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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NOV 28 2005

NATIONAL REGISTER, HISTORY  
& EDUCATION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 46A). 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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church  
Other name/site number Odell Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church; Niotaze United Methodist Church

2. Location

Street & number 301 North F Street  not for publication  
City or town Niotaze  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Chautauqua Code 019 Zip code 67355

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.)

[Signature] 11/21/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Kansas State Historical Society Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting 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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

1-11-06

Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church  
Name of property

Chautauqua County, Kansas  
County and State

**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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Sandstone  
walls STONE: Sandstone

roof ASPHALT

other TIN; WOOD

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

Name of Property Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church County and State Chautauqua County, Kansas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- 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 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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1895-1955

Significant Dates

1895

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

PRICE, BENJAMIN D. -- ARCHITECT

BURSON, S.A. -- BUILDER

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): Primary location of additional data:

- 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 #

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

Name of repository:

Name of Property Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church County and State Chautauqua County, Kansas

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone 1 4	Easting 7 6 5 4 0 0	Northing 4 1 0 6 6 2 0	3	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	Zone	Easting	Northing	4	Zone	Easting	Northing

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 Betty Ann Flesher Melican  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date October 2005  
Street & number 210 East 1st Street Telephone (620) 879-5770  
City or town Caney State Kansas Zip code 67333

### 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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

name Niotaze Little Church In the Vale, Board of Trustees  
street & number PO Box 111 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Niotaze state KS zip code 67355

**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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**Architectural Description**

The Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church (c. 1895) sits at the foot of a wooded hill, at the north edge of the small town of Niotaze, Kansas, in the southeastern corner of Chautauqua County. It is located two blocks north of U.S. Highway 166 at 301 North F Street. The building faces eastward and is situated on Lot 3 in Block 21. This 28' x 48' one-story building was built in 1895 and features a standard church plan designed by architect Benjamin Price. The one-room, front-gabled church is constructed of rusticated sandstone blocks with 12 stained glass windows of varying shapes and sizes. Stone steps lead to the bell-tower entrance at the southeast corner of the building.

**Exterior**

The building rests on a smooth-cut sandstone foundation that is defined by a projecting smooth-cut sandstone belt course. Other features include a gable roof with asphalt composition shingles and three pipe vents, a corner bell tower entrance, and a small wood frame bay projection (apse) with a shed roof on the rear elevation. The gable and shed roofs were originally covered with wood shingles. In June 1962 it was covered with composition shingles. The wood frame projection is original to the building, as are all elements of the bell tower. The bell dates to 1898.

The east elevation (front) features a circular porthole window framed by a smooth-cut square sandstone. The porthole stained glass window is covered, and is centered above two rectangular double-hung stained glass windows. The two rectangular windows each feature a triangular arch and a projecting smooth-cut sandstone lintel. To the left of the windows, on the building's southeast corner, is the bell tower entrance. This square projection measures 9'10" x 9'6" and serves as the building's only entrance. A sandstone retaining wall frames two sets of stone steps that lead from the south and east. A sandstone-faced concrete ramp leads from the north along the front of the building. The original wooden double doors, which extended to the bottom of a glass arch window, have been replaced. The original round arch window remains intact and contains three rounded triangular panes. The stone portion of the tower stretches just above the bottom roofline and features a mansard roof with a cupola resting on four wooden pillars reaching above the roof ridgeline.

The south elevation also includes the tower projection. The tower contains a fixed, rectangular stained glass window with a smooth-cut sandstone lintel. A projecting smooth-cut sandstone belt course defines the exposed sandstone foundation blocks. The southeast corner of the building contains the most exposed foundation blocks because the building is constructed into a hillside. The south elevation of the main portion of the building contains three evenly spaced rectangular

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double-hung stained glass windows each with a triangular arch and a projecting smooth-cut sandstone lintel. Two windows each contain a replaced, plain-glass bottom pane.

The west elevation (rear) contains a small 3-sided wood frame bay projection with a shed roof. The projection is centered and extends roughly three feet from the main building. The only windows on the north elevation are within the bay projection, one each on the north and south. Each window is rectangular, double-hung, with stained glass and a triangular arch.

The north elevation contains three evenly spaced rectangular double-hung stained glass windows each with a triangular arch and a projecting smooth-cut sandstone lintel. Two windows each contain a replaced, plain-glass bottom pane. A chimney pipe extends through the roof structure above the center window. Historic photographs, however, show the original brick chimney to be centrally located along the peak of the roof.

There is an open grassy area north of the church used for parking. Although no longer extant, an outhouse was situated in the grove of trees immediately west of the church.

**Interior**

The interior is comprised of a vestibule and a sanctuary. One enters the sanctuary through the original 9' double doors. The sanctuary interior has plastered and papered walls extending 8' above 34" wainscoting. Two aisles that split three sections of original wooden pews lead to a raised stage for the preacher's pulpit at the west end of the interior. Wainscoting on the stage reaches only 17" high. The pulpit is framed by an apse (bay projection) with two stained glass windows. The trim around the doors and windows is stained to match the wainscoting and wood pews.

A fireplace is located at the center of the north wall. According to historic exterior photographs a stove was probably originally located at the center of the church. Gas lights were installed in 1903, and electricity was installed in the late 1940s. The building has no plumbing. Carpet was installed in 1976.

There is a corner closet in the northeast corner at the back of the room. Along the north wall is another storage space, 18 1/2" x 31", where the chimney is located. Original features include the pastor's chair, pulpit, and visitor's bench. A Bible with a copywrite date July 1, 1886, is situated on the pulpit. An altar was placed in front of the pulpit. The piano sits against the south wall next to the stage. There are three pictures of Christ, the American flag, and a church banner along the west wall. There is an old clock hanging on the east wall of the sanctuary.

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## Statement of Significance

The Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church (c. 1895) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a good local example of a one-room standard church plan designed by Benjamin Price. The building illustrates how a standard building design can be integrated into the landscape using local materials. The stone for the building was quarried from the hill overlooking Niotaze. Although formal church services ended June 29, 2003, area residents occasionally open the building for functions. Its future use is undetermined. With most of its original materials intact, this rusticated sandstone building retains a high degree of interior and exterior integrity.

## Historical Overview

Euro-Americans began settling the territory that would become Chautauqua County in the late 1860s. The county officially organized in 1875 with Sedan serving as the county seat. According to the U.S. Census, by 1880 there were 11,072 people residing in Chautauqua County. The county population would peak in 1890 at 12,297 before steadily declining through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The Niotaze community has an interesting early history. According to William G. Cutler and various later secondary sources:

A petition was sent to the Post Office Department, asking that a post office be established at the place, to be called Matanzas. The petition was so poorly written that the authorities were unable to make out the name that was desired, and wrote to D. Clark, Postmaster at Peru, asking him what it was. Clark, cognizant of a good joke, wrote back the name Jay Hawk, and accordingly the office under that name was duly established. The people of the village and vicinity were very much perplexed over the joke that had been played upon them, and afterward had the name of the office changed to the name desired.<sup>2</sup>

The misunderstanding was quickly corrected and the name became Matanzas (now Mantanzas). Both the Santa Fe and Missouri Pacific Railroads bypassed Matanzas in the early 1880s. The post

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<sup>1</sup> "Historical Census Browser," University of Virginia Library. Accessible online at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

<sup>2</sup> William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883). Available online at [www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/index.html](http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/index.html).

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office and store were moved to the nearby intersection of these railroad lines known as Niota. Residents then requested the use of the name Niota in 1886, but a short time later the postal department suggested the use of a different name because of the similarity to Neola, Kansas. Finally, it was changed to the present name of Niotaze on April 21, 1890. The town was incorporated on January 5, 1910.<sup>3</sup>

The early twentieth century brought Niotaze prosperity through the oil industry. In an effort to reduce local dependence on Standard Oil Company, independent oil refineries sprung up throughout southeast Kansas. The Sunflower Refining Company opened in Niotaze in 1905.<sup>4</sup> By 1910, there were 317 people living in Niotaze. Located 11 miles from Sedan, the county seat, Niotaze was also a shipping point for grain, livestock, and produce.<sup>5</sup>

Today, U.S. Route 166 bisects the sprawling settlement of fewer than 100 residents. The Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church overlooks the community from a hillside on the northwest edge of town.

### Church History

It was during the period of growth and prosperity of the late nineteenth century that Niotaze residents decided to build a stone church. Prior to 1895, there were no church buildings in Niotaze and religious services were held at the Walnut Grove school house located approximately one-quarter mile north of the nominated building. The two main denominational groups were the Church of Christ and Methodist. The Methodists selected a group of Trustees who first met on January 8, 1895.<sup>6</sup> Much of the early history of the Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church comes from the *Trustees' Record*, the minutes of their meetings.

At their first meeting, the trustees discussed the possibility of erecting their own church building. It was decided that "if a stone church would not cost over \$200 more than a frame building, [they]

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<sup>3</sup> Chautauqua County Heritage Association, *The History of Chautauqua County, Kansas* (Curtis Media Corporation), 1987.

<sup>4</sup> William Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas, Volume II* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 1004-5.

<sup>5</sup> Frank W. Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Volume II* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), 370.

<sup>6</sup> The first trustees were John Shouse, Chairman; W.E. Abbott, Vice Chairman; W.B. Dobbs, Secretary; Josie E. Klinger, Treasurer; Emma Cowgill; J.D. Hampton; and W.F. Samms.



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would build a stone church.” They adopted church design number 137A from architect Benjamin D. Price. At their April 8, 1895 meeting, the trustees agreed to pay Alice Robinson \$26.50 for Lot 3, block 21. (See Figure 1) They also agreed to pay \$7.10 for Price’s architectural plans. W.B. Dobbs, W.D Miller, and John Shouse served as the building committee. The site for the church was selected because it overlooks the town. From this prominent position, the steeple can be seen for several miles. On April 13, 1895, Alice Robinson deeded Lot 3 in Block 21 to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in exchange for \$26.50 and Lot 1.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 1)

On April 23, 1895, the trustees instructed the building committee to “receive bids for contracting and to contract in accordance with Plans and Specifications received from Benjamin D. Price, excepting such change as may be necessary to make in changing from frame to stone and to put in two windows in front and three windows on each side.” Area resident S.A. Burson<sup>8</sup> contracted to do the stone work for \$675. An extra \$15 was allowed for additional stone for the foundation and \$35 to make the tower five feet taller. Frank Rabb was also hired to enclose the church for \$425, to finish the interior for \$215, and to complete the tower for \$50. The corner stone was laid on May 15, 1895.<sup>9</sup>

Also in May 1895, the trustees appealed to the Board of Church Extension to assist with the cost of the construction. The request was granted provided the church be called the “Odell Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church.” (See Figure 2.) This name is seen throughout church records until 1903. The President of Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, Dr. Murlin, dedicated the church on November 24, 1895. At this time, the trustees had received cash donations totaling \$1,214.27, leaving the debt total at \$445.83. The church was not completely furnished. There were financial troubles during these early years. In June 1896, “a tax of five cents was levied on each member to meet the present indebtedness.” Eighteen names were listed as contributors that quarter. At the end of 1896, the balance in the treasury was 66 cents.<sup>10</sup>

The Ladies Aid Society made frequent contributions to the church. They purchased the bell in 1898 for \$44.35 and the organ in 1899

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<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of Trustees, Niotaze Methodist Church, 1895-1908.

<sup>8</sup> Burson also built the old Niotaze hotel located a block east of the church with the same type of stone. The building is extant and is currently used as a residence. Burson’s name is visible over a second story window on the south side.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of Trustees, Niotaze Methodist Church, 1895-1908.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

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Sunday school records date back to 1910 when the attendance was 30 to 35. Church membership reached 28 in 1911.<sup>11</sup> The church never had a full-time minister, but instead shared ministers and lay speakers with churches at Chautauqua, Elgin, Hewins, Jonesburg, Peru, Monette, Wauneta, Elk City, Sycamore Valley, Lafontaine, Havana, and Caney. In 1968, the church joined with the United Brethren Church and became known as the Niotaze United Methodist Church.

The cooperative ministry known as the Caney Group Parish organized in 1974 and served Caney, Havana, Tyro, and Niotaze. In 2001, the Caney Group Parish dissolved. Caney became a single church charge, and Havana, Niotaze, and Tyro formed the HNT Group Parish. The Niotaze United Methodist Church officially closed on June 29, 2003. The Chautauqua County Historical and Society, Inc. formed a subsidiary known as Niotaze Church In The Vale. to preserve the building and its history.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 1: Chautauqua County Register of Deeds, Sedan, KS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lot 3, Block 21 Property Transfers</b>
10 April 1877	U.S. Government to Daniel Edwards
21 October 1881	To George Noble
10 January 1884	To Baldwin J. Clements
Unknown	To A.J. Clements and Alice Julia Robinson
18 April 1895	To Trustees, Methodist Episcopal Church
4 December 2003	To Trustees, Niotaze Little Church In the Vale / Chautauqua County Historical Society, Inc.

Figure 2

<b>Date</b>	<b>Church Name</b>
April 1895-1939	Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church / Odell Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church
1939-1968	Niotaze Methodist Church
1968-2003	Niotaze United Methodist Church

<sup>11</sup> "The Niotaze United Methodist Church Caney Group Parish, 1895-1995: Historical Information," Unpublished pamphlet, 1995, 6.

<sup>12</sup> "Niotaze United Methodist Church (1895-2003): Closing Service of Worship," Pamphlet, 29 June 2003, 7.

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**Bibliography**

Blackmar, Frank W., *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Volume II* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company), 1912.

Chautauqua County Heritage Association, *The History of Chautauqua County, Kansas* (Curtis Media Corporation), 1987.

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Connelley, William, *A Standard History of Kansas, Volume II* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 1004-5.

Cutler, William G. *History of the State of Kansas*. A. T. Andreas, Chicago, IL: 1883. Available online at [www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/index.html](http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/index.html).

“Historical Census Browser.” University of Virginia Library. Available online at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

Minutes of the Meetings of Trustees. Niotaze Methodist Church. 1895-1908.

*Montgomery County Chronicle*. “Remember These Stones.” 2 July 2003.

“The Niotaze United Methodist Church Caney Group Parish, 1895-1995: Historical Information.” Unpublished pamphlet. 1995.

“Niotaze United Methodist Church (1895-2003): Closing Service of Worship.” Pamphlet. 29 June 2003.

Price, Benjamin D., and Max Charles Price. *Church Plans*. N.P. 1907.

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Located on Lot 3, Block 21, in the First Addition, Niotaze, Chautauqua County, Kansas.

### **Boundary Justification**

This was the original site for the church. The lot is 132' x 150'.

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**Photographic Information**

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. Niotaze Methodist Episcopal Church
2. Chautauqua County, KS
3. Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
4. 25 October 2005
5. Digital photographs on file at the Kansas State Historical Society

Photo #1: East (front) elevation, view from the east

Photo #2: East (front) and north elevations, view from northeast

Photo #3: Bell tower, view from east

Photo #4: Exterior, window close-up, view from south

Photo #5: South and west (rear) elevations, view from southwest

Photo #6: Interior, view from east

Photo #7: Interior, window close-up

Photo #8: Interior, pew

Photo #9: Interior, view from west

Photo #10: Interior, pulpit