

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (form 10-900a). Type all entries.

Name of Property

Historic name Monroe Congregational Church & New Hope Cemetery
Other names/site number O'Kay Church and New Hope Cemetery; NEHBS # PTOO-33

Location

Street & number Rt. 1 not for publication
City, town Monroe vicinity
State Nebraska code NE County Platte code 141 zip code 68647

Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: na Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official James A. Hanrahan Date October 11, 1990

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official: _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure

Religion/Religious Structure

Funerary/Cemetery

Funerary/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

no style

foundation concrete

walls weatherboard

roof wood

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Situated on the crest of a hill, the Monroe Congregational (O'Kay) Church and New Hope Cemetery are located in the O'Kay community of Platte County, about seven and a half miles northwest of Monroe (population: 250), Nebraska, a small town in southern Platte County. The church (1881) is a one-story frame structure with a gable roof and vestibule entrance. The single room plan features a raised platform opposite the entrance from the vestibule which has a hall with closets on each side. The property also includes a contributing wood-frame privy (c.1881), wood-frame storage shed (c.1881), a wrought-iron fence of Victorian design, and a non-contributing brick memorial structure with a flag pole. Structural and historical integrity is uniformly high for all contributing resources.

The Monroe Congregational Church faces the south, and the New Hope Cemetery is located 100 ft. to the west of the church. The small wood-frame privy, and wood-frame storage shed are located about 40 ft. north of the church. A well-maintained country road forms the the south boundary of the complex; fence-lines mark the west, north and east boundaries.

The church building (see sketch map #1) has a foundation of concrete blocks and bricks. The wood-frame building measures 30 ft. x 40 ft. with a vestibule measuring 8 ft. x 20 ft. on the south front. The vestibule has a central 8 ft. x 8 ft. hall with 5 ft. x 8 ft. closets to each side, and opens to the 30 ft. x 40 ft. sanctuary through a double door. The raised 8 ft. x 30 ft. platform is carpeted and provides for the pulpit, piano and Sunday school area. A wood heating stove stands at the west side of the room.

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Plastered walls are painted above the varnished wainscoating. The ceiling is tiled and also has an electric fan and early globe-type hanging electric light fixtures. Fenestration in the building consists of double-hung windows with four-over-four pane arrangement. The raised front entry has double doors and transom window. Furnishings include the original 1881 wooden pews, wooden wall-hung register board, pulpit, piano, altar chairs and Sunday school table and chairs for children, used from the beginning of occupancy. In 1990, an altar table skirted with white satin was added. Above this is a picture of the "Head of Christ". The original 5 inch flooring is painted, and has a 5 ft. wide carpeted aisle.

Another contributing building in the nomination is the privy (see sketch map #2). A wood-frame building, 5 ft. x 5 ft. x 8 ft. with a wood shingled gable roof, and a two-hole built-in seat and a shelf for paper. One door has a ventilation hole.

A storage shed (see sketch map #3), 6 ft. x 10 ft. x 8 ft. wood-frame, with wood shingles on the gable roof, is another contributing building. It has no foundation, and is on skids, and has one small window.

The nomination also includes the two acre cemetery (see sketch map #4). The cemetery has many old monuments with their inscribed dates, and cedar trees which were planted well over 100 years ago.

A wrought-iron fence (see sketch map #5) bordering the east side of the cemetery is a contributing structure in the nomination. Although there is no record of its installation, the Victorian style fence probably dates from the 1880's.

A brick memorial structure (see sketch map #6) was built in 1976. It is 4 ft. x 4 ft. x 2 ft., has a concrete slab top, holds a guest book and a flag pole stands beside it in the middle. The monument was a memorial gift, as well as thirteen flags, which are flown every Memorial Day for the services conducted by the Monroe American Legion Post 322. Because the structure is not yet 50 years old, it is considered non-contributing.

The O'Kay Church remains in use today, reflecting over one-hundred years of continuous service to the surrounding community.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1881-1882

Significant Dates

1881
 1882

Cultural Affiliation

na

Significant Person

na

Architect/Builder

Murdock & Son
 Watts, Joseph

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Monroe Congregational (O'Kay) Church is architecturally significant (Criterion C) on a local level, representing an excellent example of a "first generation" rural frame church building dating from the early 1880s. The church has been evaluated under the property type "Basic Hall Churches". These modest buildings are most closely associated with periods of settlement, and suited the needs of a pioneering congregation during a period of establishment.

Criteria consideration A is applicable and is met through the property deriving primary significance from architectural distinction. Criteria consideration D is applicable and is met through the cemetery's important historical association with, and its immediate setting to, the church. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the church building (1881), through the year the New Hope Cemetery was established (1882).

Congregationalism entered Nebraska in the mid 1850s following the passage of the Nebraska-Kansas Act. The period between 1880 and the turn of the century marked the greatest and most rapid expansion of the Congregational Church in Nebraska (Ahlgren, 1989, p. 3). The Monroe Congregational Church, built in 1881, is architecturally significant as an early example of a Congregational church associated with this time period, representing one of a small number of surviving first generation church buildings. In many cases, these "first church buildings", modest in style and design, were later replaced with more substantial structures,

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reflecting a growth in the size of the congregation or increased prosperity of the surrounding community. Sometimes, new facilities were constructed out of necessity due to fire, lightning and other natural disasters. Still others have undergone substantial remodelings over the years and suffered integrity loss.

The Monroe Congregational Church is an excellent local example of the basic hall church, defined by the property type "Basic Hall Churches" (Property Type Analysis: 02.1.4:1, Murphy, 1988). Significance under Criterion "C" is cited for its high degree of historical integrity, both exterior and interior. The church, of simple rectangular massing, one story in height, and gable roof, falls into the property type of a basic hall church (Murphy, 1988, p. 1). The type is most closely associated with periods of settlement and/or pioneering congregations. Small, early congregations chose the type because it suited the needs of a pioneering population during a period of establishment. Congregations which continued to grow and prosper replaced hall churches with larger, more elaborate types (Murphy, 1988, pp. 6-7).

The property also retains the significantly related cemetery dating from the same time period, and the simple, yet necessary, secondary buildings (privy, storage shed) associated with rural church settings.

The Monroe Congregational Church was organized April 30, 1869, near or at Keatskatoos, Platte County, Nebraska. The church held meetings and preaching for several years at what is known as the Monroe School house. In later years, meetings were held at various places as well as at Monroe School house, chiefly at the houses of William J. Thurston, Robert Wiley, E.B. Hall, and at the school houses of District Nos. 32 and 39 in Platte County.

On the 11th of June, 1881, the Monroe Congregational members voted to construct a house of worship. Builders were hired and with the help of members and friends, the church was ready for services in the fall. They hauled the lumber and supplies by horse and wagon from Columbus; they made their own bricks and concrete blocks. On January 14, 1882, a meeting was held at the Monroe Congregational Church for purpose of forming a cemetery association in accordance with the law.

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During the mid to late 1800s, communities were established in the Platte County area: two miles from the O'Kay Church, a German Lutheran Congregation established a cemetery and church, but the church was sold and moved to a museum farm northwest of Albion, Nebraska. The West Hill Cemetery is about 6 miles west of O'Kay, but the church building is no longer there. Postville Church, about 5 miles east of O'Kay, is still standing, but not being used. The Palestine Baptist Church, about 7 miles northwest of O'Kay, was destroyed by fire.

In the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey of Platte County in 1980, approximately twelve rural church properties were identified. Only one other church building (PT00-48), fits into the property type of a basic hall church. It, however, was constructed for a Methodist congregation. The Monroe Congregational Church remains as the only known example of a basic hall church type in Platte County associated with this early time period of Congregationalism in Nebraska.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ahlgren, Carol, The Congregational Church in Nebraska, Historic Context Report 02.05.01, Jan. 1989, on file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

The Monroe Republican, Nov. 1905, Monroe, Platte County, Nebraska.

Murphy, David, Basic Hall Churches, Property Type Analysis: 02.1.4:1, Aug. 1988, on file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

New Hope Cemetery Association, original record books (1869 on), % Leonard Johnson, Rt. 1, Monroe, Nebraska.

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3 acres

UTM References

A 14 | 612470 | 45995000
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____ | _____ | _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as a 3 acre rectangular tract of land commencing at a point at the SW corner of the E1/2 of the SW1/4, Sec. 10, T18N, R3W, thence north 85 meters, thence east 143 meters, thence south 85 meters, thence west 143 meters to the point of beginning, a rural legal description in Platte County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

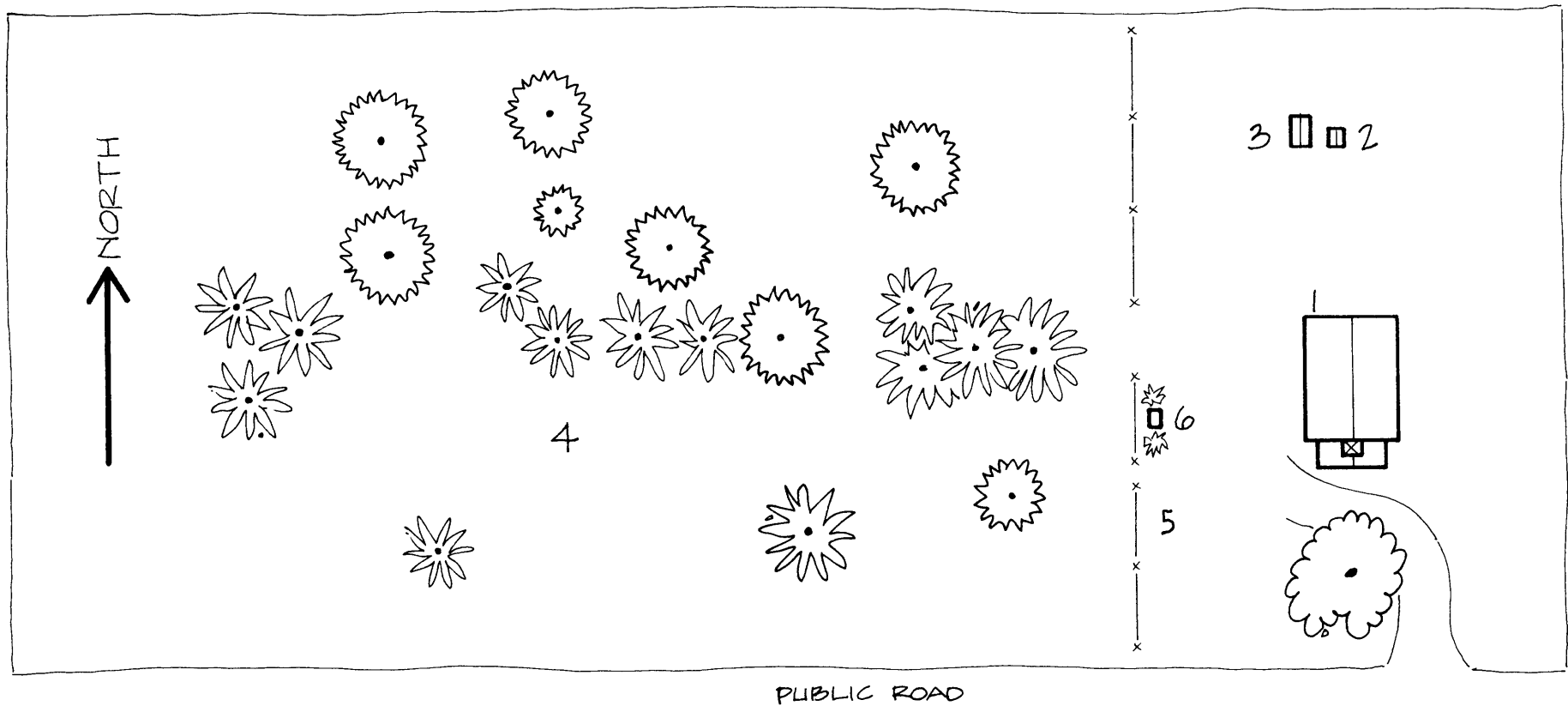
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret F. Schmidt - Secretary date August, 1990
 organization New Hope Cemetery Association telephone (402) 564-4967
 street & number 5402 W. Meadow Road city or town Columbus state Nebraska zip code 68601







NEW HOPE CEMETERY E
 O'KAY CHURCH (NEHBS #PT00-33)
 RURAL PLATTE COUNTY,
 NEBRASKA

SITE PLAN - NO SCALE
 DRAWN BY DELL DARLING FROM SKETCH MAP
 PROVIDED BY MARGARET SCHMIOT
 MARCH 1989

- KEY
- 1. CHURCH
 - 2. PRIVY
 - 3. STORAGE SHED
 - 4. CEMETERY
 - 5. WROUGHT-IRON FENCE
 - 6. FLAGPOLE MEMORIAL MONUMENT