SCALE: 1 INCH = 20 FEET

PLANS RESIDENCE & HEATING PLANT

11-12-97

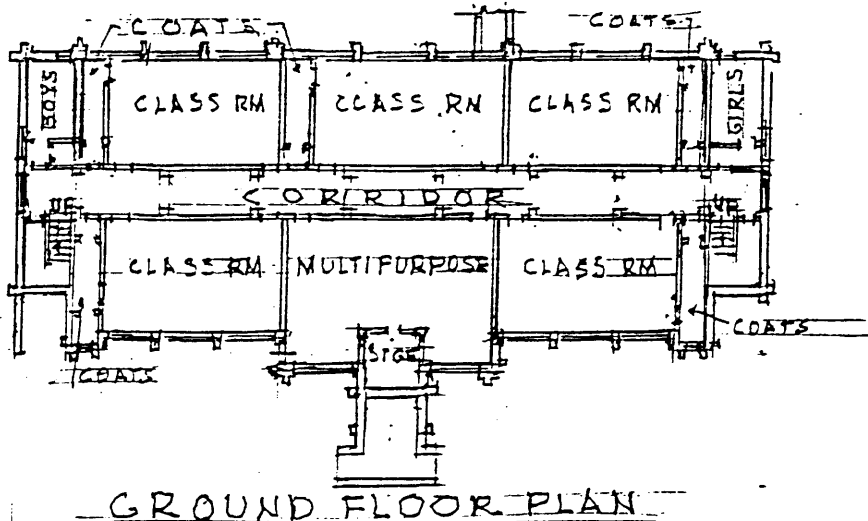
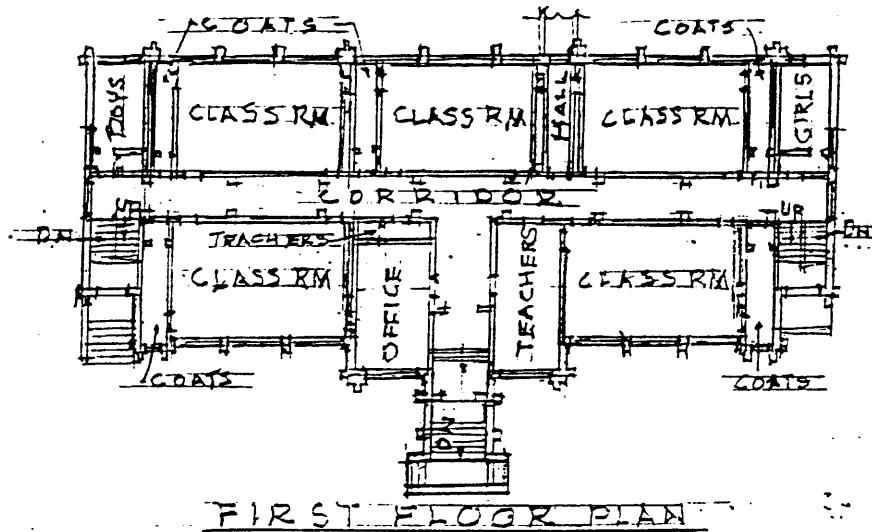
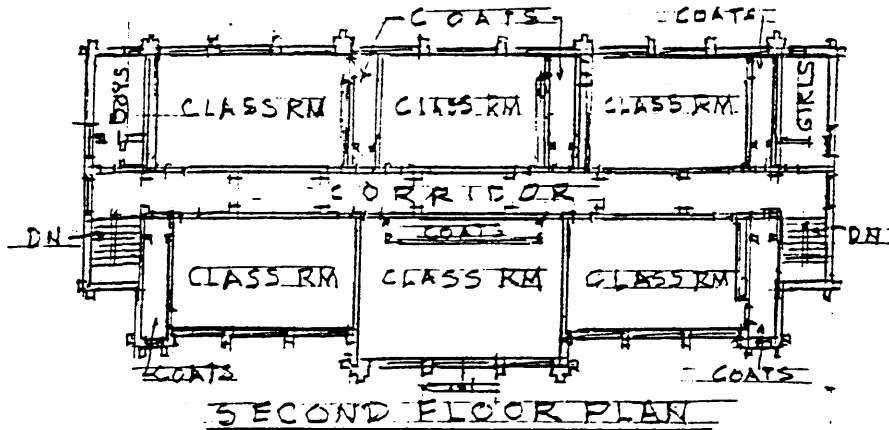
ST. BONIFACE CHURCH, SIOUX CITY, IA.

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Drawn by Henry W. Fachman, A.I.A.



PLANS ST. BONIFACE SCHOOL, SIOUX CITY, IA. 11-22-97.
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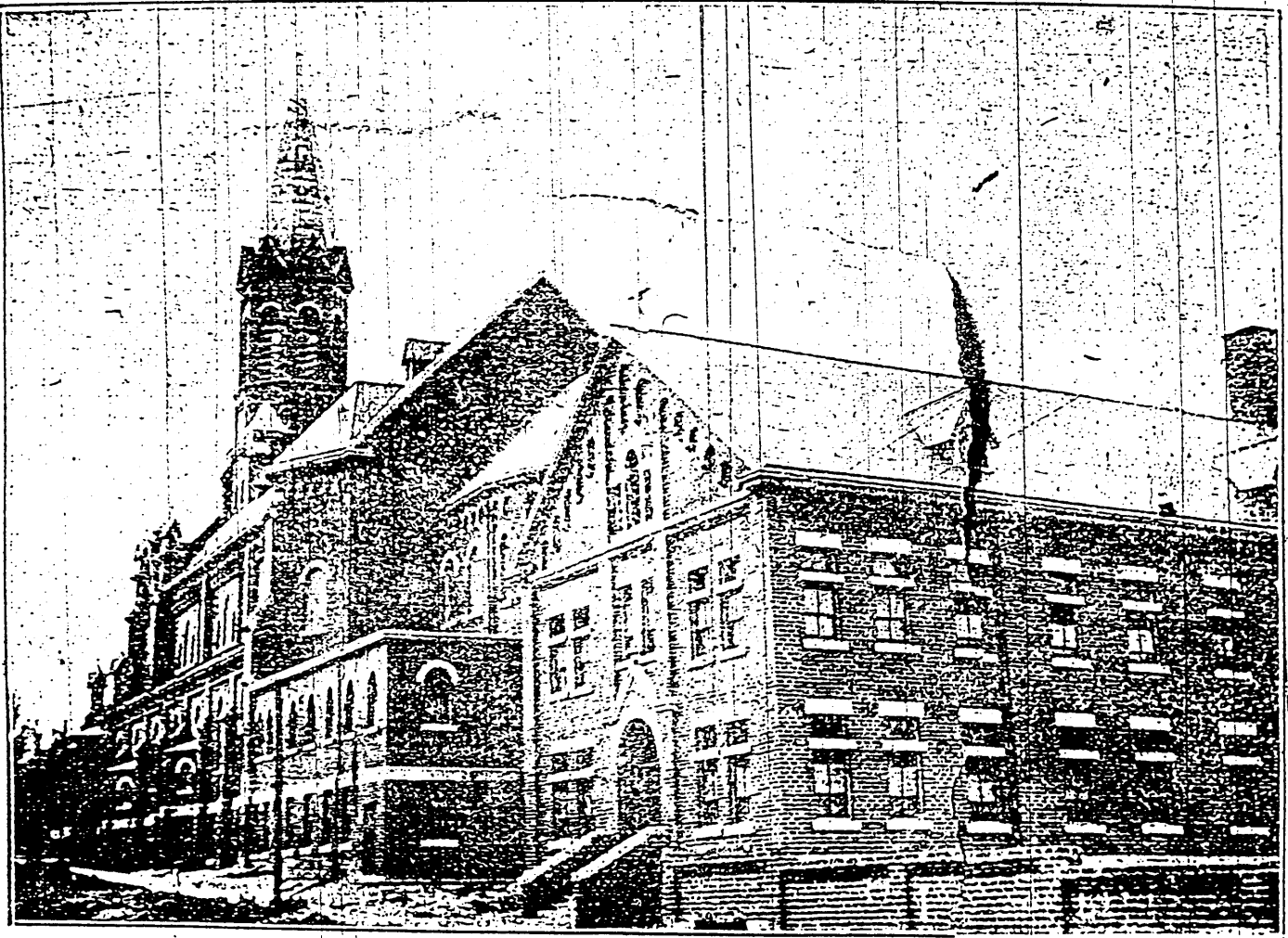
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Additional Documentation: *Sioux City Journal*, 4 September 1911, page 8.

DEDICATORY SERVICES WILL BE HELD TODAY AT THIS LARGE NEW CHURCH AND MONASTERY



ST. BONIFACE STRUCTURE WHICH HAS JUST BEEN COMPLETED AT WEST FIFTH AND OMAHA STREETS AT A COST OF \$100,000.

In preparation for the formal dedication of the St. Boniface Catholic church as a new edifice of worship, the granite of the structure has been swathed in bunting and adorned with fluttering flags. In the interior of the building, all forms of preparation will be made to the climactic moment at which the church will be dedicated.

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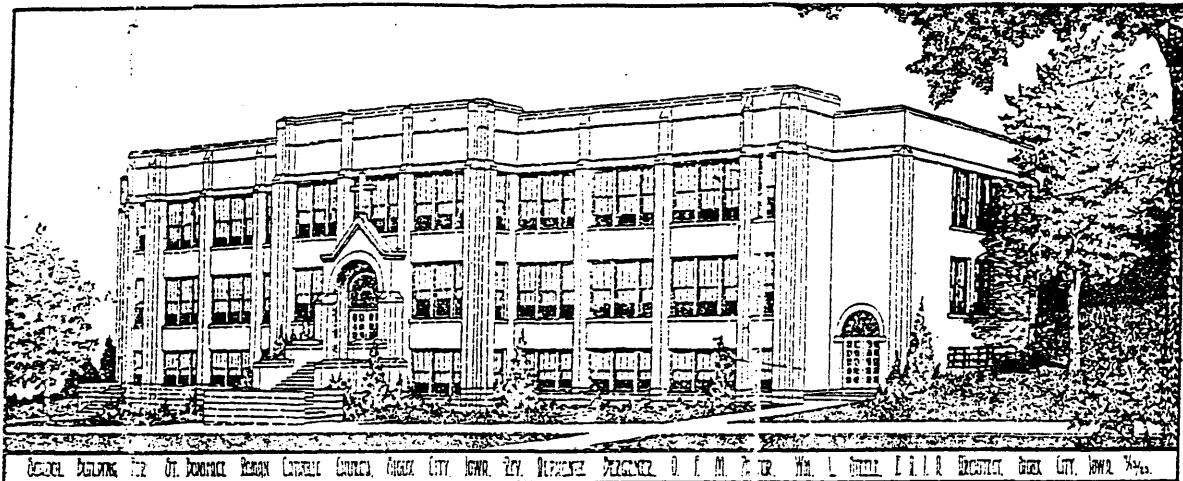
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Additional Documentation

THE SIOUX CITY SUNDAY JOURNAL: MAY 27, 1923.

WEST SIDE CATHOLIC PARISH STARTS TO BUILD NEW SCHOOL



ARCHITECT DRAWING FOR ST. BONIFACE PARISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL, SIOUX CITY, IOWA. REV. ALPHONSE BERGERER, O. F. M., PASTOR. MR. W. J. STEELE, ARCHITECT, SIOUX CITY, IOWA, 1923.

Drawings of \$93,000 School Building Which Will Be Constructed.

Rapid growth of the St. Boniface Catholic parish was marked the past week by the starting of work on the foundation of a new St. Boniface school building, which with the large central heating plant that will be installed, will cost approximately \$125,000.

From the little parish of 345 persons, organized in 1855, the congregation steadily increased until it numbers at the present time 2,200 members. Need of a Catholic school building in that parish became greater each year, as the congregation increased, and the school children crowded the rooms in the church and in the home of the Sisters of Christian Charity, where they received instruction.

This year it was decided to have the new school constructed, and work on the building will be pushed as rapidly as possible.

The structure will be 170 by 60 feet in size, will consist of two stories and a basement, and will be constructed of reinforced concrete, with stone trimmings to correspond with the church building. It will be fireproof throughout.

Ten classrooms and an office will be included in the building. The basement will be used as a hall.

Plans for the building have been prepared in the office of W. J. Steele, architect.

The first enrollment of the school will number 425 or more pupils.

The parish now owns the entire block of land extending from Omaha to Cook

streets and from West Fifth to West Sixth street. All buildings will be heated from the new central heating plant, which will cost about \$25,000.

Rev. A. J. Gerlemann was the first pastor of St. Boniface church, back in 1855, when the parish was organized. He served until 1902, when he was transferred to Granville, Ia. In those days the church was known as the "Little German Church," and was situated at West Fifth and Main streets. Rev. Father Schieler was the second pastor, and remained until 1906. Bishop P. J. Garrigan then called on the Franciscan Fathers to take care of the parish, and the first to take charge was Father Seraphin Lampe who came in 1906 and remained until 1909, when he was succeeded by Rev. Rabanus Thill.

Under the direction of Father Thill the present St. Boniface church at West Sixth and Omaha streets was built in 1910. The home of the Sisters of Christian Charity was built during the same period. In 1911 Father Thill was succeeded by Rev. Honorat Bonzelet, who served until 1919, when he was succeeded by the present pastor, Rev. Alphonse Bergerer.



St. Boniface Catholic Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Additional Documentation: Brother Leonard Darscheid. An early picture (l., dated 1885) taken shortly after his investiture, and (r.) a later (undated) picture showing him holding the book *Die Christliche Kunst* (Christian Art). From the Archives of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, 3140 Meramec Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

