



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 301 Central Avenue

not for publication: NA
vicinity: NA

city/town: Whitefish

state: Montana code: MT county: Flathead code: 029 zip code: 59927

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

Mark F. Gaudier / SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

August 19, 2004
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10/1/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Private	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property:	Building	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:	na	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing:	na	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:	Current Functions:
RELIGIOUS/religious facility	RELIGIOUS/religious facility
SOCIAL/meeting hall	SOCIAL/meeting hall
EDUCATION/classroom	EDUCATION/classroom
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility	

7. Description

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque	foundation: CONCRETE
	walls: BRICK
	roof: ASPHALT
	other:

Narrative Description

Located in the northwestern corner of the state, Whitefish, Montana is a small community of approximately 5000 people. The small city is nestled at the southern edge of Whitefish Lake, at the northern end of the lush Flathead Valley. The First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish was built in 1921 on the corner of Central Avenue and Third Street, at the southern edge of the commercial district. The ecclesiastic home of the First Presbyterian congregation is a massive, one-story, brick building with a flat, parapetted roof and 15-foot-high concrete foundation walls that extend above ground to create a daylight basement. The building also features a modern addition at the rear (east) elevation. The overall presentation of the church is formal and substantial. Drawing on Romanesque Revival style, the church is a particularly good example of Norman design influences, including a recessed square tower, large circular windows, and heavy, arched windows. Exterior wall surfacing on the church is light-colored common bond brick at the main level, and concrete-wall below the formed concrete watertable. At the roofline, the original portion of the church features a corbelled cornice that gives the appearance of small blind arches encircling the building. The low parapet wall at the roofline is unadorned. Originally, the tower was castellated, featuring merlons and embrasures capped with formed, beveled concrete capstones. (See continuation sheets)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1

The original portion of the building is comprised of the large rectangular bay to the west that houses the church nave and a slightly smaller (both in height and width) bay protruding to the east that houses the sanctuary. In 1982, a one-story tan brick addition was constructed at the rear elevation of the church. Though large in scale, the addition is compatible in style and does not detract from the overall integrity of the original building. The L-shaped addition extends from the sanctuary, and features a narrow bay that forms the short leg of the "L" and a larger rectangular bay to the east. The narrower modern bay contains seven tall arched windows across its north elevation that effectively separates the addition from the original portion of the church.



Indicative of the Romanesque Revival style, the original building features large, tall, arched window openings, each containing a pair of arched windows with a circular window piercing the space between the two arch heads. Thin concrete hoodmolds echo the arch of the windows, and feature rectangular concrete label stops at the springline. The sills are formed concrete. Slightly recessed pairs of sixteen-light, wood-frame, fixed windows provide light to the basement level of the original building. On the addition, the main level windows are arched, with brick sills, and formed concrete hood molds and label stops. One-by-one casements fill the lower portion of the arched windows, with single panes filling the arch above the springline. At the basement level, one-by-one, metal-framed sliding windows fill the nearly square window openings.

A recessed, square tower at its northwest corner serves as the main entrance to the building and dominates the church. A pair of large, wooden, paneled doors are centered on both the north and west elevations of the tower, beneath arched window openings. Like the windows throughout the main story of the original building, paired arched windows with a circular window above fill each of the arched openings. A large circular window, set in a floral pattern, is centered above each entry, set off by formed concrete molds, brick voussiors, and concrete keystones. A sandstone cornerstone is set between the entrances on the northeast corner of the tower. A third entry at the tower area is a single, wooden, paneled door located in the north elevation wall created by the recessed nature of the tower. This door is topped with a brick arch, hood mold, and label stops. The arch is filled with brick.

The south of the tower, the west (front) elevation contains three evenly-spaced arched window openings at the main story. Four circular, formed concrete shields are evenly spaced across the wall, within the spaces created between the arches. The daylight basement windows are centered below the arched windows.

The main bay of the north elevation mirrors the west, with three window openings at both the first and basement levels. The east, sanctuary bay of the north elevation contains a single, shorter, arched window at the first story and a pair of sixteen-light fixed windows centered below at the basement level. Immediately east of the sanctuary bay is the recessed, west bay of the 1982 addition. Seven tall, narrow, multi-light window openings fill the bay at the first story, effectively distinguishing it from the original portion of the church. A pair of large wooden doors provides access to the basement level at the west side of the bay. The easternmost bay of the north elevation contains two modern, evenly-spaced arched windows at the first story and two casements across the basement level.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 2

The south elevation contains three bays: the nave, sanctuary, and the addition. The nave and sanctuary bays display the same fenestration as that of the north elevation. The addition, which consists of a single protruding bay on this side, contains no windows except at the basement level. Doors provide access at both the main and basement levels. Metal steps lead up to the double doors on the west side of the addition, and a concrete stairwell leads to the basement doors directly below.

The east (rear) elevation of the church consists of the single bay of the 1982 addition and contains four window openings at the first story: three arched windows evenly spaced across the southern three-quarters of the elevation, and a single circular window, identical to those in the tower, at the north side. Casements are located beneath the arched windows at the basement level.

For over 60 years the building served the congregation well until Whitefish began to change from a logging and railroad town to a resort community. Consequently, ground was broken for an addition in 1982, which would completely fill the unoccupied portion of the lot behind the original church. The addition consisted of two stories and is 48 by 64 feet outside and approximately 3000 square feet inside. The upper story joins the original church at the same level. It consists of a fellowship hall and kitchen with two restrooms and a storage room. The lower story, approximately three feet below ground line contains an office and study for the pastor, a nursery, four Sunday school rooms, two restrooms, and a mechanical room.

In order to become compliant with requirements for the disabled, a concrete ramp on the north leads from grade to the entry door for wheelchair access. Sufficient room was left for an elevator, which was added later. Two emergency exits are located at the southeast and southwest corners of the ground floor.

The roof is essentially flat with a drainage slope to the alley on the east. The bricks of the original building were three tones of yellow, placed randomly in the façade. Only one of the original brick colors was available, so the exterior of the addition is all one tone. However, one can hardly notice the difference in the final result. The windows in the addition are all arched. Narrow, arched, stained glass windows made by a member of the congregation are located over the entry and stairwell.

In 1985 renovation of the basement began by gutting the entire area, except the furnace room and restrooms, which are still intact. A chapel was built into the southwest corner and elevated above the basement floor. It is accessed down one flight of stairs from the door on the northwest corner of the church. From the chapel level, a second flight of stairs leads to the basement and a hallway that gives access to the other rooms, plus egress to the lower floor of the addition at the east end. In 2000 the church's front steps were reconstructed and a new railing was installed to replace one that had become loose.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 3

Integrity

Despite the spacious addition to its rear elevation and some modifications to the lower level of the interior, the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish retains a high degree of integrity. For more than eighty years, the building has served as a spiritual, educational, recreational, and architectural landmark in the community. Its associations with the history of the community are clear, as is its setting, location, and feeling. The workmanship, materials, and overall design of the impressive Rigg and Vantyne Romanesque Revival building remain intact.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Areas of Significance: SOCIAL HISTORY;
ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Period(s) of Significance: 1921-1953

Significant Person(s): NA

Significant Dates: 1921

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Archibald Rigg and Roland Vantyne;
Dr. W.W. Taylor & First Presbyterian Church
Building Committee; John Benson, Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance

The First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with the social history of the community. The church served not only as a place of worship, but also a community meeting place, recreational center, an education facility, and a base of operations for the congregation's considerable service work within the locality throughout the twentieth century. The building itself serves as a testament to the role the congregation has played in the social history of Whitefish, and indeed the stained glass windows serve as manifestations of the pioneering and collaborative spirit of the town's earliest settlers. The church gains additional significance and is eligible for listing under Criterion C as a remarkable local example of Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical architecture designed by Spokane architects Archibald Rigg and Roland Vantyne.

Early History of the Flathead Valley

The earliest inhabitants of the Flathead valley planned their camp movements in terms of seasonal availability of plants. Generally, they used the lower elevations in the winter and moved to the uplands in the summer and fall. Spring campsites were located near camas beds.¹ These early peoples had base camps and special purpose camps. Base camps were often located on a river terrace that was cut by a tributary stream. At base camp, people harvested plants and fish. They prepared and processed plants and fish for immediate use and for storage. They also processed the game brought to the camp by hunters. Hunters, fishermen, mineral and plant gatherers also went to other locations. There they set up special purpose camps designed to take advantage of the natural resources in these locations. They hunted animals, harvested the plants and collected raw materials available in these locations. These earliest peoples are ancestors to the Salish and Kootenai tribes of the region.² In the 18th and 19th centuries, Kootenai tribal members lived at the head of Flathead Lake and hunted and fished in the upper Flathead Valley. (See continuation sheets)

¹ A member of the Lily family, the edible camas bulb grows in moist meadows and along stream banks. The bulbs can be baked, roasted, dried or eaten raw. Many Northwest Indians used Camas bulbs as their principal sweetening agent.

² Cultural Resources Management Group, "Clark Fork Heritage Resource Management Plan, Volume 1 – Public," prepared for the Clark Fork Project, Avista Corporation, January 2000; on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Helena, MT, Chapter 1, pp. 6, 9, 24-29. The Cultural Resources Management Group is made up of representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation in Montana, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and the Kalispel Tribe, the U.S. Forest Service, Idaho SHPO, Montana SHPO, and Avista.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1

Elders and written histories indicate the Qlispe or Pend d'Oreille people traditionally inhabited a vast area of western Montana, including the area now encompassed by the Flathead Indian Reservation, the Flathead Valley to the north, the Swan Valley and the South Fork of the Flathead River (the Bob Marshall Wilderness). Some major Pend d'Oreille camps were located along the Sun River on the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains. Pend d'Oreille hunting grounds included the Sweetgrass Hills.³

"The Flathead Valley was one of the last areas in the trans-Mississippi west to be settled by non-Indians, primarily because of its geographic isolation. Surrounded by rugged mountains and a large lake and characterized by long, harsh winters, the valley remained difficult and hazardous to access for decades after the first whites came through the area in the early 1800s. The establishment of the Blackfeet and Flathead Indian Reservations in 1855 insulated the region further. A few trappers and traders passed through the area in the early 1800s and around 1812, Hudson's Bay Company established an outpost, Howse House, near the head of Flathead Lake. Following the Treaty of 1846, which designated land south of the 49th parallel as United States soil, various prospectors, trappers, settlers and adventurers passed through the Flathead Valley. But, none are known to have settled permanently, and the area remained virtually unknown to the outside world."⁴

"This situation changed when in 1862, gold was discovered in the Kootenai District of British Columbia north of the Flathead Valley. Miners and freighters bringing supplies through Missoula passed through the upper Flathead Valley on their way north. A minor gold rush on Libby Creek in 1867 again brought people through the general area. The trail to the goldfields followed a rough wagon road along the west shore of Flathead Lake, crossed Ahsley Creek near the site of present day Kalispell, then continued north along the Stillwater River which runs through present day Whitefish, and on to the Kootenai River. This north/south route was used for decades to connect western Montana with southern Canada.⁵ Some miners stopped to prospect in the Flathead, but little was found. In the 1870s, a number of non-Indian men arrived in the upper Flathead Valley intending to graze cattle. Most were unsuccessful and left soon after, but a few stayed. Both geographic isolation and economic conditions in the cattle industry worked against these stockmen."⁶

The first non-Indian settlers in the area of today's Whitefish lived near the outlet of Whitefish Lake rather than on today's townsite. By 1892, several dozen people lived in that area. In 1891, the Great Northern Railway line crossed Marias Pass at the Continental Divide and construction crews began working their way west. They went through Columbia Falls and on southwest to the new town of Kalispell, founded as the railroad's division point. From there, the railroad continued west to Jennings and Libby. James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern, soon decided to reroute the line west of Columbia Falls. According to longtime Whitefish resident and famed Montana writer Dorothy Johnson:

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kathy McKay, "Historic and Architectural Properties of Kalispell, Montana Multiple Properties Documentation Form," 1992, Section E, p. 1, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

⁵ Flora Mae Bellefluer, "The Development of the Upper Flathead and Kootenai Country," M.A. Thesis, Montana State University, 1948, p. 65. McKay, "Kalispell MPD," Section E, pp. 1-2.

⁶ McKay, "Kalispell MPD," Section E, p. 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 2

Jim Hill...decided to move part of his main line to a less dangerous route through that part of the Rockies. For his new division point, with roundhouse, switch yards, repair facilities and headquarters for a lot of employees, he chose Whitefish, where there was plenty of timber, plenty of water, and already a small, rough settlement of real pioneers. We gave Jim Hill due credit for wisdom in making that change but refused to love him as a founding father. The move left Kalispell depressed and bitter, but its still bigger and is still the county seat. When I was in high school we had a school yell that really rubbed it in: "Whitefish on the main line! Kalispell on the branch line! Rah rah rah!"⁷

Track was laid from Columbia Falls to Whitefish (8.5 miles) in 1903, and in 1904 another 60.5 miles were laid from Whitefish to Rexford, where the Great Northern already had a spur line. This route was 17 miles longer than the original route through Kalispell, but the maximum grade and maximum curvature were much improved. Because of this rerouting, the town of Whitefish was founded in 1903 at a forested area next to the tracks. Whitefish replaced Kalispell as the official division point for the Kalispell Division, which extended from Cut Bank on the east to Troy on the west, in October 1904. As the division point, Whitefish housed the Great Northern's repair shops and administrative offices. In 1925, E. F. Flynn of Great Northern headquarters said, "Whitefish is the most distinctively railroad town on the whole Great Northern system...a larger percentage of the population are employees."⁸ Great Northern engineers, firemen, and others, including the Japanese crews, were required to live in Whitefish.⁹

History of the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish

It was July 1903 when Rev. Ellis, a Synodical Sunday School Missionary received word that the Great Northern Railway was planning to establish a division point at the foot of Whitefish Lake. As a railroad center he felt it would develop into an important city and he investigated the possibility of establishing Christian work there. He immediately contacted Alexander Pringle the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Kalispell. The two men left Kalispell riding bicycles until they came to the river, then they rowed the rest of the way to the new settlement.

They visited the families and bachelors and set up a meeting where it was determined that there was enough interest to organize a Sunday school. The townsite officials promised a lot for a chapel, but the first Sunday School was held in August under the tree overlooking the lake. The Rev. Pringle visited logging and railroad camps during the next few months asking for donations or money or a day's labor and by December a building had been erected. On December 6, 1903, the new church was organized with 16 members and a minister had been called. The *Whitefish Pilot* in its January 23, 1904 issue reported that a public school was opened in the church on the hill near the lake and the rest of the winter the Lakeview Church was used as a public school on weekdays and a house of worship on Sunday.

⁷ Dorothy Johnson, *When You and I Were Young, Whitefish*, (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1997), p. 13.

⁸ Quoted in Betty Schafer & Mable Engelter, *Stump Town to Ski Town: The Story of Whitefish, Montana* (Whitefish, Mont.: Whitefish Library Association, 1973), 133. McKay, "Great Northern Railway Passenger and Freight Depot and Division Office National Register Nomination Form," Section 8, p. 1.

⁹ Schafer & Engelter., pp. 2, 10, 19-21, 23, 25, 27; McKay, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 3

The *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* in January 1904 proclaimed that Whitefish, a town not yet six month's old, had a wide-awake church that had had a big Christmas celebration with a good program. In March 1904, a ladies aid society was formed and they chose as their name Daughters of Dorcas.¹⁰ At this time there were very few members of the church and these activities benefited the entire town. The names have changed over the years but the Whitefish Presbyterian Church has continued to be a leader in community service. One group that operated through the First Presbyterian Church was the Ladies Missionary Society. Records of the Women's Missionary Society, which was organized in 1911, show that they not only supported the foreign fields, they paid rent for the destitute and made gift boxes for the hospital and for local people.

The new settlement began to move to the south side of the tracks when it became evident that the railroad would build their station there. A building was used temporarily until the new church could be built. The Whitefish Townsite officials donated two lots on the corner of Third Street and Lupfer Avenue, and the southside church was built there.

During the influenza epidemic of 1918, schools, theaters and saloons were closed when nearly 1000 of the 3850 residents were affected. Rev. Sanford, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, turned to a daily ministry to the flu victims. There were very few cars in town, but the Rev. Sanford borrowed two of them and he went up and down the streets of the city. If he saw a house with no smoke coming from the chimney he stopped to investigate. When he found someone who was stricken, he transported them to one of the emergency hospitals. He is credited with saving many lives.

By 1919, the congregation had increased 100% and the Sunday school 200% and the church services were held in the Masonic Temple. It was at this time that plans were made to construct the present church "for the needs of the new and greater Whitefish."¹¹ Dr. W.W. Taylor was chair of the building committee. Although not architects, Taylor and the committee took an active role in drawing up the plans for the new church and they were accepted with only minor modifications by the Spokane architectural firm of Riggs and Vantyne. The church would be two blocks to the east on the corner of Central Avenue and Third Street, and constructed of brick with a flat roof and Tiffany-style glass windows. Fifteen-foot tall basement walls would allow for a gymnasium with sufficient clearance for basketball and other games. There was also a classroom, kitchen, boiler room, stage and restrooms. Along the north wall on a balcony were rooms to be used for Sunday school. The cornerstone for the new building was laid May 10, 1921.

The cornerstone ceremony was a great event in the city, and attended by dignitaries from the Presbyterian Church, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. and Masons from across the state, as well as numerous members of the Whitefish community. In preparation for the event, local contractor John Benson worked to be sure that the massive basement walls were in place on time. The reporter noted "about a week will yet be required for the ... walls to harden and then the brick superstructure will be rushed forward."¹² The rest of the building was completed very quickly, and was dedicated on October 9, 1921.

¹⁰ The name was taken from Acts 9:36 which proclaims that Dorcas was always doing good and helping the poor.

¹¹ *Whitefish Pilot*, May 10, 1921.

¹² *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 4

Social Significance

During planning and construction, the feeling was that Whitefish needed a church equipped to carry on through all the week the educational and recreational activities. This was truly the case because it became a meeting place for almost every community event, both religious and secular. Because it was the only building in town which could hold a capacity crowd and because of its central location, from the time the church was built, the basement section was used almost every day for some community activity. The floor of the basement had a shuffleboard court marked out on it, there were tables for table tennis tournaments, and a town basketball league used this area for their games through much of the twentieth century.

The church sponsored both Boy and Girl Scout troops, from the Brownies to Eagle Scouts, and their activities for their parents were held in the church basement. Throughout its history the church has served the community as an educational and recreational facility, in addition to its importance as a religious gathering place.

The First Presbyterian Church was truly a social and cultural center in Whitefish throughout the twentieth century, and continues to serve as the setting for education, public gatherings and community events. Indeed, the role of the building to the community has increased over the years, and its popularity necessitated its expansion in 1982 and some remodeling in 1985 in order to keep pace with the growing needs of the congregation and secular groups.

The Continuing Mission of Community Service at the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish

Congregation member Vivian Hull provided this testament to the importance of the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish to the community and its continuing direct impact on the social history of the town through its many social philanthropic and outreach programs. The First Presbyterian Church, both the building and the congregation, play an interesting and active role in the well being of the community. Its impact and associations with the social history of the community transcend spiritual and religious indications, and have a significant, tangible impact in the town.

Our church has always been supportive of our schools. The first church on Lakeside was used as a school on weekdays and a house of worship on Sunday. Our congregation has always included many who teach in our schools and they make the church aware of many ways to help the students. Sometimes it is collecting items for crafts, at other times there are bigger areas in which help is needed. When the special services department was in its infancy in the 1960's we helped to set up a clothes closet for underprivileged students.

Many of our congregation regularly volunteers listening to children read, tutoring individuals, and teaching music. Another project many have participated in is the mural project. A student interviewed an adult, then wrote a poem about the life of the adult. A mural was painted on a large sheet of plywood which was then mounted on the outside walls of many businesses. Teachers also have paired students with adults who were interviewed about the history of Whitefish.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 5

It was a member of our church who organized the E.A. Hinderman Memorial Scholarship in 1975. This scholarship is awarded annually to seniors in our district and is based 50% on financial need. In 2003, six seniors received \$5000 each. Money left after a reunion was the basis for this fund and it has grown over the years by donations. There are nine members on the committee and three of them are members of the Presbyterian Church, one of whom served as treasurer for 17 years.

When the North Valley Music School was struggling to become established our church opened the doors to them. The school used the Sunday school rooms during the week. This school supplements the music program at the public school as students are taught to play piano, violin, and other stringed instruments. Individual vocal lessons are also taught. This school is for students of all ages and many adults are enrolled.

The women of the church had many events that promoted much good will in the community. One of these was the annual Harvest Home Dinner held in October and open to the public. The most popular restaurant was closed on Tuesdays, and once each month the women held a cafeteria at noon. It was attended by railroad employees, teacher, store clerks, students and many women who came to eat then went on to play bridge at a private home. These two events were much anticipated as they allowed the community to meet and greet friends and neighbors. The Presbyterian Women still have an annual bazaar and soup luncheon each year, which is open to the public.

When the Stumptown Historical Society was in it infancy, there were very few members and some members of our church were the first officers, board members, and contributors. They worked untold hours helping to secure the depot [listed in the National Register of Historic Places 7/11/2002] and begin its restoration. The museum section of the depot was done entirely by volunteers and a goodly share of the workers were from the Presbyterian Church. They continue today to serve in many capacities from board members to donors to receptionists at the museum.

Whitefish is a community where many organizations work well together and coordinate their activities for the most efficient results. One of the earliest of these endeavors was the canteen, which was held during World War II. Because Whitefish was a division point on the railroad, trains carrying the troops stopped here while crews were changed. Women from the local churches and the community (many of whom were from the Presbyterian Church) set up a canteen at the depot where the servicemen were able to get sandwiches, cookies and beverages. Even today some men who were passengers on those trains come back to visit and some have even moved to Whitefish because of the hospitality they were shown many years ago.

The Presbyterian Church supports the Shepherd's Hand Clinic with regular contributions. This is a weekly clinic held at the Christ Lutheran Church for those residents who "fall between the cracks" for medical care. This is not only for Whitefish people, but for those of the surrounding communities also. Medical personnel from all faiths volunteer their services for this clinic. Other volunteers do clerical work: however the real need is for money to pay for medicine for the clinic. At our annual bazaar this year a hand made quilt is to be raffled with all proceeds going to the clinic.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 6

The North Valley Food Bank started many years ago as "Fish" and was operated from the back of a local paint store. It has grown into a major operation, and unlike most food banks it is operated entirely by volunteers. The Presbyterian Church contributes not only food, but volunteers. Each week the bulletin carries what kind of food is needed and we have two drop off areas where food is collected and delivered to the food bank. This facility serves people from Coram to the east to the Canadian border on the west and north.

We participate in the Good Samaritan Program with other churches in our community. Regular contributions are put into a fund where stranded visitors can receive a voucher for food, gas or a motel room. This is done in cooperation with the local police department who verifies that the recipient does not have a record.

We also are supporters of "Hope Ranch" which is a program for young girls who have been addicted to drugs. These girls come from all parts of the U.S. and are housed at a ranch a few miles west of town.

We always have a large attendance at our Christmas Eve service and the offering taken at this service is divided among charitable organizations. Recently it has gone to the food bank, Shepherd's Hand Clinic, and Abby House, a shelter for abused spouses.

Many of our congregation have worked for several years with Habitat for Humanity but four houses were built in one area this year and one of them was done by people from churches in the area. Over the years, contributions have been both monetary and volunteer hours.

Our church supports The Glacier Camp on Flathead Lake, with various kinds of camping each summer. Often children who attend have no church affiliation, and our church provides some scholarships for those who cannot afford the camping fee.

When disaster of any kind occurs in our community, the Presbyterian Church along with the other churches contributes whatever may be needed. This summer when a family's home burned, our church was a collection point where donations were brought to replace what was lost.¹³

While many of these activities and programs take place at various places throughout the community, the First Presbyterian Church building serves as a base of operations for all of this interaction with the community. Beyond the spiritual, the church and its congregation members serve as an important physical connection to historic and ongoing programs supporting recreation, local history, education and service throughout the Whitefish area. One of the most tangible links to this legacy is the collection of remarkable stained glass windows that grace the building.

13 Vivian Hull and Pastor Andrew Kennedy, "First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish," unpublished, National Register files, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, November 2003.

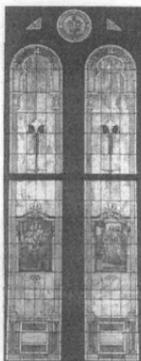
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 7



Stained Glass Windows

The church features outstanding Tiffany-style art glass windows that were brought from St. Louis. They tower nearly from the floor to the ceiling of the main level of the original church. From the exterior, the windows are a visible symbol to the community of the Presbyterian's ecclesiastical teachings, but from inside the church, you can read the names of those who donated them. Each of the seventeen windows serves as a monument to the pioneers of the church, who were also the pioneers in the new town.

The first pair of windows on the south side of the building were dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Samson. The Samsons owned the Samson Bank, an apartment house that was a home for many of the first teachers and early workers on the railroad. Mr. Samson was a tie contractor for the railroad and he and his wife were probably the largest landholders in the area. Mrs. Samson served on the building committee for the church. Samson Lake is named after that family.

Baker Avenue and Baker Avenue Bridge are important Whitefish thoroughfares named for the Baker family who were early day loggers and had the first mill on Whitefish Lake. A pair of windows is dedicated to Edgar Baker, who died in a logging accident.

Another pair of windows bears the names Mr. and Mrs. E.L. Geddes. He was a director of the First National Bank, worked in real estate and was on the first city council. A house he built, although now owned by a local family is still called "The Geddes House" and Geddes Avenue is named after the family.

Others to whom windows are dedicated include Miss Murphy, a very early-day teacher, who sang in the choir and is also remembered for helping to nurse the ill during the flu epidemic of 1918. Mr. Little owned a transfer and dray business. Whitefish had a large Japanese population and Mrs. Elizabeth Peck taught over 400 to speak English and helped them adjust to their new life.

In a letter to her "Aunt Jennie" in 1921, Mrs. Peck described her work and closeness with the Japanese community:

I took, for my part of the work in the church, the Japanese. We have fourteen families and fifty single men. They work for the railroad, most of them. I teach them to talk English, read and write it. And if I do say it, I have accomplished it. I never hoped to do so well when I started it.

... We built a new church this year. Cost forty thousand dollars and I asked for a donation of the Japanese men. Said it would be nice if they could give a window. Well they sent in a check for seven hundred and five dollars. Bought two windows and then the windows came, one of them said, "For Mrs. Elizabeth D. Peck from the Japanese." I said am I dead? What an honor to live up to. So it will stand as long as the church does and I will have to teach Japanese all the rest of my natural existence.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 8

They give me wonderful presents. You see I get no money for my work. I do not belong to any of the "aids" or other things, just do this for my part.

One month I helped a man to buy a house, helped to bury one man that was drowned and helped two babies into the world. Millard says you can't turn around that there isn't a Japanese at the door, but Millard helps too and is good to them.

Indeed, the beautiful windows in the church not only tell the stories of the Bible, but also the story of early Whitefish. The people to whom the windows were dedicated are the individuals and families that established the community, from the bankers to the teachers to those who benefited from their service.

The interaction of the varied members of the Whitefish community with church members and their wonderful building ranged from education to recreation. This relationship is a testament to the importance of the church to the local social history, the community outreach programs offered in the building, and wonderful sense of cooperation and appreciation between the diverse members of the Whitefish population. Clearly, the First Presbyterian Church at 301 Central Avenue conveys significant associations to the social history of the community of Whitefish. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.¹⁴

Architectural Significance

The First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish gains additional significance under Criterion C, as it is an excellent local example of Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical architecture. The Romanesque Revival style had its beginnings in religious architecture. The original style was common throughout the Mediterranean region during the 11th century. In the 1840s, American Christians were attracted to the picturesque quality of the churches of the Middle Ages. They wanted that quality replicated in their own parishes, and so a revival of interest in Romanesque architecture began. Romanesque Revival became the favored style for American churches through the turn of the twentieth century, and expanded to major public buildings, commercial buildings and eventually residential architecture.¹⁵

¹⁴ The history of the Japanese workers on the Great Northern Railroad and in the community of Whitefish is very interesting. For more information see: The Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs, "From the Far East to the Old West: Chinese and Japanese Settlers in Montana, Study Guide." Missoula, Montana: The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, 1998; Tsurutani Hisashi, *America-Bound: The Japanese and the Opening of the American West*, first English edition, translated by Betsey Scheiner with the assistance of Yamamura Mariko. Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1989; Kathy McKay, "Historic and Architectural Properties of Kalispell, Montana Multiple Properties Documentation Form," 1992, Section E, p. 1, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT. "Japs Preferred," *Kalispell Bee*, September 4, 1903, p. 8; *Inter Lake*, October 14, 1898; Johnson, pp. 67-68; "M.M. Hori Laid to Rest, Many Floral Tributes," *Whitefish Pilot*, November 27, 1931.

¹⁵ Mallory B. E. Baches, "A Matter of Style: Richardsonian Romanesque," *The Town Paper*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall, 2003, http://www.tndtownpaper.com/Volume5/richardsonian_romanescque.htm.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 9

In reaction to the elegantly designed Gothic Revival churches that set the standard of taste in the 1840s for the Episcopal Church, other church groups found the Romanesque "less ostentatious...more republican," according to Robert Dale Owen in his 1849 publication, *Hints on Public Architecture*. Evangelical congregations that emphasized preaching developed church plans to focus on the pulpit and could draw on virtually any style for the exterior.¹⁶

The Romanesque Revival style is characterized by masonry construction and the general use of the semi-circular arch for all wall openings and decoration. Asymmetrical organization is common to the style. Belt courses, or decorative stone courses that run horizontal across the entire building or major portions of it, are also prevalent. Falling just below the eaves, arcaded corbel tables are often found.¹⁷ The First Presbyterian Church displays each of these characteristics, including semi-circular arched windows and doors, a large, square Norman tower on one corner of the building, and arcaded corbelling. The watertable emphasizes the horizontal across the building.

With design ideas from the First Presbyterian Church Building Committee, Spokane architects Riggs and Vantyne finalized the plans for this magnificent church. These prominent architects partnered through the first half of the twentieth century and designed many substantial and important buildings in the Pacific Northwest, particularly eastern Washington. They were well versed in the Romanesque Revival style, and employed it on several of their designs. These include the Philena Apartments (1929) in the City of Cheney (Washington State) Historic District (NR listed 2/2/2001), and the Hillyard Masonic Temple (1931) in Spokane.

Roland Vantyne (1887-1938) studied at the Buffalo Polytechnic Institute and worked for architects in Buffalo, New York and Duluth, Minnesota. He came to Spokane in 1910 and worked as a draftsman for Albert Held and later for Julius Zittel. Canadian-born Rigg (b. 1878) was also well educated, having studied at Trinity College in Toronto, Columbia University in New York, and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He arrived in Spokane in the early 1900s and, like Vantyne, worked as a draftsman in local architectural firms during his early career, working for Cutter and Malmgren and later Albert Held. He partnered first with architect Julius Zittel in 1912, then with Vantyne. Vantyne and Rigg's partnership lasted 23 years.

Their work in Spokane included the Salvation Army Building, Shriner's Hospital, the Symons Building, and the Masonic Temple expansion. They also designed the Garden Crypts Mausoleum (Greenwood Cemetery) and Sunset Mausoleum (Fairmount Cemetery) in Spokane.

¹⁶ New York Landmarks Conservancy, *Common Bond* May 1997, <http://www.sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/The%20Romanesque%20Revival.htm>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 10

Criteria Consideration A

The First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish derives its primary significance from its associations with the social history of the town and from its architectural distinction. The church building's links to the secular aspects of social history of the community, including service organizations, education, and recreation, are clear. In addition, the building is a remarkable local example of Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical architecture and a fine representation of work by regional architects Riggs and Vantyne. Therefore the property meets Criteria Consideration A.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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: Stumptown Historical Society, Whitefish, MT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
11 697183E 5365010N (NAD27)

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): NE SW NE of Section 36, T31N, R22W

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 52, lots 22-24, Whitefish Original Townsite.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, based on legally recorded boundary lines, to include the land surrounding the building that has been historically associated with the building and conveys the property's historic setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Vivian Hull
organization: c/o First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish date: November 2003
street & number: 301 Central Avenue telephone:
city or town: Whitefish state: MT zip code: 59937

with technical assistance by

name/title: Kate Hampton
organization: MT SHPO date: April 2004
street & number: 1410 Eighth Avenue telephone: (406) 444-3647
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620-1202

Property Owner

name/title: First Presbyterian Church
street & number: 301 Central Ave. telephone: (406) 862-2802
city or town: Whitefish state: MT zip code: 59937

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1

Baches, Mallory B. E. "A Matter of Style: Richardsonian Romanesque." *The Town Paper*. Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall 2003, http://www.tndtownpaper.com/Volume5/richardsonian_romanescque.htm.

Bellefluer, Flora Mae. "The Development of the Upper Flathead and Kootenai Country." M.A. Thesis, Montana State University, 1948.

Cultural Resources Management Group. "Clark Fork Heritage Resource Management Plan, Volume 1 – Public." Prepared for the Clark Fork Project, Avista Corporation, January 2000; on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish Planning Committee. "Meeting Minutes." (1910-1922) On file at the First Presbyterian Church, Whitefish, MT.

Hull, Vivian and Kennaly, Andrew. "History of the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish." (2003) On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

Hisashi, Tsurutani. *America-Bound: The Japanese and the Opening of the American West*. First English edition, translated by Betsey Scheiner with the assistance of Yamamura Mariko. Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1989.

Inter Lake. Kalispell, MT. October 14, 1898.

Johnson, Dorothy. *When You and I Were Young, Whitefish*, rev. ed. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1997.

Kalispell Bee. "Japs Preferred." September 4, 1903.

Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs. "From the Far East to the Old West: Chinese and Japanese Settlers in Montana, Study Guide." Missoula, MT: The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, 1998.

McKay, Kathy. "Great Northern Railway Passenger and Freight Depot and Division Office National Register Nomination Form." (2002) On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

McKay, Kathy. "Historic and Architectural Properties of Kalispell, Montana Multiple Properties Documentation Form." (1992) On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

New York Landmarks Conservancy, *Common Bond*. May 1997, <http://www.sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/The%20Romanesque%20Revival.htm>

Schafer, Betty & Engelter, Mable. *Stump Town to Ski Town: The Story of Whitefish, Montana*. Whitefish, Mont.: Whitefish Library Association, 1973.

Whitefish Pilot, May 10, 1921.

Whitefish Pilot. "M.M. Hori Laid to Rest, Many Floral Tributes." November 27, 1931.

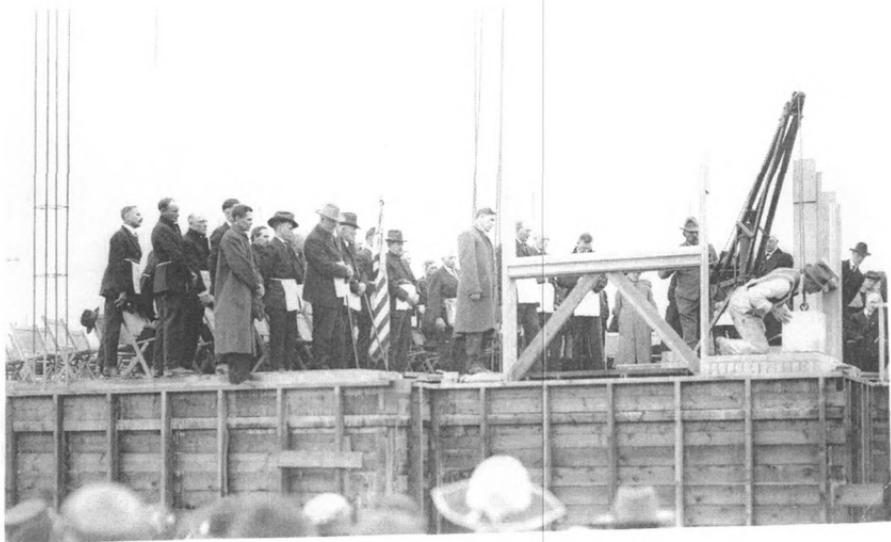
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Photographs

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1



Laying the Cornerstone for the First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish, May 10, 1921.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Photographs

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1



First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish, 1921.

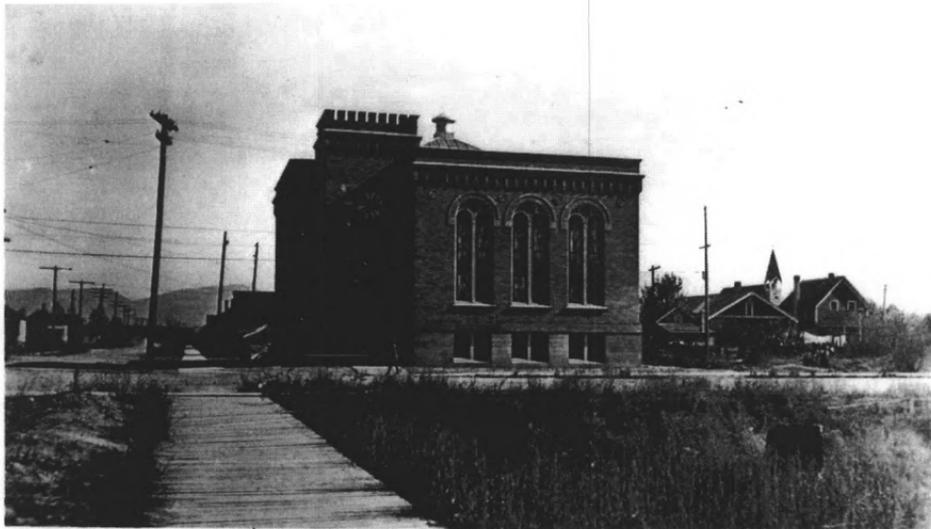
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Photographs

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1



1st Presbyterian Church Whitefish Mont

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish, view to the east, 1921.

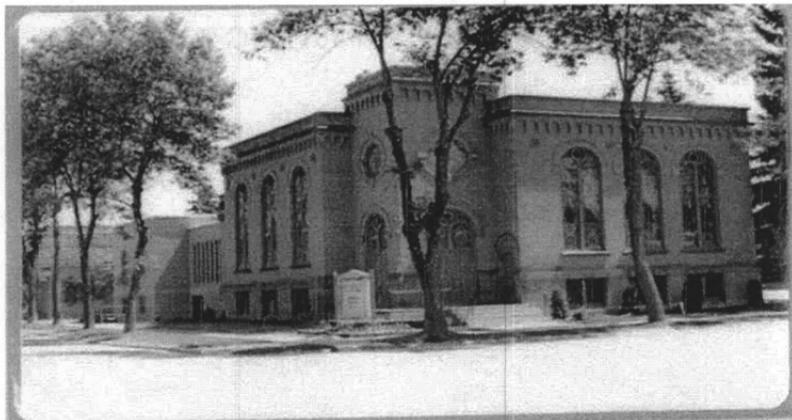
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Photographs

First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish
Flathead County, MT

Page 1



First Presbyterian Church of Whitefish, after the addition was completed in 1986.