National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



766

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

historic name Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church		
other names/site number Sweet United Methodist Church		
2. Location		
	N/A not for n	ublication
street & number 7200 Sweet-Ola Highway city or town Sweet		vicinity
state Idaho code ID county Gem code		
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amende certify that this <u>X</u> nominationrequest for determination of eligibility meets t standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion <u>X</u> meetsdoes not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this processidered significantnationallystatewide <u>X</u> locally. (See continuation additional comments.) Signature of certifying official/Title	he documentation d meets the n, the property operty be n sheet for	
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 removed from the National Register other, (explain:)	Date of Act	i ^{on} 97

Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church	Sweet, Gem County, Idaho
Name of Property	City, County, and State

Contributing Noncontributing 1 1
sites struc objec 1 1 Total Number of contributing resources previously list the National Register N/A Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
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(Enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION/religious facility
Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation <u>STONE/basalt</u>
walls <u>WOOD/weatherboard</u>
CONCRETE
roof METAL
other
W

 \underline{X} See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Statement of Significance

(Mark	able National Register Criteria "x" on one or more lines for the criteria ying the property for National Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
x A	Property is associated with events that have	_COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
	made a significant contribution to the broad	
	patterns of our history.	
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons	
_	significant in our past.	
С	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics	
	of a type, period, or method of construction, or	Period of Significance
	represents the work of a master, or possesses	1905-1947
	high artistic values, or represents a	1765 1771
	significant and distinguishable entity whose	The state of the s
		Cimificant Potes
_	components lack individual distinction.	Significant Dates
— В	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	1905
	information important in prehistory or history.	Manager and the second
	ia Considerations "x" on all that apply.)	
Proper		Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
x A	owned by a religious institution or used for	N/A
	religious purposes.	Cultural Affiliation
В	removed from its original location.	N/A
С С	a birthplace or grave.	
	a cemetery.	
	a reconstructed building, object, or	Architect/Builder
	structure.	W A
F	a commemorative property.	
	less than 50 years of age or achieved	
— •	significance within the past 50 years.	
	significance within the past 30 years.	
	tive Statement of Significance in the significance of the property on one or more conti	nuation sheets.) X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8
	jor Bibliographical References	
(Cite	graphy the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing	this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
pro (30 pro Reg des red #	us documentation on file (NPS): eliminary determination of individual listing 5 CFR 67) has been requested eviously listed in the National Register eviously determined eligible by the National gister signated a National Historic Landmark corded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Primary location of additional data: x State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository: Idaho Historic Sites Inventory #45-152
	cord #	

	<u>Sweet, Gem County, Idaho</u>
Name of Property	City, County, and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property less than one acre	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
A 1/1 5/5/4/0/1/0 4/8/6/8/4/5/0 Zone Easting Northing	B / //// Zone Easting Northing
c _/ _//// _////	D _/ _//// _////
<u>Verbal Boundary Description</u> (Describe the boundaries of the property.)	
	\underline{x} See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10
Boundary Justification	
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)	
	x See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Madeline Buckendorf, Independent Contractor	
organization	date
street & number 1402 E. Blaine	telephone (208) 454-3435
city or town <u>Caldwell</u>	
Additional Documentation	state <u>ID</u> zip code <u>83605</u>
	state <u>ID</u> zip code <u>83605</u>
Additional Documentation	state <u>ID</u> zip code <u>83605</u>
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form:	state <u>ID</u> zip code <u>83605</u>
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form: • Continuation Sheets	state <u>ID</u> zip code <u>83605</u>
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. s having large acreage or numerous resources.
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form: • Continuation Sheets • Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the A Sketch map for historic districts and/or properties	property's location. s having large acreage or numerous resources.
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form: • Continuation Sheets • Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the A Sketch map for historic districts and/or properties • Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of	property's location. s having large acreage or numerous resources.
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form: • Continuation Sheets • Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the A Sketch map for historic districts and/or properties • Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	property's location. s having large acreage or numerous resources. f the property. conal items.)
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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	Name of Property	Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
	County and State	Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church is located on the east side of the Sweet-Ola Highway in Gem County, Idaho. It is situated across the road from the former Sweet School, approximately one half mile south of the Sweet townsite. The building is a one and one-half story, rectangular structure with a gabled roof and west-facing gabled-front facade. It is built on a basalt rubble foundation with wood framing and shiplap siding painted white. The steeply pitched, gabled roof is of ridged metal sheeting, covering the original wood shingles. A square belfry with a hipped-roof steeple rises above the projecting entryway on the west-gable facade. All bargeboards, corner boards, window trim, sills and lintels are plain milled boards painted white. The dimensions of the building's main section are approximately 24' x 36'; the entryway is 8'x 8' and the belfry is 6'x 6'. The small concrete-block furnace room, added to the building's north elevation circa 1958, is 17' x 13'. A small wood frame building, presently used as a church annex, was moved close to the church's northeast corner in 1980. This building does not contribute to the historic character of the church.

Two concrete steps lead to double doors in the one-story, gabled entryway. A recent concrete ramp rises to the landing on the north side. The wooden double doors consist of two panels each. Above the doors is a pointed, false-Gothic arch featuring a tympanum filled with four triangular lights. Above the entryway's gabled roof rises a square, wood-frame tower covered with shiplap siding. Centrally located in the tower's west side is a diamond-shaped casement window consisting of four diamond panes. The top third of the tower consists of louvered vents on all sides. The top is capped with a steeply pitched, hipped roof with flared eaves. A wooden spire rises from the roof pinnacle. A double-hung sash window with two-over-two lights is located on each side of the west main facade. A pointed, false-Gothic arch is located above each window; its tympanum consisting of a single glass pane covered with paint. All windows, corners, eaves, and doors are framed with plain wood trim except for a crown molding above the windows.

The south side elevation contains three false-Gothic windows which match those on the west facade's main section. The rest is unadorned except for the plain wood trim. The east or rear elevation has an off-set doorway on its south end; it is a six-panel wood door that has replaced an original door. A rectangular transom with a recent stained-glass window is located over the door. Two concrete steps and a landing covered with outdoor carpet lead to the doorway. An outdoor light covered with a round metal shade is centered in the eaves. A false-Gothic window matching the others is located at the northeast corner of the building.

The north facade has a one-room addition which was added circa 1958. The addition is a furnace room composed of concrete-block masonry, painted white to match the main building, and shiplap sofits in the eaves. Its dimensions are 13' x 17'. A concrete-block chimney rises at the

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Section number 7 Page 2	Name of Property Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
	County and State Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

juncture of the addition's roof with the main section's roof. Two windows matching the other original church windows are located on the north facade's east and west end. A small wood frame annex covered with particle board was moved close to the church's northeast corner in 1980, but is not attached to the church building. This structure has been noted as a noncontributing resource.

The church's interior contains some original elements and several alterations. Light brown wooden wainscoting covers the lower fourth of all walls and trims the windows. A low nave is located in the east end of the building. The pew layout has been changed to a single row in the middle of the church with single pews lining the walls. Originally there were two rows of pews with a central aisle. The pulpit has also been moved from the center to the north side. In the late 1950s ceiling tiles and new light fixtures were added, and in the 1970s ceiling fans were installed. The altar remains the same, placed against the middle of the east wall. The church continues to be used for religious worship and as a community wedding chapel and meeting place.

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	County and State Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church is locally significant under Criterion A for its role in the historical development of the Sweet community. For over ninety years the church has served as an important social focus for this small community located in rural Gem County. The church's history exemplifies the historical development patterns typical of rural communities in the United States, particularly in Idaho and the Northwest. It is also one of the few remaining community institutions still serving Sweet residents.

In the 1860s gold strikes brought a rush of miners and settlers from Oregon to Idaho's Boise Basin. The Payette River provided a natural corridor from the Baker City, Oregon gold camps to the new Idaho City discoveries. Disappointed gold seekers and other emigrants soon settled along the River in what is now Gem County, running small farms and ranches to supply hungry miners, freighters and other travelers. Small hamlets, such as Emmettsville, Marsh [later called Montour], and Sweet formed around designated post offices. Population in the Payette Valley communities grew quickly as the towns became supply centers for the mines and more permanent farming settlements.¹

Sweet began to thrive when the development of the Buffalo Hump Mining District, located north of the Salmon River, brought more traffic along the Payette River. The town was named after Ezekiel Sweet, a native Ohioan who first emigrated to California, then came to Idaho in 1877. He worked as a ranch hand near Squaw Creek, a tributary north of the Payette River. Sweet filed on a homestead a mile from Squaw Creek (the first post office in the area), and eventually the post office was moved to his ranch. The "Sweet" post office became a gathering place, and was used for voting and other community activities. A small village started growing, fed by the anticipated mining boom at Thunder Mountain to the northeast, burgeoning sawmills at Dry Buck, and eventual construction (1911) of the Idaho Northern Railway along the Payette River. By 1900, Sweet's population had grown to 300. Most of the residents were former Midwesterners, with some Irish, Scandinavian, and German immigrants. Town businesses included a bank, meat packing and cold storage plant, general store, butcher shop, grange hall, and three saloons. A small school was also built near town.²

The Sweet community still lacked a church. In the 1860s and 1870s, local residents conducted religious services in their homes. At the 1884 General Methodist Conference, several ministers presented the need to develop more Methodist churches in Idaho. Boise, Moscow, Lewiston, and Wallace had already established Methodist congregations, but smaller towns lacked ministerial services. Church circuits developed which averaged fifty miles in length, with a preacher serving four or five small communities. Growing out of this movement, in the late 1880s the first Emmett Methodist minister rode a circuit to surrounding villages, including Sweet, Marsh,

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	County and State	Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

Ola, and Horseshoe Bend. At that time the towns were too small to support building their own churches or a full-time minister. By the 1890s the population had increased enough to create a new circuit with Sweet as the starting point. Reverend J. M. Hixon, a former railroad worker, served as the first minister. Glenco, Jerusalem, and the sawmills at Dry Buck joined the Sweet circuit.³

By the beginning of this century, Sweet area residents decided their community was large enough to support its own church building. Church services were being held in other community institutions, such as the grange hall and school. In 1903 the Ed Miller family, local ranchers, donated land near the Sweet townsite for its first permanent church and parsonage. Reverend Hixon and local families helped build the parsonage. The congregation also started raising funds for a church building. They received help from several different sources. Ola sheep rancher H. A. Ballantyne lent funds for building construction; local sawmills near Dry Buck, Ola, Sweet, and Emmett provided materials at a discount; and the Emmett Methodist church donated funds they gathered from parishioners and Sunday school programs. Another loan was obtained from Methodist headquarters in Philadelphia.⁴

No records of building plans for the Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church could be located, but some of the local residents were experienced builders from the Midwest familiar with traditional Gothic Revival styling commonly used for rural Protestant churches. Church members such as the Badleys, Gatfields and Nolands (the Nolands constructed many area buildings) helped build the building, which cost approximately \$1,000. A. H. White papered and painted the church, which was described as "roomy and inviting" by a 1905 Emmett newspaper.⁵

The 1905 dedication of the Sweet church marked a milestone for the Sweet community. The town had grown from a frontier settlement to a "civilized" community, with all of the required social, educational, and religious institutions. The Sweet church dedication became a regional event: many residents from surrounding towns came to the ceremony, and Emmett's Methodist Minister Pastor Deane delivered the dedicatory sermon. Attendees donated funds to pay off the church's mortgage, which Mrs. Hixon ceremoniously burned later that day. An Emmett Index newspaper article underscored the importance of a permanent church building to Sweet's community standing:

The building, aside from its influence on the moral and spiritual life of the town, is also an addition to the town from a business point of view...The coming of a church [to frontier communities] has in this case been quickly followed by better citizens, more progress and better government....The erection of the first church in Sweet marks an epoch in the business and spiritual life of our sister town and its rich prosperous farming community.⁶

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	County and State Sweet, Gem County, Idaho	

The church's construction instigated other community improvements, such as the construction of sidewalks running the length of the town. The sidewalk provided foot traffic an alternative to walking in ankle-deep dust or mud. One of the town's saloons also helped support the church by donating a piano in 1909, again indicating the church's importance as a community institution. The Sweet church served the spiritual needs of the entire community until the 1930s, with Catholics, LDS, Seventh-day Adventists and others using the building or attending Methodist services. It also became the primary meeting space in the community, hosting innumerable secular as well as sacred activities⁷

The Great Depression took its toll on rural communities, driving marginal farmers and ranchers out of business. Increased mechanization and mobility after World War II also had an impact, causing a decreased need for a human work force. Though Sweet's population never was large enough to incorporate, the post war era saw a marked population decline and businesses in Sweet slowly started to close down. The Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church also nearly closed, due in part to the construction of the Sweet Assembly of God Church in the late 1930s. Following World War II the Methodist church's membership dropped to single digits.

The Sweet church women's auxiliary played an important role in keeping the church and the community functioning throughout its history. The original Ladies' Aid Society did sewing projects, held cooked food sales, and held bazaars to raise funds for church activities and missions. They also cooked hot lunch for the schools, helped with farm sales and put on election day dinners. Three Methodist women -- Anna Sweet, Cora Warr, and Lou Moore -- kept the church open by holding services from the late 1930s to late 1950s, when attendance had dwindled to single-digit numbers.⁸

In 1958, Sweet Methodists merged their congregation with the Emmett church, and an energetic young minister brought new life to the two churches. The Brownlee church had closed by this time, and the addition of these few families also increased the Sweet congregation. As a result of the 1958 merger, church funds also increased. The revitalized congregation decided to make some improvements to their building. New ceilings, lights and wallboard were installed in the church's interior. A concrete-block furnace room was added to the north side of the church. The changes altered the church only on its north facade, and they again increased community use of the church. In 1958, the first wedding in fifty years was held at the Sweet Methodist Church.

Another local church, a Latter-day Saints Ward, was constructed in the mid-1960s. The Sweet Assembly of God Church closed its doors in 1980 and was quickly demolished. The LDS and Methodist churches remain as the only religious institutions in town. The only other community gathering place is the school, which combined with the Emmett School District in 1946. A single business, a restaurant and lounge, and the post office are all that remain in Sweet's former

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commercial core. Presently the Sweet Methodist Church holds a membership of approximately thirty people. It still functions as a community church and meeting place for local inhabitants. Because of its picturesque rural setting and traditional styling, the church is used as a wedding chapel by people across the region.

After 90 years the Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church remains active as an important community institution, serving various needs of the surrounding rural population. As the economic fortunes of Sweet waxed and waned, local families worked hard to keep their social and educational institutions alive. For area residents, the Sweet church evokes a sense of continuity in a rapidly changing world.

This building does fall within National Register Criteria Consideration A. It is still an active religious institution. The building is not, however, being nominated to the National Register for any religious significance. It exemplifies the important historic role of lasting cultural and social institutions in rural community life. It is also historically significant as a tangible symbol of the development, evolution and contraction of Sweet from 1905 to 1947. As such the Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

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	County and State	Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

END NOTES

- 1. Nellie Ireton Mills, All Along the River (Payette, Idaho: Payette Radio Limited, 1963) 161-198. For a comparable study of a neighboring town, see Madeline Buckendorf, "Life and Death of a Small Town: The Case of Montour, Idaho," <u>Idaho Yesterdays</u>, 33 No. 2 (Summer 1989), 8-24.
- 2. Ibid. See also Lalia Boone, <u>Idaho Place Names</u> (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1988); R. L. Polk, <u>Idaho Gazetteer and Business Directories</u>: 1891-1892, p. 1373; 1901-1902, p. 300.
- 3. Erle Howell, Methodism in the Northwest, ed. by Chapin D. Foster (Nashville, Tennessee: The Parthenon Press Printers, 1966).
- 4. "Sweet's First Methodist Church Grew from Influx of Prospectors," <u>Idaho Statesman</u>, 8 April 1962, Sec. 4, 1.
- 5. "Sweet Methodist Church Record, 1902-1942," Idaho Methodist Church Archives, MS 456, Box 12, Idaho State Archives, Boise (hereafter ISA).
- 6. "Dedicate Church," Emmett Index (Emmett, Idaho), 3 August 1905, n.p.
- 7. Ibid.
- 8. Field notes of conversation and personal records of Jamie Chilcott by author, Sweet, Idaho, July 28, 1995.
- 9. Ibid. See also "Methodists Recall Early History Here In 93rd Year Observance," <u>Emmett Index</u>, 1962, Idaho. In vertical file at Idaho State Historical Society Library, Boise (hereafter ISHS).

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	County and State Sweet, Gem County, Idaho	

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Christ-Janer, Albert, and Mary Mix Foley. <u>Modern Church Architecture: A Guide to the Form and Spirit of Twentieth Century Religious Buildings</u>. New York: McGraw-Hill book Company, Inc., 1962. Pp. 191-192.

Church Histories. Boise, Idaho: Idaho Methodist Church Archives, MS 456, Box 19; see also Box 30, Idaho State Archives (hereafter ISA).

"Dedicate Church." Emmett Index (Emmett, Idaho), 3 August 1905, n.p.

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Gatfield, Marie Noland. Interview by author, June 18, 1986. Transcript and Tape, OH678A and B, ISHS.

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Mills, Nellie Ireton. All Along the River. Payette, Idaho: Payette Radio Limited, 1963.

Personal Correspondence, Joyce Stanley Kendall to Mrs. Frank Goodwin, March 12, 1974. Idaho Methodist Church Archives, MS 456, Box 12, ISA.

Polk, R. L. Idaho Gazetteer and Business Directories. 1891-1892, p. 1373; 1901-1902, p. 300.

Sinnott, Edmund W. <u>Meeting House & Church in Early New England</u>. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963.

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Section number <u>9</u> Page <u>2</u>	Name of Property Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
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Stanton, Phoebe B. <u>The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture</u>: <u>An Episode in Taste</u>, <u>1840-1856</u>. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968.

"Sweet Methodist Church Record, 1902-1942." Idaho Methodist Church Archives, MS 456, Box 12, ISA.

"Sweet's First Methodist Church Grew from Influx of Prospectors," <u>Idaho Statesman</u>, 8 April 1962, Sec. 4, 1.

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Section number 10 Page 1	Name of Property	Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
	County and State	Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property consists of a .362 acre parcel located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Sweet-Ola Highway and an unnamed private road approximately one half mile southwest of the center of the community of Sweet, Idaho

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary described is the parcel of land that has historically been associated with the property.

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Section number ADD Page 1	Name of Property Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
	County and State Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

PHOTO LOG

Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church Sweet, Gem County, Idaho

Photographer: Madeline Buckendorf Date: August 16, 1996

Negatives on file at Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise

[Note: The above information applies to all photographs listed below.]

Roll #1

Frm#	Subject	Address	Location
1 S	Sweet M.E. Church,	7200 Sweet-Ola Hwy.	NW W
3	# 	H	W
4 5	"	11	S SE
6	"	!!	NW
7 8	" (foundation detail) " (window detail)	11	S S