

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received OCT 12 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic France Memorial United Presbyterian Church

and/or common France Memorial United Presbyterian Church

2. Location

street & number <sup>3rd</sup> Third and Cedar Streets, not for publication

city, town Rawlins vicinity of N/A

state Wyoming code 56 county Carbon code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> other:
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Elders France Memorial United Presbyterian Church

street & number Third and Cedar Streets

city, town Rawlins vicinity of N/A state Wyoming 82301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carbon County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Rawlins state Wyoming 82301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title WY Historical Site Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, 1920 Thomes Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	n/a <input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

France Memorial United Presbyterian Church in Rawlins, Wyoming, is located at the intersection of Third and Cedar Streets near the central business area. Constructed in 1882, the stone church physically expanded with the needs of the parish in the 1950's but the building retained its architectural integrity. The original church was a building constructed of native stone quarried from the mountains north of the City of Rawlins. The walls are two feet thick with an interior space of 30 feet by 50 feet. The church school addition to the south and the 1950's construction on the west side of the building are basically compatible with the original structure. Stylistically, France Memorial is similar to other Gothic Revival churches constructed in Wyoming during the late nineteenth century. Many ecclesiastical structures such as France Memorial constructed in mid to late nineteenth century America featured elements of the Gothic Revival style such as pointed arches, lancet windows, and steeply pitched roofs.

The building is constructed of locally quarried, rock-faced stone, laid in regular courses. The roof is gabled and the boxed cornice has small decorative brackets accenting the eaves on the primary facade. A stone watertable separates the stone foundation from the walls as the foundation projects or juts out from the stone walls at an angle. The lancet windows have pointed stone arches above them that contrast with the surrounding stonewalls. Stone quoins and sills also provide a visual contrast to the regular stonework. One of the dominant features of the building is its large square stone tower with three tiers. The highest portion, the third tier, is a wood structure with a ventilated lancet louvre on all four sides with a wood steeple. The lancet shaped windows on the north and east side of the second tier provide a form that is copied in the decorative stonework on the tower. Wood double doors on the east and north sides of the tower are recessed, and the lancet motif is also utilized here. The stonework on the original structure has been repointed.

The additions to the south and west are also constructed of stone but have flat roofs instead of a gable. Lancet windows were used in the addition to the west while double hung windows are part of the southern addition. The church school addition to the south is rather large in comparison to the original building. The addition to the west is rather small.

Through the years additions, alterations and renovations have changed the outward appearance of the church building only slightly. The church building was repaired in both 1887 and 1892-93. In 1892, electric lights were installed while in 1899 the interior of the structure was renovated and painted as the congregation replaced the slate roof with a tin roof.

More interior renovating and remodeling took place in 1902-03 as it was necessary to provide more room for the choir. A platform used by that group was enlarged and a balustrade was placed around the choir "loft." A 1908 exterior addition to the church was an electric sign saying "church" which was viewed as a proselytizing outreach by the congregation. Remodeling and painting took place again in 1925-26.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1882                      **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The France Memorial United Presbyterian Church in Rawlins, Wyoming is historically significant as it is the structure housing one of the oldest Presbyterian congregations in Wyoming, first organized in 1869. The church building, completed in 1882, is one of the oldest remaining structures in Rawlins and serves as a landmark in the city. From 1882 until the present, the building has functioned as a social, cultural and religious center of the town and has contributed significantly to the broad patterns of the area's history. As one of the oldest ecclesiastical structures in Rawlins, France Memorial is the only church in the city constructed of stone. Built only a few years after the Union Pacific completed tracks through the state, France Memorial is an early example of the Gothic Revival style in Wyoming. The use of Gothic Revival features in a church constructed in an isolated Wyoming town demonstrated an awareness and interest in architectural and philosophical trends of the day.

See Addendum, Item #8, page two

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Addendum, Item #9, Page 1

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Rawlins, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	3	3	1	4	0	9	0	4	6	2	8	4	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

**Verbal boundary description and justification** France Memorial Church is located at the southwest intersection of Third and Cedar Streets in Rawlins. Only the building itself with the accompanying additions are included within the nomination's boundaries.  
SEE ADDENDUM

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marian Geddes

organization France Memorial United Presbyterian Church  
Church Historian

date November, 1982

street & number Third and Cedar Streets

telephone

city or town Rawlins

state Wyoming 82301

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Alvin J. Baston*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/28/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Carl Dinkins*

date

5/14/1984

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Statement of Significance Addendum Item number

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In the summer of 1868, the Union Pacific railroad track reached Rawlins, paused, and then moved westward, inexorably, across Wyoming to Rock Springs and Evanston. A town began to take form as the Union Pacific established a division point in Rawlins. Many pitched tents for their homes, and others lived in dugouts along the creek bank. A courthouse, first just a tent, and later a log building, came into being. The depot was built, and a hotel, and people had begun to make this their permanent home.

As the Union Pacific pushed on westward, Dr. Sheldon Jackson organized the Presbyterian Church of Rawlins, Wyoming Territory, by the authority of the Presbytery of Missouri. The organizational meeting was held August 6, 1869 in the dining room of the Railroad Hotel, west of the depot and south of the tracks.

In the entire Carbon County there were only 460 people, immigrants, from far places, who intended to make Rawlins their home. Here they would build permanent homes and rear their families. So, it is understandable at this first meeting, held by Sheldon Jackson in the small town in the Territory of Wyoming, that after offering a prayer he chose as his sermon topic: "Possess Ye The Land."

Land for the church was obtained from the Union Pacific Railroad. The plot of land for the Presbyterian Church was at the corner of 3rd and Cedar Streets and was purchased for \$62.50. Although only six persons became members of this original church, many citizens were eager to have a church established in the town. The Reverend Mr. Jackson agreed to arrange for the building of a church if the citizens would contribute \$500.00 toward the cause. This being decided upon in November of 1869, a Chicago dealer of building materials was contracted to begin the erection of a church in compliance with the plans already made by Mr. Jackson. The materials were supplied at a cost of \$950.00 and two men were sent from Chicago in early December to put up the building.

Mr. Jackson figured the church had cost a total of \$2,582.00 including funds spent for seats, for a pulpit, a cupola, rail freight, and travel expenses for the Chicago workmen.

On the cold windy day of March 13, 1870, the first Presbyterian church building erected in Wyoming Territory was dedicated. It was a neat little frame building, measuring 20 by 36 feet with seating for 110 persons.

The little church was the only one in Rawlins, and there being no other church within a hundred miles in any direction, it was always open to all ministers and all congregations. The attendance averaged between 25 and 30 on each Sunday. The membership of the congregation grew slowly. One new member in 1871 was Margaret Elizabeth France, the wife of James France.

By 1880, members of the church began discussing the possibility of construction of a new church. In September, 1881, the congregation met and made the final decision

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Addendum

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to proceed with the construction of a new building. A committee was formed and \$2,100.00 was firmly subscribed with another \$800.00 to be received at the completion of the building. Most of this money was subscribed by non-members.

The little church, which was actually just twelve years old, was sold for \$300.00 and moved off the lot. Construction of the new edifice began in May, 1882. The little church's use to the comparatively new town continued, however, as it was used for approximately three years as a school house, then as a home. It later housed the office of the Rawlins Republican for about twenty years and then was sold to the Engstrom Motor Company, finally being torn down in 1926.

The cornerstone of the new building was laid by the Masons on July 25, 1882 and construction was completed late in 1882 when the steeple, towering over the roof and containing a room for a bell, was put in place. The building was built of native stone, the interior thirty feet wide and fifty feet long, allowing enough room to seat 180. The total cost was about \$7,800.00. As the congregation did not have sufficient funds to pay all the construction costs, a mortgage was negotiated with James France.

By 1885 enough funds had been raised to pay off the mortgage. The money came from different sources but the bulk came from James France, holder of the mortgage. So early in 1885 it was announced that the church was free from debt. The congregation met and adopted a resolution that changed the name of the church to "The Mrs. Elizabeth France Presbyterian Church." The present name of the church continues to recognize the contribution made by the France family as it is called the "France Memorial United Presbyterian Church."

Throughout its history, the France Presbyterian Church has served as a social, cultural, and religious center for the City of Rawlins. The church always drew non-affiliated worshipers and the facility was frequently used as a meeting place for civic groups. The congregation at one time had an outstanding choir and the Rawlins Chorus Club grew from this church group. The congregation also supported a church orchestra and a sabbath school library for young people. The church performed civic functions of its own such as conducting services for the inmates at the Wyoming State Penitentiary and presenting cantatas during the holiday season.

Although renovations, alterations and additions have been added to the church structure, the building currently standing at the corner of 3rd and Cedar is essentially the structure constructed by the small congregation in 1882. It serves as a landmark in the City of Rawlins and deserves listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of Rawlins.

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The church occupies lots 1 and 2 Block 22 original townsite of Rawlins as recorded at the County Clerk's office in Rawlins. The lots have an aggregate measurement of 48 feet by 132 feet.

The church is presently being considered for sale with the probability for commercial use and tax incentive rehabilitation very real possibilities. While the historic boundaries of lots 1 and 2 will serve to protect the integrity of the church building, it must be noted that should a tax act project be initiated, the school and chapel additions (constructed respectively in 1952 and 1957) would not be eligible for tax incentives.