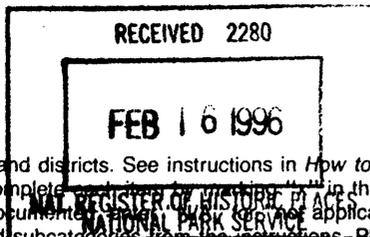


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "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 Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church

other names/site number Stonington Church / 5BA555

2. Location

street & number 48854 County Road X N/A not for publication

city or town Stonington N/A vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Baca code 009 zip code 81075

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]
Signature of certifying official/Title

February 8, 1996
Date

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): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

3/14/96

Entered in the
National Register

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	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	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

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof WOOD: Shingle

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

Period of Significance

1917

Significant Dates

1917

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Murray, W. S.

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:

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

Name of repository:

Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Baca County, CO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	3	7	4	9	2	6	0	4	1	3	1	0	5	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

3

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 Maxine L. Smith (& HLW)

organization Stonington Community date 9-7-1995

street & number 21715 County Road 51 telephone (719) 324-5331

city or town Walsh state CO zip code 81090

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 Stonington Community

c/o Milton Ross

street & number PO Box 143 telephone (719) 324-5315

city or town Walsh state CO zip code 81090

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO

DESCRIPTION

The Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church is a one story, wood frame building with pointed-arched windows and a bell tower. It is located in the rural community of Stonington, which is in the southeast corner of Baca County. The Gothic Revival building has a concrete block foundation, clapboard siding, and a steeply pitched front gable roof covered with wood shingles. The gable ends and bell tower are faced with diamond and square cut wooden shingles. The property is in fairly good condition and has undergone little alteration since its construction.

The church faces north near the junction of County Road X and a private road. Concrete steps and platform lead to the offset entrance that is covered with a gabled roof supported by metal poles. Two, five-panel, wooden, double doors with transom lights serve as the main entrance into the building. There are two pointed-arched windows along the wall beside the entrance and a small segmentally arched window opening with a carved wood surround in the gable end.

The east and west elevations each contain four, evenly spaced pointed arched windows. The square bell tower extending from the northeast corner of the roof has louvered openings and a pyramidal roof topped with an unusual weather vane. The tower contains the original bell that is still operational.

The south (rear) elevation has a centrally positioned beveled bay projection with two pointed-arched windows. Adjacent to the bay is a wooden door with concrete steps. Directly above the polygonal roof of the bay is another small segmentally arched window opening with a carved wood surround. All the pointed arched windows are wood frame, double hung sash with tracery and textured clear glass.

The exterior of the building appears very much as it did when it was constructed in 1917. The only exterior changes were the replacement of the deteriorating wooden porch supports with metal poles, the installation of the louvered enclosures in the bell tower openings to discourage the pigeons, and the addition of screens to the windows. These changes are believed to have occurred in 1946 and have had very little impact on the integrity of the property. The property is in fairly good condition, despite the need of paint and roof repairs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 & 8 Page 2

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO

DESCRIPTION (continued)

The interior was remodeled during the 1980s, but the original plaster walls, wooden wainscoting, and tongue-and-groove ceiling appear to be intact beneath the panelling and acoustical tile. A forced air furnace and two bathrooms were installed at the time, along with improvements to the electrical system.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church is eligible to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance. It is a good, intact example of the Late Gothic Revival style executed by local craftsman and is the only identified example of this style in the county. The building also embodies the distinctive characteristics of the churches that were constructed by early settlers on the plains. As the property was used for religious purposes and derives its primary significance from architectural distinction, criteria consideration A applies.

Although Gothic Revival architecture arrived in America from England in the late 18th century, it was not until a growing interest in romanticism during the 1830s that the style turned into a popular movement. Gothic Revival is distinguished by the use of pointed-arched windows in combination with steeply pitched gabled roofs, towers, and window tracery. In addition to these elements, the picturesque example in Stonington also includes a beveled bay, decorative shingles facing the gable ends and the tower, carved window surrounds, and an unusual weather vane. An enduring style, Gothic Revival remained the most influential architectural style for churches well into the 20th century.

Robert Adams, in his book White Churches of the Plains, establishes a pattern among the buildings that were constructed by early settlers for their worship services. Although churches constructed of lumber first appeared in the 1880s, they did not become commonplace until the first two decades of this century, when prairie communities began to stabilize and the railroads facilitated the availability of lumber. Homes and schools were generally priorities among these settlers. The design of these churches relied heavily on the early frame churches of New England. New England churches--spare rectangles with gabled roofs that were unadorned except for a bell tower and steeple--provided a practical model for these prairie settlers. By adopting the New England designs, Adams notes that these prairie settlers "created strikingly beautiful buildings while suggesting a reassuring stability and continuity."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO**SIGNIFICANCE (continued)**

Adams provides specific characteristics for these churches on the plains. Floor plans were usually an ordinary box, although the inclusion of a tiny three-sided apse covered with a hipped roof was not unusual. Windows were most often double hung sashes and many were topped with a lancet arch, an attempt to "gothicize the New England inheritance." Regular window glass was the norm, however there was an occasional variation of mottled translucent glass. Stained glass was almost never used because of its initial expense and the cost to replace it if damaged by hail. Roofs were nearly always gabled and covered with shakes. The bell tower most often extended up from the ground, rather than from the roof, and provided a space for a narthex or entry. When there was a steeple, it was usually short and most often four-sided. The bell, often behind shutters, was a source of considerable pride and could be heard for miles. Because of their expense, a congregation might have to wait until they could afford one. Raising the bell was often a dramatic and precarious event. These churches were dedicated at special services and "from that day forward they were the center of most of the religious and social life of the members." Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church closely parallels this pattern in its plan, materials, roof, windows and bell tower.

In the forward to Adams' book, Thomas Hornsby Ferril, one of Colorado's poet laureates, notes that:

Unquestionably, there is something tiresome about the endless sweep of plains and prairies....But this seeming monotony...excites spiritual energies. So it is that these little white churches symbolize these driving needs. If they are somewhat repetitive and monotonous in style and structure, no matter; they stand for something powerful and luminous in the westering of American life...

HISTORY

Stonington was originally a man's residence and post office, some three miles from the present town. "New" Stonington was established in 1904 and the townsite grew to an approximate size of six square blocks. Even though the nearest railroad point was in Elkhart, Kansas, the small town was the hub serving the surrounding farm community. The first church built in Baca County was at Plymouth (four miles southeast of Stonington), but it blew down in a windstorm in 1897 and subsequent religious gatherings were then held in private homes and schools.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO

Although a 1915 business directory lists a Methodist-Episcopal Church in Stonington with Reverend Johnson as pastor, the congregation was apparently meeting in the schoolhouse. When Reverend F. Ridley Guy arrived, he found the congregation enthusiastic about having their own church building with a bell. The community had been contributing to a building fund for several months as the schoolhouse was becoming too small to accommodate the increased congregation.

On October 13, 1916, bids were let for the building of a frame church with dimensions of 32 feet by 52 feet. The cornerstone was designed by Reverend Guy and was laid on May 10, 1917. A public sale was held on July 13, 1917 at the premises of George E. Konkel. Proceeds of the sale and donations solicited went into the church building fund. Construction had already begun at this time and the cost of the church was to be \$3500, of which \$1200 still had to be raised. Funds for the construction and most of the labor were donated by residents of the community, which was in itself a marvel in this sparsely settled, economically poor area. The builder was W. S. Murray, a postmaster of a small town just across the Kansas border. He also built many of the early residences.

The church held its opening service on September 23, 1917 and was dedicated on December 9, 1917. The first funeral held in the church was on December 14, 1917. On March 18, 1918, a new bell weighing 1000 pounds arrived and was installed in the tower.

After its construction, the Stonington church served as a religious and social meeting place for a wide area for many years. Religious services, nearly all wedding and funeral services, and many other community functions such as Halloween parties, box suppers, and Mother's Day teas, were held in this building. The town of Walsh, eleven miles to the northeast, was not founded until 1926 and Springfield (the county seat) was over thirty miles away. Until the establishment of Walsh and the advent of the automobile and graded roads for transportation, these distances made Stonington and its church the only feasible gathering place for religious services for the surrounding countryside. In the event of a death in the community, the church bell was made to ring on only one side, signalling to the countryside that a funeral was imminent. Wagons would be lined up for as far as a mile to attend funerals.

Located in the extreme southeast corner of Colorado with the state of Kansas only eight miles to the east and the state of Oklahoma twenty miles to the south, the town of Stonington has only fourteen residents now and no longer has a post office, school, or any business establishments.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 & 10 Page 5

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Hickman. White Churches of the Plains. Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1970.

Baca County Historical Society. Baca County, Colorado. Lubbock, Texas: Specialty Publishing Co., 1983.

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Plainsman Herald (Springfield, Colorado). 7 July 1988, p. 1.

Poppeliers, John C.; Chambers, S. Allen, Jr.; and Schwartz, Nancy B. What Style Is It? Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1983.

Templin, J. Alton; Breck, Allen D.; and Rist, Martin, ed. The Methodist, Evangelical, and United Brethren Churches in the Rockies, 1850-1976. The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1977.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning 627 feet West of the Northeast corner of Section 6, Township 32 South, Range 42 West of the 6th P.M., thence West 230 feet, thence South 209 feet, thence East 230 feet, thence North 209 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

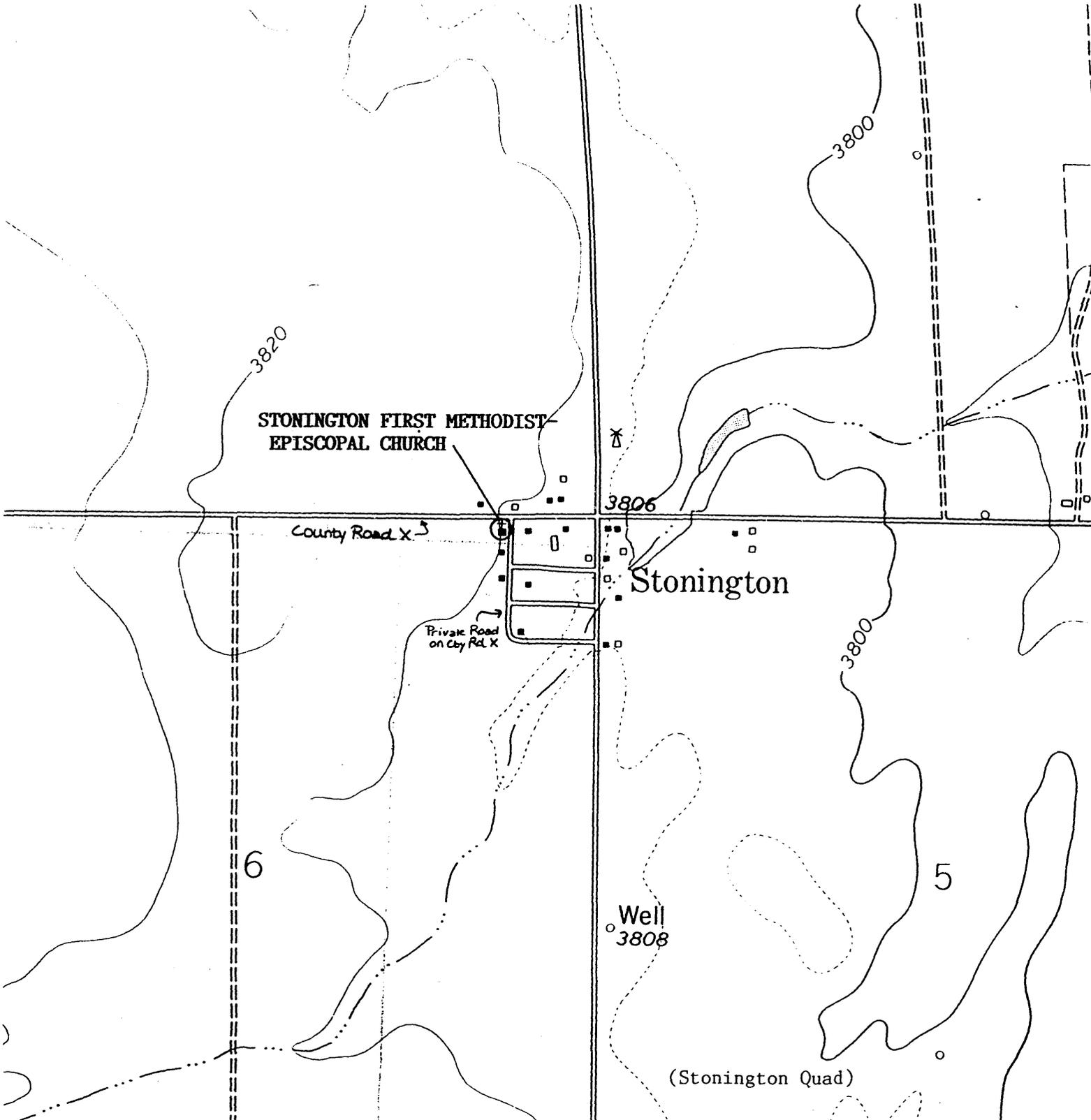
The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land historically associated with the church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page 6

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page 7

STONINGTON FIRST METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BACA COUNTY, CO

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information is the same for all photographs:

property: Stonington First Methodist-Episcopal Church
county & state: Baca County, Colorado
photographer: Janeal Thompson
date: August 1995
location of negatives: 21715 County Road 51, Walsh, CO

photo

- 1 North facade, looking south
- 2 West elevation, looking east
- 3 East elevation, looking west
- 4 South elevation, looking north
- 5 Cornerstone on northwest corner of facade, looking south
- 6 Window on south elevation above bay, looking north
- 7 North gable end with window and shingle detail, looking south
- 8 Bell tower and weather vane, looking northwest
- 9 Bell tower and weather vane, looking southeast
- 10 Weather vane, looking southeast