

St. Paul Historic Context Study

Churches, Synagogues, and Religious Buildings: 1849-1950



Assumption Church, J.T. Andreas Atlas (1874)

Prepared for the
St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
St. Paul, Minnesota
by
Carole Zellie, Landscape Research
Garneth O. Peterson, URS /BRW

2001

Historic Context

Churches, Synagogues and Religious Buildings: 1849-1950

Introduction

Church steeples still stand out on the St. Paul skyline, but in far fewer number than fifty years ago. Churches and synagogues have long been symbols of the city's religious life, as well as many aspects of its social, cultural and architectural development. These buildings and related schools and other structures remain evidence of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnic settlement, and are often important neighborhood landmarks.

This historic context examines the development of religious architecture in St. Paul, beginning with its first log chapel in 1841 and extending to the creation of a new generation of modern buildings in the 1950s.

Remaining examples of religious buildings include modest neighborhood missions as well as the magnificent Cathedral of St. Paul that rises above the city. Church buildings have been adapted by many congregations to their changing liturgical, membership, and economic needs. Many buildings have housed five or more congregations.

In general the architectural quality of the remaining historic buildings is very high, with a number designed by the city's leading architects. Most buildings remain in their original use. As a building type, however, churches face special challenges in adaptive reuse. A few former churches have been made into houses or apartments, while others stand vacant.

Illus. 1

The Dano-Norwegian Presbyterian Church, 196 Thomas Avenue, ca. 1903. Photo ca. 1936. Between 1906 and 1922 this was Golgotha Presbyterian Church; between 1923 and 1933 the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1937 the First Church of Infinite Science. Razed.

Five general periods describing the growth of the city's religious organization were analyzed and compared to sites in the St. Paul Historic Resources Database. Approximately 180 inventoried sites are included in the religious building category of the database, including churches, synagogues, schools, rectories, and parsonages. A breakdown of sites in the Historic Resources Database is as follows:

1870-1880 (all are HPC individually designated)	3
1881-1890 (1 is HPC individually designated)	11
1891-1900 (none are HPC designated)	17
1901-1920 (3 are HPC individually designated)	57
1921-1950 (none are HPC designated)	63
Total	180

Locally Designated Properties

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Architect</i>
Cathedral of St. Paul	Summit Ave. W.	1906-15	Masqueray
Church of the Assumption	51 Seventh St. W.	1869-73	Reidel
Central Presbyterian	500 Cedar St.	1880	Hayes
Bethlehem German Presbyterian	311 Ramsey St.	1890	Gilbert
First Baptist Church	499 Wacouta	1875	Boyington/Shiere
Church of St. Bernard	197 Geranium	1905	Jager
Church of St. Casimir	937 Jessamine	1904	

A list of properties recommended for further designation study is found on page 20.

Context Organization

The Churches, Synagogues, and Religious Buildings historic context is organized into the following periods:

- **Pioneer Congregations and New Immigrants: 1841-1880**
- **New Churches in New Neighborhoods: 1880-1900**
- **Early Twentieth Century Expansion: 1900-1930**
- **Churches in the Third and Fourth Generations: 1930-1960**

Sources

This context study consulted published histories such as Williams (1876), Andrews (1890), and Castle (1912). These and other sources documented the history of many congregations and their buildings. June Drenning Holmquist, ed., *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* provides essential information on the ethnic and cultural background of St. Paul's congregations. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* was also an important source of information about new church construction as well as catastrophes such as fires and tornadoes.

St. Paul city directories provided a general roster of the city's congregations from year to year, and Robert Hoag's "Churches of St. Paul: A Directory" was also essential in tracing early churches and their changes of names and locations.

U.S. Department of the Census "Schedules for Religious Bodies" 1900 and 1920 provides comparative data on church membership, as does the Works Progress Administration "Historical Records Survey" for churches, 1936-41.

Dozens of congregations have published church histories over the past 125 years, and these accounts document the progress of local building. J. Wesley Hill's *Twin City Methodism* (1895) and Rev. James M. Reardon's *The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul* (1952) are among broader surveys.

This study relied primarily on building permit information already recorded in the city's historic property database. Building permit and other building information as reported in the *Improvement Bulletin* was consulted where time permitted.

Finally, historic photographs from the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society provided an excellent overview of the original appearance—as well as transformation—of St. Paul’s churches and related buildings.

Illus. 2

The Chapel of St. Paul, on Bench Street between Cedar and Minnesota. Photograph ca. 1855. Also used as a school by the Sisters of St. Joseph 1851-59, and as the first St. Joseph’s Hospital, 1859-1861. Razed.

Pioneer Congregations and New Immigrants: 1841-1880

By 1860, St. Paul had fourteen churches representing six denominations amidst its population of over 10,000. With the exception of the Catholic Cathedral, most of the buildings were small and sheltered a congregation numbering under one hundred. By 1880, with a population of over 40,000, the city counted over forty churches and twelve denominations, now were housed in buildings of every size and description.

St. Paul’s pattern of church building is like that of many early midwestern communities founded in the 1840s and 1850s, one where missionary societies encouraged the organization of congregations and the construction of churches, schools, parsonages and related buildings. The societies provided ministers but the congregations struggled to finance the first buildings in an unstable economy. Between the organization of a congregation and the completion of a first church building, the membership typically met in other churches, and in rented halls, schools, and homes. One account about the first church of House of Hope Presbyterian noted that in 1857 the congregation determined “at first to erect a stone building, which should cost not less than \$25,000, but the panic of that year forced the members to modify their desires . . . the building committee was instructed to build a frame chapel at the lowest possible figures.”¹ As completed, the church contained seventy-five pews and cost \$2,275.

A great variety of Sunday schools, missionary and literary societies, prayer groups, cemetery associations, sewing circles, and interconnected fraternal and beneficial societies grew from each congregation, each establishing a part of the city’s social fabric. Allied organizations and their buildings, including hospitals, shelters, orphanages and settlement houses are worthy of separate study, as are cemetery associations and cemeteries.

St. Paul’s First Roman Catholic Churches

St. Paul’s earliest settlement is closely associated with the efforts of Father Lucien Galtier, who gave the city its name. Assigned to minister to the largely French Canadian Roman Catholics at Mendota and Pig’s Eye, in 1841 Galtier erected a small, gable-roofed log building dedicated to St. Paul, the Apostle of Nations. It was located near present-day Second (Bench) Street between Cedar and Minnesota streets.

Galtier was succeeded by Rev. Augustin Ravoux. In 1851, the Diocese of St. Paul was founded and a more permanent brick structure was completed on the block bounded by Wabasha and St. Peter and Sixth and Seventh streets.² In 1858 another new cathedral was completed and was in use until 1915. The blocky, vaguely Romanesque building had a cross-axial plan with low-pitched gable roofs, and a central rose window above the main entry. Constructed of blue limestone, the Cathedral was accompanied by the bishop’s residence, a well-detailed Italianate style building with a prominent central cupola.

Illus. 3

The Cathedral of St. Paul, between Wabasha and St. Peter on Sixth Street (1858). Photograph ca. 1860. Razed.

French-Canadians were well acquainted with Minnesota by the time of permanent white settlement. Many were lumbermen and fur traders from Fort Snelling and Mendota, and by 1850 they numbered over three hundred in St. Paul and Ramsey County. In 1866, St. Paul counted 476 French Canadians and 115 French.³ By 1888 there were a reported 6,000 French-speaking residents, including 4,500 French-Canadians.

French-speaking Catholics were the core of the membership of the Cathedral of St. Paul, and several other French-Canadian parishes grew out of the Cathedral church. The construction of a church with a rectory and school on the same or adjacent block was a standard practice for most Catholic parishes in this period. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet directed the Cathedral School, while the Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of St. Francis, Christian Brothers and Franciscan Fathers taught at other early parish schools.⁴

The Church of St. Louis was organized in 1868 and built a church at Tenth and Cedar streets. The church founded the Ecole St. Louis in 1873 (and it continued until the 1960s). Organizations such as the Union St. Jean Baptiste Lodge and the Union Catholique de l'Abstinence Totale were also associated with the congregation. Between 1877 and 1904 the French language newspaper *Le Canadien* served this French-speaking community.⁵

German and Irish immigration also enlarged the early Roman Catholic community. Following the Revolution of 1848, many Catholic Germans from Bavaria and Prussia arrived in St. Paul. Assumption Church, the first of six German Catholic national parishes in the city, was organized in 1854 and a church erected in the next year. Many in the earliest German community settled on the Lower West Side, along the Upper Levee, and in Frogtown near Dale and Thomas streets. Germans—whose total numbers included Protestants and Jews as well as Catholics—worked as unskilled laborers like many Irish and French Canadians, but also comprised many of the city's grocers, craftsmen, and merchants.⁶

The Irish were well-represented among the first permanent settlers of St. Paul and eventually founded Catholic churches throughout the city. In 1860, St. Paul's Irish-born totaled 1,903.⁷ With French and German Catholics they attended the Cathedral of St. Paul, but the Church of St. Mary at Ninth and Locust in Lowertown was founded in 1867 and in 1868 the West Side Irish organized St. Michael's Church "so that they could attend services without having to pay the toll to cross the bridge to the cathedral."⁸

The Early Protestant Churches

Many but not all of the early Protestant denominations were comprised of Old Stock Americans. Geographer John G. Rice defines the Old Stock Americans as "members of white European families whose ancestors had resided in North America for a number of generations before they made the trek to Minnesota."⁹ Some historians note that they were not an ethnic group *per se*, but rather the host society and the "bearers of a new national culture," assuming that their ways were the ones to be adopted by new groups of Americans.¹⁰ In Minnesota, there was great diversity among this group, reflecting their New England, Tidewater Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and other origins. In 1860, almost forty percent of the population born outside Minnesota were natives of the East or South, and they created the framework for the early economy and many institutions. Especially apparent in early St. Paul were natives of New England, especially Maine and New York.

Rice notes "one of the most lasting imprints which the Old Stock Americans made on the cultural fabric of Minnesota was the religious diversity they supported."¹¹ The Baptist, Lutheran, Congregational, Episcopalian, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations they established also ministered to non-English speaking immigrants though the nineteenth century by many kinds of settlement houses, missions, and other charitable activities, but with varying results.

Methodist

In 1836, the Illinois Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church established a mission for the Dakota at Kaposia. In 1848, a congregation was organized in St. Paul by several Methodist families.¹² Their first church was built on Jackson Street in 1847 and was replaced by a small brick church on Market Street opposite Rice Park. Considered to be less class-conscious than other Protestant denominations, Methodists embraced lay preaching, camp meetings and circuit ministers, as well as much temperance preaching. Methodism was adopted by many immigrant Germans and Scandinavians, beginning with German Methodists, who founded a congregation in 1851 and built a church at Broadway and Sixth Street in 1853, and by Swedes at the First Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1854.

Presbyterian

Presbyterian mission activity in the area began with Gideon and Samuel Pond and T.S. Williamson, who arrived at Fort Snelling in 1835 and established mission outposts at Kaposia and Lake Harriet. Reverend Edward D. Neill, who would be an important leader in Minnesota's future growth, presided over the first St. Paul congregation established in 1849.¹³ When the First Presbyterian church building erected at Washington and Fourth streets burned, it was replaced with a new brick structure in 1850, which remained in use until 1875.

Central Presbyterian represented the Old School branch of the church and was organized in 1851. In 1856 they finished a brick church at Exchange and Cedar Streets. House of Hope Presbyterian Church was founded in 1855 by Edward D. Neill and the first church building was erected in 1858 at Fifth and Exchange.

Baptist

Pioneer school teacher Harriet Bishop arrived in St. Paul in 1847 and is regarded as the city's first Baptist. The First Baptist Church was organized in 1849, and a building was completed in 1854. Ten years later it was replaced by a stone chapel on Wacouta Street. This building was occupied by the Baptists for twelve years until the completion of the present First Baptist Church in 1875.

Episcopal

Episcopalians in general failed to attract non-English speaking immigrants, but they did attract a membership of many British and Canadian arrivals. The mother parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota was Christ Church. Organized in 1850, its first church was completed in 1850 at Fourth and Cedar streets, and this building was occupied until 1871.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church was organized in 1856 and a first building completed in 1857 at Ninth and Olive streets. The building was in use until about 1912. Of St. Paul's, Henry Castle noted that men of "historic importance in the city and state have served as wardens and vestrymen of this church, including H.H. Sibley, Gen. J.T. Dana, John L. Merriam, Harvey Officer, G.A. Hamilton, H.M. Smythe, Henry Hale, Channing Seabury and J.W. Bass."¹⁴ The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd was founded in 1867 as a city mission, and a church at Twelfth and Cedar was dedicated in 1869.

Lutheran

There were five Lutheran churches in St. Paul by 1875, representing English, German, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish-speaking congregations. By 1900, Lutheran churches would outnumber all others in the city. Swedish Lutherans organized in 1854, but did not erect their church, the First Swedish Evangelical Lutheran at Woodward and Stillwater avenues, until 1867. Christ Lutheran Church, composed of Norwegians and Danes, was organized in the late 1850s and again in 1868. Their first church was erected in 1870 near Mt. Airy and L'Orient streets.

Trinity Church, the mother of all Evangelical Lutheran Churches in St. Paul and a largely German congregation, was founded in 1855, and its first building was erected in 1858. The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded in 1863, erected a new church at Ninth and Rosabel streets.

Congregational

The Plymouth Congregational church was organized in 1858 and its first building was a chapel on Temperance Street dedicated in 1859. Described as "small and uninviting," the building was replaced in 1872.

Unitarian

Unitarian services were first offered in St. Paul by 1858, but the Unitarian Society did not incorporate until 1873 when it moved into the Universalist church.

Universalist

The First Universalist Society of St. Paul was incorporated in 1865. After meeting at various locations, a building was erected at Wabasha and Exchange streets and the congregation began holding services in the basement in 1869; the auditorium was finished in 1872. (This building was later sold to the Church of St. Louis and remodeled.)

The Early Jewish Community

The earliest Jewish settlement of St. Paul began in the 1850s. The community included settlers from the eastern and southern United States as well as eastern and central Europe. Immigration after the Civil War was largely from Poland, the Ukraine, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Romania, and represented many languages including German, Yiddish, Polish, and Russian. Many occupations were found in this diverse group, including merchants and professionals as well as traders and peddlers.¹⁵

Historian Hyman Berman notes that the beginnings of organized Jewish group life in Minnesota began in St. Paul in 1856 with the founding of Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation.¹⁶ The congregation reorganized 1868, and planned a synagogue, which was completed in 1871 at Tenth and Minnesota streets. Eastern Europeans organized the Sons of Jacob (B'nai Jacob) in 1875. The B'nai Jacob synagogue was opened in a converted building at Minnesota and Eleventh streets in 1879, and a new synagogue erected on College Avenue between Wabasha and St. Peter in 1888.

African-American Congregations

African-Americans were part of the earliest settlement of St. Paul, with the census recording 180 in 1870; 470 in 1880; 1,500 in 1890 and 2,300 in 1900.¹⁷ The city's African-Americans quickly "developed an indigenous community that was to be the center of black social and cultural activity in the state well in to the 20th century," notes David Vassar Taylor.¹⁸ Much of the early community was concentrated in Lowertown. Pilgrim Baptist Church was organized in 1863 after meeting for several years as a mission of the First Baptist Church. Their first building was erected in 1870 at Thirteenth and Cedar streets. St. Mark's Episcopal Church was organized in 1867 and survived until about 1870. St. James African Methodist Church organized in 1870, with its church at Fuller and Elfelt streets.

Early Church Architecture

Only two churches built before 1880 remain in St. Paul. Assumption Church (1871) and First Baptist Church (1875) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are locally designated.

Most of the earliest churches were not elaborate buildings like these two survivors. For example, according to one observer, the First German Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1853 at Broadway and Sixth Street, was a "plain frame building, 28 x 40 feet in size."¹⁹ Views of St. Paul churches of this period typically show a gable-roofed frame building enclosing the sanctuary, with an unpretentious steeple housing a bell or supporting a cross. While some buildings were careful renditions of the Greek Revival style, with low-pitched gable roofs, a full pediment at the gable ends, and classical window and door enframements, many were very simple vernacular buildings erected with modest budgets by local builders. The master builder of this period, such as St. Paul's A. C. Prentiss, was typically a carpenter or mason with no formal architectural training. This changed with the appearance of architects such as Augustus F. Knight who began practicing in St. Paul in 1857, and Abraham Radcliffe, who opened a St. Paul office in 1858.²⁰ Edward P. Bassford, a native of Maine, arrived in St. Paul in 1866.

Between 1850 and 1880, church building was concentrated in what is today the central downtown, between the Uppertown and Lowertown landings. Churches shared the often-muddy street with houses, hotels, and commercial buildings. The Plymouth Congregational Church (1859) was probably typical of the simplest designs, where a low-pitched gable roof shelters the sanctuary below a modest bell tower. The only decorative feature is a balustrade and four spires atop the tower.

Illus. 4
Plymouth Congregational Church, Temperance Street (1859). Photo ca. 1880. Razed.

The brick edifices erected by a few of the earliest congregations best show the design intentions of the master builders and architects. The First Methodist Church on Market Street opposite Rice Park was built in 1850. The low-pitched gable roof supported an over-scaled bell tower which had a square base crowned with an arched bell tower structure (the First Presbyterian Church at Third and St. Peter reportedly possessed the state's first bell.)²¹ A small rose window and round-arched openings decorated the First Methodist façade. (When photographed in 1926, it was the Murphy Brothers Downtown Garage, and the central entry had been widened into a garage door.)

Illus. 5
First Methodist Church, Market Street (1850). Photograph ca. 1885. Razed.

Illus. 6
First Methodist Church, Market Street (1850) after conversion to garage. Photograph 1926. Razed.

The churches of the 1860s reflected the round-arched Romanesque Revival style as well as the more vertical, lancet-arched Gothic Revival; both ideas had a variety of expressions by St. Paul builders and architects through the 1870s. When completed in 1858, the rather blocky St. Paul Cathedral at Sixth and St. Peter streets was the largest church yet built in the city, and its best display of the Romanesque Revival style. (See Illustration 3.)

The Gothic Revival Style was first popularized the United States in the early 1800s by Benjamin Latrobe and was disseminated across the county by pattern books. The early Gothic church in St. Paul were typically finished in board-and-batten siding, with steeply-pitched roofs and eaves trimmed with ornate tracery. The siding of some was finished with sanded paint to imitate stone.

Illus. 7
Christ Church, Fourth and Cedar, 1851. Photograph ca. 1865. Razed.

Executed in frame, the Christ Episcopal Church at Fourth and Cedar (1851) was a thoroughly Gothic Revival building. The steeply-pitched roof, slender tower and spire, lancet-arched windows, and crenellated parapet are typical of the pattern book-derived fashion favored by Episcopalians in southwestern Minnesota parishes in the 1850s. Its replacement was a much larger limestone edifice. Completed in 1867, a lancet-arched window filled with stained glass and tracery lit the sanctuary. The window was flanked by pairs of slender pinnacles, which rose from stepped buttresses.

Illus. 8
Christ Church, Fourth Street, 1867. Photograph date unknown. Razed.

Another Gothic Revival church was St. Mary's Catholic, at Locust and Ninth streets. Completed in 1867, the gable end of the limestone building was filled with a trio of round-arched windows, and round-arched windows lined the sanctuary, while a single slender pinnacle and square tower recalled English parish churches.

New Churches: the 1870s

In the 1870s St. Paul was enjoying the benefits of its expanding railroad hub and a growing warehouse and commercial district. A variety of public improvements—including new streets and street lights, a water system, and sewers and new bridges—were installed or under construction. For many congregations the 1870s was the decade to abandon the pioneer church (if it still existed) in favor of a larger edifice. The new churches of the seventies were generally more sophisticated and expensive than those of the previous decades and benefited from the benevolence of growing wealth in the community. While often finely detailed and crafted of limestone, in plan and execution most did not reveal the architectural complexity of the next generations, however. Slender spires of ambitious height crowned most new downtown churches, with their heights reaching between 150 and 200 feet. Newly-arrived architects in the 1870s included German-born Augustus F. Gauger.

Between 1870 and 1880, the city's original congregations expanded their buildings and razed or sold their edifices and built new ones. Germans, Scandinavians, Poles and Czechs were among the new arrivals that founded and built new churches. With the availability of early horsecar service which expanded the limits of the early walking city, St. Paul's "church zone" grew outward from the core downtown and the edges of Dayton's Bluff, Uppertown, Ramsey Hill, and a short-lived elegant residential area near present-day Lowertown along Woodward Avenue near Lafayette and Central parks. The future of a downtown location was becoming increasingly tenuous, with adjacent railroad, warehouse and commercial construction spreading thorough the 1870s and 1880s.

Henry Castle observed that in 1870 the First Presbyterians decided to move to the "lower part of the city" from St. Peter and Third streets. A new building was erected in 1875 at Lafayette and Woodward streets. "At that time," he noted, "this was and seemed likely to remain a very eligible residence center. But soon afterward the movement toward the hill district began, and twenty years later the church sold its lower town property and removed to its present location at the corner of Lincoln avenue and Grotto Street . . ."22

By 1875, the city directory recorded thirty-seven congregations representing twelve denominations. Catholic churches now numbered seven. The Romanesque Revival style Church of the Assumption was completed in 1871. Its 208-foot twin towers remain part of the downtown St. Paul skyline. Representative of the larger, relatively well-financed churches of the 1870s, it is crafted of blue limestone. It was the only St. Paul church illustrated in the J.T. Andreas *Atlas of Minnesota* (1874), which showed a sampling of new buildings to a wide audience. The design is credited to Munich architect Eduard Reidel, whose plans were brought to St. Paul by the parish.

The Polish and Bohemian Catholic congregation of St. Stanislaus was at Western and Goodhue in a church built about 1872, and the Church of St. Joseph, an Irish Catholic congregation, built a frame church at Carroll and Virginia in 1875.

In 1871 House of Hope Presbyterian erected a new church at Fifth and Exchange streets. Its 166-foot spire was covered with Vermont slate and was described as “very spacious and imposing.”²³ This building was used by the congregation until 1913.

The First Universalist congregation completed a stone edifice in 1872 at Wabasha and Exchange streets, after worshipping in the unfinished building’s basement for several years. (This building was sold to the French Catholics of the Church of St. Louis in 1881). The Congregationalists also completed a new church at Wabasha and Summit Avenue in 1872.

Meanwhile, the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church pioneered to the corner of Dayton and Mackubin with a simple frame church erected in 1873.²⁴ This was the first church built on St. Anthony Hill.

In 1874, the new First Methodist Church was completed on Dayton Avenue at Third Street. The limestone façade featured three slender lancet-arched windows flanked by twin towers, the larger of which terminated in a soaring spire. Designed by Abraham Radcliffe, it was in use until 1909.

In 1875, the First Baptist Church congregation erected a cream-colored limestone church at Ninth and Wacouta streets for its membership of nearly 700. Andrews called the building, crowned by a 180-foot spire, an “elegant, substantial, and altogether valuable house of worship.”²⁵ William Boyington of Chicago was commissioned for its design. Three other Baptist churches built in the 1870s were for the Swedish, German, and African-American congregations.

Illus. 9
First Baptist Church, Wacouta Street (1875). Photograph ca. 1925. Extant.

Protestant Scandinavians and Germans

In the 1870s, the city’s growing Scandinavian and German population became increasingly important to the direction of Protestant church development. Some of their new edifices were of simple frame construction, but a number were of more elaborate designs in brick and stone, reflecting the longevity and resources of the new congregations.

Minnesota was a destination for Swedish immigrants, who first settled in Washington County in 1850 and arrived in number in St. Paul shortly thereafter. As noted, the First Lutheran Church was founded by Swedish immigrants in 1854, although the congregation did not have a permanent home until 1867. This pioneer period had relatively modest numbers of Swedish settlers drawn to the mills and breweries, with many residing in the Phalen Creek Valley in the *Svenska Dalen* or Swede Hollow.²⁶ Much larger numbers of Swedes arrived by 1890, when there were 10,665 counted in Ramsey County. In Sweden, the state church was Lutheran, and most citizens were members. However this Lutheran core—in Minnesota largely the Augustana synod—was influenced by Baptist, Methodist, and various evangelical reform movements in England and the U.S. By the late nineteenth century, many U.S. Swedes were members of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant synod.

Many of the new arrivals in St. Paul migrated to Payne Avenue and then to Arlington Hills, where the East Side offered many employment opportunities.²⁷ The Swedish Lutherans were established at Woodward and Stillwater avenues.²⁸

Norwegians furthered Lutheran as well as Methodist and Baptist memberships. The first Norwegian Lutheran church was St. Paul’s Evangelical, founded in 1869. Their first church was on Mt. Airy Street, and they erected a new church at Canada and Fourteenth streets in 1882. Emmanuel Norwegian Evangelical, organized in 1872, was on the same block.

Germans were the largest foreign-born group in Minnesota until 1905, when Swedish immigration outpaced it. By 1870, there were 3,644 Germans in St. Paul, when they also constituted 37 percent of Ramsey County's population. However, the immigration that most greatly shaped the city was between 1870 and 1905. In 1900 there were 12,935 German-born residents in St. Paul, a figure that rose to 15,868 by 1905. The German population evident in the founding of the Catholic Assumption Church in 1854 was also found among Protestants, especially Lutherans. While the earliest Germans typically settled near the Upper Levee and in Frogtown, the immigration after 1880 included new communities between Marshall and Selby, large portions of the West Side, and the Dayton's Bluff area where they were an estimated thirty to forty percent of the population by 1900.

The German Evangelical Trinity Church, founded in 1855 at Wabasha and Tenth streets, was followed by Zion German Evangelical Lutheran Church at Cortland and Sycamore in 1863. (The present church dates from 1888). The First Evangelical Church was founded in 1857 and built a church at Eleventh and Pine streets. On the West Side, the German Evangelical Emmanuel, at Goff and Dearborn was organized in 1870. In Dayton's Bluff, St. John's German Evangelical at Margaret and Hope streets was built in 1871, First German Baptist, founded in 1873, was at Fifth and Mendota, while St. Paul's German United Evangelical Church, at Minnesota and Eleventh streets, was founded in 1879. The German Methodist Episcopal Church was built at Fuller and Western in 1873.

New Churches in New Neighborhoods: 1880-1900

Although St. Paul gained dozens of new churches between 1880 and 1900, the historic resources database records only twenty-eight surviving examples.

By 1880, St. Paul was the railroad hub of the Northwest, and its steamboat and rail connections secured its position as the region's wholesale center. The city's population rose from 41,473 in 1880 to 133,156 in 1890, and reached 153,065 by 1900. Downtown churches raised large sums to finance impressive new buildings, and dozens of much smaller churches were constructed in every direction across the expanding city. After 1893, however, a nation-wide financial panic dampened construction activity for the rest of the decade.

The architectural sophistication of a new generation of St. Paul architects (and a few from Minneapolis and elsewhere) was evident in the new churches of the 1880s and 1890s, especially those downtown. Paul C. Larson has identified a new generation of St. Paul architects who arrived in the city in the 1880s, including J. Walter Stevens, Clarence H. Johnston, Cass Gilbert, William H. Willcox, Charles Joy, Allen H. Stem, Harvey Ellis and John Coxhead²⁹ The architectural press took note of their buildings and the designs were often the subject of *Pioneer Press* and other newspaper features. A number of church commissions were won by Cass Gilbert (and in partnership with James Knox Taylor), Clarence H. Johnston, and A. F. Gauger, and are among those surviving in the city today.

The design of some of St. Paul churches reflected the well-published contemporary work of Boston architect H.H. Richardson and his many disciples. The building exterior depended on low-sprung arches, heavy, rusticated masonry and polychromy, and a complex roof shapes topped with towers or turrets. The exterior was often of Minnesota stones such as Duluth Brownstone, Kasota Stone, Luverne quartzite, and St. Cloud granite.

The fusion of spiritual and social life in some denominations was evident in the work of Warren H. Hayes (1847-1899). A leading church designer in this period, he was an early advocate of the Richardsonian Romanesque. His church commissions were completed in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and the Midwest, and from Oregon to Massachusetts. In addition to at least nine Minneapolis commissions between 1881 and 1894, he designed Central Presbyterian Church (1888-1890) at 500 Cedar Street (HPC; NRHP).

Illus 10

Central Presbyterian Church (1888-1890), 500 Cedar Street (HPC; NRHP). Date of photograph unknown.

Hayes was an exponent of the so-called Akron Plan or “diagonal octagonal plan,” which provided a flexible layout allowing the church auditorium to be linked to the Sunday School by sliding panels or doors. Kitchens, choir rooms, and pastor’s studies were also included. The plan provided an octagonal auditorium with the chancel opposite the main entrance, organized on an isocoustic curve, which gave all pews equal sight lines to the pulpit.³⁰

Many of the buildings erected in the 1880s and 1890s were architecturally elaborate and technologically up-to-date buildings. Modern plumbing, heating and electricity were installed in the new churches, while their older counterparts struggled to introduce these systems to older buildings.

Illus. 11

Trinity German Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Wabasha and Tilton (1887). Photograph ca. 1890. Razed.

Many of the downtown churches erected in the 1880s and early 1890s were large and well-financed, although often not long-lived because of the rapidly changing urban landscape. Trinity German Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Wabasha and Tilton, was completed in 1887. A slender, slate-covered central spire and bell tower rose from the main façade, which was layered with brick corbel courses and a variety of round and lancet-arched windows. The building was razed in 1952. The Central Park Methodist Church at Twelfth and Minnesota was completed in 1887 and was in use until 1961 when it was razed for the construction of I-94. The Romanesque design by George Wirth was a top-heavy but eye-catching design featured a square plan with numerous conical towers and a 220-foot spire.

Cass Gilbert’s Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church was built at 503 Dayton Avenue in 1886 (and is now a part of the Historic Hill District). Another notable and extant Gilbert design, the Bethlehem German Presbyterian Church of 1890, was erected at Pleasant and Ramsey streets. Gilbert’s First German Methodist Episcopal Church at Olive and E. Eleventh streets (razed) was completed in 1893; in 1894 the building was illustrated in the *Architect, Builder and Decorator*.³¹ Its compact massing and polychrome stone exterior contrast with the more unbalanced design of some other large churches of the period.

Illus. 12

Central Park Methodist Church, Twelfth and Minnesota (1887). Photograph ca. 1900. George Wirth, architect. Razed 1961.

Illus. 13

First German Methodist Episcopal Church Olive and E Eleventh (1893). Photograph ca. 1894. Razed.

Illus. 14

The People’s Church, Pleasant Avenue and Chestnut Street (1889). J. Walter Stevens, architect. Burned 1901, rebuilt and later razed.

Another prominent near-downtown building was the People’s Church at Pleasant Avenue and Chestnut Street. Organized in 1888, the independent group led by Rev. Samuel G. Smith held their first services in the Grand Opera House and completed the impressive building in 1889. The

building contained the largest meeting hall of its type in the city and had a lively façade designed by J. Walter Stevens which resembled “a large clubhouse rather than a place of worship.”³² It was rebuilt after a 1901 fire but burned again in 1940.

Also of note is St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal (1888), designed by William H. Willcox and Clarence H. Johnston at 754-58 Fourth St. E. on Dayton's Bluff. It is the only surviving of three designed by the partnership between 1887 and 1889.³³

On the West Side, the Emanuel Lutheran Church at 510 Humboldt was erected in 1883. Like the downtown Trinity German Evangelical Lutheran Church, it featured a slender slate-covered central spire and bell tower, flanked by slender pinnacles (razed).

Illus. 15
Ninth Presbyterian Church, Farrington and Edmund streets (ca. 1885). Photograph ca. 1885. The church sits at the edge of a residential area then under construction. Razed.

New Frontiers

The platting of many new subdivisions and the extension of city services and streetcar and rail lines in all directions provided additional territory for congregational expansion. A church was often a standard feature of the new neighborhoods that developed across the city in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. These buildings were tucked along quiet neighborhood streets or located along busy arterials. City atlases show that the church was frequently at the leading edge of new subdivisions, and was often accompanied by only a few new houses in the immediate vicinity.

John Wesley Hill's *The History of Twin City Methodism* (1895), written before automobiles changed patterns of work and church-going, provided some insight into church expansion in this period:

People feel that they ought to have church privileges within walking distance. Some favorite preacher or old social ties may draw them to greater distances but as a rule they do not long continue to attend churches so far away that their children cannot walk to Sunday School and Young People's meetings. Half a mile is about as far as they are likely to walk and send their little ones. This makes it expedient for a great denomination that feels its responsibilities for the religious culture of the people of the city to provide suitable places of worship within at least one mile from each other. The city, in its business experience, makes such or better provision for the school accommodation of its children. Wherever a large public school is planted, there is proof that not far away a church may find a good site.³⁴

The financial challenges faced by some new congregations recalled those of the pioneer churches. Many accounts of the church building effort read like this one about St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Dale Street and Sherburne Avenue. (The church was founded in 1887 as a mission church; their 1918 building is extant.)

To establish a congregation in a growing city was a task as difficult then as it is now [1937]. The members were poor and anxious to own homes, though it be a shanty. . . In the spring of 1888 the temporary place of worship proved to be too small for the growing congregation. To insure permanent success, it was realized, a permanent church home would be needed. Two sites were available, a corner on Charles and Mackubin and another on Dale St. and Sherburne Avenue . . . It was planned to build a church on this site 95 feet long and 45 feet wide, a frame structure which was to be brick veneered later. Because the funds would not reach, this plan was reduced to 40 x 80 feet. To build on a property no paid for would prove a dangerous venture. The Synod had to be appealed to again for funds.³⁵

Missions established by older churches grew considerably in the 1880s and 1890s. Often the mission was a very simple building or a converted house. Some were combined with lodging or social services.

Church moving was a common practice. When the Church of St. Louis acquired the former Universalist Church at Cedar, their old building of 1869 was moved from Tenth and Cedar streets to Charles and Galtier streets for St. Adalbert's Roman Catholic Church. St. Adalbert's replaced this building in 1911 when they erected a new church. It served as a parish hall until it burned in 1913.³⁶

Many of the new neighborhood churches were smaller than their downtown counterparts. The exteriors were clad in frame, brick, stone, and even rusticated concrete block. Some were the products of local builders working with the many published church plans of the period. Architectural motifs associated with the homeland of many immigrant congregations were also apparent, especially with Eastern European congregations.

The Queen Anne and Shingle styles, utilizing a smooth surface of clapboard or decorative shingles, were often employed for the neighborhood churches. Many reflected architectural features and decoration employed on houses from the surrounding area. Gilbert & Taylor's Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church (1887) is an exceptional example of a building designed for a neighborhood setting; the Unity church at Wabasha and Summit (ca. 1890) was an exposition of Queen Anne motifs applied to a hipped roof edifice at residential scale. On the east side, the exterior of the clapboard-clad Arlington Hills Methodist Episcopal Church at Cook and Greenbrier streets (ca. 1890) was composed of a few Gothic motifs applied to a large, otherwise Queen Anne style building.

Illus. 16
Unity Church, Wabasha and Summit (ca. 1890). Date of photograph unknown Razed

Illus. 17
Arlington Heights Methodist Church, Cook and Greenbrier streets (ca. 1890). Date of photograph unknown Razed.

Catholic

Between 1880 and 1900, twelve new Roman Catholic churches were built in St. Paul, followed by only three in the 1890s. Irish Catholics built new churches in newly-developing, largely middle-class neighborhoods. They were St. Patrick's (1884, Mississippi and Case streets); St. John's (1886, Forest and E. Fifth streets); St. James (1887, View and Juneau streets); St. Vincent de Paul (1888, Virginia Street and Blair Avenue) and St. Mark's (1899, Dayton Avenue and Moore Street).

St. Peter Claver, an African-American Catholic congregation, was organized in 1888 at the encouragement of Archbishop John Ireland, and a new building was constructed in 1892 at Farrington and Aurora streets. (Most of these early churches have been replaced by newer buildings.)

Presbyterian

Following the creation of First Presbyterian (1850), Central Presbyterian (1851) and House of Hope (1855), at least thirteen other Presbyterian congregations were organized by 1900. Most built new edifices in the city's expanding territory. Among new congregations created in outlying areas were Merriam Park (1885), Warrendale (1888), and Macalester (1890). The Warrendale church at Cross and Oxford streets was a lively design occupying a corner site. The square bell tower was crowned with four shingled pinnacles and a spire, and the stucco building rested on a rustic fieldstone foundation. Its designer was Charles Wallingford, whose own house still stands

at 1259 Como Boulevard (1886). His other, also-razed churches include Macalester Park Presbyterian (1887).

Illus. 18

Warrendale Presbyterian Church, Cross and Oxford streets (1888). Date of photograph unknown. Razed.

Lutheran

Lutheran membership grew steadily through the 1880s and 1890s, and thirty churches were established by 1900. Norwegian immigration aided the growth of the denomination in St. Paul.³⁷ Although the state church of Norway was Lutheran, in the United States Norwegians split into synods reflecting different theological viewpoints. In 1892, Luther Theological Seminary was founded in St. Paul by the United Church synod in Phalen Park. (This was not the forerunner of the institution in the city today). Concordia College was founded by the Missouri Synod in the same year.

At least four new Norwegian congregations representing various Lutheran synods were founded, including Our Saviour's Norwegian Free Church at Sherburne and Dale (1899), the Norwegian Evangelical Bethany at Forest and Jenks (1896) and the Norwegian Lutheran Trinity Church at Farrington and Sherburne. The East Immanuel Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran built a small frame church in 1888 at 1019 Jesse Street, where they were housed until 1925. (The building is now a single-family house.)

New German Lutheran congregations included St. Marcus German, at St. Clair and Richmond (1897). To the far west, the Swedish Lutheran Church of Merriam Park was organized in 1889.

Illus. 19

East Immanuel Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran (1888), 1019 Jesse Street. Date of postcard unknown. Now a residence.

Methodist

Methodists were particularly active in expanding to newly-developing areas. In the 1880 and 1890s the Methodist churches expanded across the city, founded by English-speaking as well as Scandinavian and German congregations. Most notable was Methodist representation in the new commuter suburbs. At least eleven new Methodist churches were built between 1880 and 1900, including Hamline at Capitol at Asbury, Holman Memorial at Bates and Euclid, and St. Anthony Park on Raymond near Manvel. The Arlington Heights Methodist Church served a new population on the East Side (see Illustration 17). The stone and shingle-clad Hamline Methodist Episcopal Church, featuring a star-shaped rose window, was designed by Clarence H. Johnston in 1899.

Congregational, Baptist, and Episcopal

The Congregational church expanded from one downtown church to seven across the city in the 1880s. It also had a number of outlying missions, including the Bell Chapel in Desnoyer Park. One historian noted that the Park Congregational Church at Holly Avenue and Mackubin Street engaged in "many educational and philanthropic activities, which enlist the interest of the people of the progressive residence district in which it is located."³⁸ In Hazel Park, a new church was built at White Bear and Maryland in 1892.

Baptist churches also had substantial growth. New churches included the Woodland Park at Selby and Arundel (ca. 1885), the Norwegian Danish Baptist at Woodbridge and Milford, organized in 1883, the First Norwegian Danish Methodist Episcopal Church at Thirteenth Street and Broadway, the Bethlehem (German) Presbyterian Church at Pleasant and Ramsey, organized

in 1887, and the Dano-Norwegian Presbyterian Church at Thomas and Marion, organized in 1893.

St. John the Evangelist's chapel was completed at Ashland and Mackubin streets in 1881, and was the first of nine new buildings erected in the 1880s and 1890s. It was followed by Ascension, Messiah, Epiphany, St. Clement's, St. James, St. Mary's of Merriam Park, St. Peter's, and St. Stephen's. Although Episcopal churches had generally few immigrant congregations, Swedes attended St. Sigfried's Episcopal Church, organized in 1887 and with a church at Randolph and View streets.

Early Twentieth-Century Expansion: 1900-1930

There had been something of a lull in church building. Churches were built during the boom times for the future. They were built with borrowed money, and when the hard times followed there were desperate struggles with debts. With the return of prosperity the first idea of the congregation was to get the debts paid, and the effort has been so successful that for some time the smoke of burned mortgages has been almost continuous. With the return of prosperity also came more people, and churches that satisfied during the depression became inadequate and the present period of construction started.

Saint Paul Pioneer Press, May 31, 1903

The 1890s were marked with economic depression, and the writer above referred to the turn of the century recovery; nevertheless church building and expansion proceeded at a somewhat more modest pace between 1900 and 1930 than during the period 1880-1900. However, over seventy surviving churches from this period are recorded in the historic resources database.

In 1900, the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies counted 161 church organizations in St. Paul, with a total of 103,639 members. This membership represented about 63 percent of the city's total population of 163,065. Church buildings totaled 156, and 62 parsonages were counted. Lutherans had more churches in the city than any other denomination, while Roman Catholics, with 24 churches and 62,000 members, outranked them in membership.

The continuing trend for some large downtown churches was to relocate from downtown. Prominent moves to Summit Avenue were made by the House of Hope Presbyterian (1914; at Victoria; designed by Ralph Adams Cram), and the St. Paul Cathedral (1915; at Selby; designed by Emmanuel Masqueray). In 1920, St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church moved to Summit and Lexington avenues from Victoria and Portland, first to the basement of the present edifice dedicated in 1926.

In St. Paul as in Minneapolis, the turn of the century produced costly churches of considerable architectural significance, some designed by nationally-known firms such as Ralph Adams Cram of Cram and Ferguson of Boston. Neoclassical designs as well as English Revival styles were the most evident in the new churches. The now-raised Mt. Zion Temple at 796 Holly Avenue (1904), designed by Clarence H. Johnston, was a Roman temple with a low tiled dome and two Ionic capitals in the entry portico. Another Johnston design, the First Church of Christ Scientist at 739 Summit Ave. W. (1913) reflects the Christian Scientist's preference for Roman motifs as well as Johnston's exploration of classical motifs. The earlier First Methodist Episcopal Church at Holly and Victoria (now St. Volodymyr & Olga Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 1908) by Thori, Alban and Fischer features a full temple front with eight fluted Ionic columns.

Illus. 20

First Methodist Episcopal Church (1908), Victoria and Holly streets. Date of photograph unknown. Thori, Alban, and Fischer, architects.

The Swedish Tabernacle (1904) was an eye-catching brick edifice designed to impress. Located at Minnehaha and Edgerton and designed by Omeyer and Thori, the circular plan was reflected in

the rounded central gable flanked by two domed towers. (After 1934 the building was the home of First Covenant Church, and between 1954 and 1962 the Full Gospel Assembly, a Pentecostal congregation. It was razed in 1963).

Illus. 21

Swedish Tabernacle, Minnehaha and Edgerton (1904). Date of photograph unknown. Omeyer and Thori, architects. Razed.

The persistence of a version of the Gothic Revival style very popular in the 1880s and 1890s, one featuring a central spire and a façade enlivened with pinnacles, corbels, and other devices is evident in two surviving churches built after 1900. The exceptional Trinity Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran at 515 Farrington dates from 1902-06. Nearby, St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran at 507 Dale was designed by William Alban and completed in 1918. Each façade utilizes a similar vocabulary as that evident at Trinity German Evangelical Lutheran Church built in 1887 at Wabasha and Tilton (see Illustration 11).

The design of many of the traditional churches of the early twentieth century reflected the influence of East Coast architects such as Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) who favored near-reproductions of English Gothic Revival styles, particularly the English parish church. Cram's House of Hope Presbyterian, his most prominent Twin Cities commission, featured a square tower crowned with slender pinnacles. Variations of this design were popular for the next forty years, and can be seen in nearly every area of the city. Typically executed in dark red or brown brick with cream stone trim, a corner bell tower with crenellations and lancet-arched windows were standard features.

In addition to buildings such as the Hamline Methodist Episcopal Church of 1899, Clarence H. Johnston Sr. designed a number of other prominent churches in neighborhood settings in the early twentieth century. The Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist at 559 Portland Avenue (at Kent) dates from 1902. Paul Clifford Larson calls attention to the archaeological correctness of the design, suggesting Magdalen College at Oxford. Johnston also supervised later work (ca. 1919) on the building designed by Ralph Adams Cram of Boston.³⁹

University Avenue Congregational erected their Johnston-designed church at Sherburne and Victoria in 1907. The Olivet Congregational Church at 1850 Iglehart, also from 1907, was a simple and beautifully-crafted English Gothic design in the Merriam Park neighborhood. In 1914, two other Johnston designs were completed in St. Anthony Park. The stone-clad St. Matthew's Episcopal Church at 2136 Carter Avenue overlooked College Park, while the somewhat less picturesque St. Anthony Park Congregational at 2129 Commonwealth Avenue occupied a corner near Langford Park.

Among new Presbyterian churches was that of the Merriam Park congregation at 203 Howell St. N., completed in 1912 and designed by Thomas Holyoke.

Catholic church construction after 1900 included the expansion of the Church of St. Agnes at 513 Lafond in 1910, a campaign that included the present landmark spire designed by George Ries. Several still extant twin-towered churches were built in this period, including the Church of St. Casimir at 937 Jessamine Ave. E (1904) and the 1,000-seat Church of St. Bernard (1907) by John Jager. The three-towered Church of St. Andrew at 1051 Como Avenue was completed in 1927.

Another exceptional design by John Jager was for the Church of St. Columba. (This 1915 building has been since replaced by a 1949 edifice.) The wood-trimmed stucco building had squat towers flanking a gable-roofed sanctuary. An Arts and Crafts emphasis was evident in the low, corbel-trimmed arch over the two entries and in the geometric stained glass.

Illus. 22

Church of St. Columba (1915) Lafond near Hamline. Date of photograph unknown. Barry Byrne, architect. Razed.

At the same time English Gothic and other period revival designs were popular, a few congregations commissioned architects who produced less traditional new churches. The Knox Presbyterian Church at 1536 Minnehaha (at Asbury) was designed by William Alban and Charles Hausler. Its Prairie School design features a flat roof, symmetrical façade, and geometric terra cotta ornamentation.

Illus. 23

Knox Presbyterian Church, 1536 Minnehaha (at Asbury) 1912-14. Photograph ca. 1930. Alban and Hausler, architects.

Illus. 24

St. Paul Cathedral, Summit and Selby avenues, 1915. Postcard photograph ca. 1920. Emmanuel Masqueray, architect.

Planning and construction of the Cathedral of St. Paul occupied church leaders for nearly twenty years—a period when the Pro-Cathedral, the Basilica of St. Mary was also under construction in Minneapolis. The granite building on Summit Avenue designed by Emmanuel Masqueray was dedicated in 1915.

While Masqueray's design for the Cathedral was being completed, he had several other commissions in the city including the Church of St. Louis at 510 Cedar Street (1910), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (St. Paul's church on the Hill) at Summit and Saratoga (1912), and the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church at 661 Forest Street (1914).

The early twentieth-century saw the continued founding of religious schools, particularly within the Roman Catholic church. By 1912, when there were twenty-four Roman Catholic churches in St. Paul, there were also over one-hundred related schools ranging from elementary schools to colleges and seminaries. The St. Paul Theological Seminary for the dioceses of St. Paul, Duluth, St. Cloud, Winona, Fargo, Sioux Falls, Lead, Crookston and Bismarck was founded by James J. Hill in 1892. The seminary site included forty acres of land and St. Mary's Chapel. (The College of St. Thomas was founded on adjacent property in 1885.) The College of St. Catherine was founded in 1905 at Cleveland Avenue and Randolph Street.

Between 1920 and 1940 seven new Roman Catholic churches were built in St. Paul. Included was the Church of our Lady of Guadalupe, which served Mexican and other Spanish-speaking parishioners. The church met in a rented storefront prior to its location in the former St. Peter Baptist Church at 186 E. Fairfield.

Foreign-language services declined in importance in some Protestant churches in the early twentieth century, but remained a strong part of others. Acculturation and assimilation were present in many other parts of immigrant life, but many congregations could expect to hear their native language until after World War I.

Polish, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Czech and Eastern Slav Congregations

The arrival of new ethnic groups added to the already diverse mix of German, Scandinavian, and other congregations in the early twentieth century. There were an estimated foreign-born 1,015 Poles in St. Paul in 1890, and the number reached 2,610 in 1930. Drawn from diverse regions and with many dialects and cultures, many Poles destined for the Twin Cities settled in Northeast Minneapolis but those who came to St. Paul founded several churches. Archbishop John Ireland favored the preservation of the Polish language to strengthen support for the church.

The groundwork for the twentieth-century immigrants had been laid at St. Stanilaus Church, organized in 1870 by Poles and Bohemians. In 1881, the congregation separated and the Bohemians remained at St. Stanislaus, while the Poles organized St. Adalbert's Church. St.

Stanislaus had about 1,900 members in 1910, while St. Adalbert's numbered about 2,900. St. Adalbert's present cruciform-plan church at 242 Charles was completed in 1911 and was designed by Boyer, Taylor and Tewes. Its twin towers are modeled on those at the Church of St. Barabar in Cracow, Poland. St. Casimir's, was organized in 1888. Their second building, a twin-towered church at Jessamine and Forest streets, was built in 1902 (NRHP; HPC).

Other New Communities

Between 1900 and 1930 many other new immigrant groups arrived in St. Paul.⁴⁰ Some—such as Greeks who numbered only about 100 residents by 1900—focused their early church-building activity with their countrymen in Minneapolis. Around the turn of the century the small Syrian and Lebanese community established the Church of the Holy Family, a Maronite rite church, on Robie near East Seventh Street.⁴¹

Minnesota was not a major destination for the millions of Italians who left Italy in the twentieth century. Although many who settled here had agricultural backgrounds, over eighty percent lived in the Twin Cities or Duluth.⁴² The number of foreign-born Italians in St. Paul rose from 317 in 1890 to a peak of 1,722 in 1930.⁴³ Some St. Paul used their agriculture backgrounds to establish wholesale produce businesses, but historian Rudolph Vecoli notes their occupational diversity, ranging from businessmen to sculptors and artisans. In St. Paul, many Italians sorted into residential areas based on their Italian homeland. For example, the Genoese lived between W. Central Avenue and Summit Place, while the Tuscans were near East Seventh and Rosabel streets.⁴⁴ The Upper Levee and Swede Hollow and Railroad Island (Lower Payne Avenue) grew by chain migration, with one family member eventually recruiting village-like numbers. Eventually, poor housing evolved into more substantial neighborhoods where Italian remained the dominant culture for decades.

Vecoli notes that these immigrants, who were all from Roman Catholic backgrounds, nevertheless posed what was called the "Italian Problem." With a strongly Irish culture in the American church and anti-clerical sentiment among the Italians as well as few Italian priests, the early Italians in St. Paul had no church home. In 1899 the first Italian clergy arrived at the Holy Redeemer Italian mission, which was held in the basement of the downtown Cathedral. Italians did not have their own church until Holy Redeemer was built on W. College Avenue in 1915. (Another church, St. Ambrose, had struggled after its opening on Bradley Street in 1911.)⁴⁵

Romanians numbered only 52 foreign-born in 1900, but grew to 589 residents by 1930 when they were drawn to North End and Frogtown neighborhoods by jobs on the railroad and in mills and factories.⁴⁶ Many were from villages in the Banat, near the Yugoslavian and Hungarian border. Minnesota's first Romanian Orthodox parish was organized in St. Paul and St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church was completed in 1914 at 854 Woodbridge. At the time it was one of only about sixteen Romanian Orthodox churches in the U.S.

The peak year for Czech immigration to St. Paul was 1930, when 1,513 residents were counted in the census. Some Czechs were Roman Catholic, while others were Protestant. In St. Paul the first Catholic immigrants attended the German Assumption church, and in 1872 St. Stanislaus of Kostka was built on W. Seventh Street. It served Poles as well as Czechs. In 1880 Czechs formed their own Church of St. Adalbert, and erected a new building at Charles and Gaultier streets. This community also founded the St. Paul branch of the Czecho-Slovanic Benefit Society (CSPS), the "oldest free-thought fraternal organization in the United States."⁴⁷ (The CSPS building at 381-383 Michigan, dating from 1887, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) In 1886, Protestant Czechs founded Cyril Congregational Church near St. Stanislaus on W. Seventh Street.

The complex migration of East Slavs, including Rusins, Ukrainians, Russians, and Belorussians included the settlement of between 5,000 and 10,000 in Minnesota. In St. Paul, part of the evidence of their early community is the foundation of the Russian Orthodox Church. There have been many controversies over the integration of the Byzantine Rite in the United States Roman Catholicism. The Russian-Serbian Holy Trinity Orthodox Church was established in 1916 by Belorussian (East Slav) as well as Serbian (South Slav) members. Their small onion-domed church

(dating from 1906 and originally the Calvary Mission) is at 958 Forest Street. In 1938 this church was involved in a dispute over church hierarchy, an historic question ultimately decided by the Minnesota Supreme Court.⁴⁸

Illus. 25

Holy Trinity Russian-Serbian Orthodox Church (1906 as Calvary Mission). Photograph ca. 1922. The exterior of this building is now clad in stucco but the onion dome remains.

In 1920, the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies counted 201 church organizations in St. Paul, with a total of 154,258 members. This membership represented about 66 percent of the city's total population of 234,698. Lutherans, with forty-four churches and 28,000 members, had more buildings in the city than any other denomination, while Roman Catholics, with 31 churches and 77,819 members, outranked all in membership. There were fifteen Baptist churches including three African-American congregations with a membership of 700. The twenty-five Methodist bodies included two African Methodist Episcopal congregations with a membership of 775. Jewish congregations numbered twelve, with 13,500 members.

In 1900, the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies counted 161 church organizations in St. Paul, with a total of 103,639 members. This membership represented about 63 percent of the city's total population of 163,065. Church buildings totaled 156, and 62 parsonages were counted. Lutherans had more churches in the city than any other denomination, while Roman Catholics, with 24 churches and 62,000 members, outranked them in membership.

Churches in the Third and Fourth Generations: 1930-1960

Over seventy surviving churches from this period are recorded in the historic resources database, including examples that reflect changes in liturgy and new ideas about the appearance and function of religious buildings.

By 1940, there were about 221 churches representing over twenty-three denominations and faiths in St. Paul. Catholic Churches now numbered thirty-four, and the Lutherans fifty-seven. The ethnic identification once a part of the church name was increasingly absent from most Protestant congregations, but was retained in the Greek, Russian Serbian, Romanian, Syrian Orthodox, and some Roman Catholic churches. The diverse Jewish community had twelve synagogues in 1930 and thirteen by 1940; most were in or near downtown.

While a small number of new denominations had been established since the turn of the century—such as the Church of Latter Day Saints at 247 N. Grotto—a number of non-denominational churches and organizations appeared. Most were short-lived. They included the Unity Truth Center (901 Globe Building), the Shrine of Light (161 Maple) and the International Righteous Government Movement. The latter was an international organization headed by "Father Divine." St. Paul's headquarters were at 602 N. Robert Street.⁴⁹ In the 1930s, the Central Church of Infinite Science occupied the former St. Sigfried's Episcopal Church (1872) at Eighth and Locust streets and the former Dano-Norwegian Presbyterian Church (ca. 1903) at 196 Thomas.

After World War II, an improved economy and new housing development in the east and west corners of the city encouraged well-funded expansion programs for some congregations, while other urban churches struggled with declining membership. A large parking lot was a requirement of many of the new churches. Typical of many of the mobility of some mid-century churches was St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran, at Dale Street and Sherburne Avenue since 1918. In 1951, the congregation moved from its Frogtown location to a more park-like edge of the neighborhood, with a new church at Van Buren and Lexington Parkway.

After World War II, many new church buildings featured exposed structural materials, dramatic handling of natural light, and very simple modern exteriors. The city's most notable example of modern design from this period is the Church of St. Columba at 1305 Lafond Avenue. The stone

building was designed by Barry Byrne (1883-1967), a Chicago architect noted for his innovative work. In 1951 Mount Zion Temple at 1300 Summit Ave. was designed by Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953), a German Expressionist architect best known for his 1910 design for the Einstein Tower in Potsdam. He designed several synagogues in the Midwest after emigrating to the U.S. in 1941. One of the most prolific synagogue designers, Percival Goodman of New York designed the 1956 rebuilding of the Temple of Aaron at Hartford and Mississippi River.

Local architects associated with traditional designs in this period included Carl Buetow (Jehovah Evangelical Lutheran Church at Thomas near Snelling; 1923 and Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Charles and Mackubin, 1932); N. Edward Mohn (Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church at Snelling and Goodrich, 1925); Fred A. Slifer (St. James Roman Catholic Church at Juno and View Streets 1938-39); Frank Abrahamson (St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church at Armstrong and Victoria, 1949) and Ingemann and Bergstedt (St. Paul's United Church of Christ at Summit and Milton, 1952).

Central Park Methodist Church at 639 Jackson Street was completed in 1959, and is representative of the direction of new church design after World War II. The building was composed of no-nonsense brick, metal, and glass arranged in simple geometric masses. The stark cross-topped steel spire rose several stories above the building. A comparison with its predecessor at Twelfth and Minnesota reveals much about the evolution of church design (see Illustration 12). Completed in 1887, the limestone building by architect George Wirth was a weighty amalgam of Richardsonian and English Gothic motifs. Its multi-tiered spire dominated the skyline around the State Capitol until 1961, when the building was razed for freeway construction.⁵⁰

Illus. 26

Central Park Methodist Church, 639 Jackson Street (1959). Photograph ca. 1959.

Churches, Synagogues, and Religious Buildings Historic Context Recommendations

In general, St. Paul churches and most related buildings appear to be well inventoried insofar as extant examples have been located and identified as to original name and date of construction. It appears that most additional research, however, has been conducted primarily for those listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the past twenty years (since most of the present inventory was completed) there have been alterations as well as improvements to many of the properties. Some might not be included in the inventory now because of low integrity, usually due to unsympathetic additions.

As noted in this study, few of the city's pre-1900 churches survive. A good number of remaining examples are included in the Dayton's Bluff or Historic Hill districts, or are downtown. There are only eight individually designated properties (including one school) outside the historic districts. The recommendations below focus on properties already listed on the National Register, as well as those of architectural significance and those associated with the settlement of the city's diverse ethnic groups. All meet St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission designation criteria.

Many of the buildings recommended for designation study are currently in full use by their congregations, but several appear to be vacant. While finding new uses for historic churches can be difficult, there are several examples of good recent projects involving conversion to housing or other uses.

Buildings Recommended for Further Designation Study

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
661 Forest St.
1914
E. Masqueray

Church of St. Agnes (NRHP)
548 Lafond Avenue.
1909-12
George J. Reis

Church of St. Columba
1305 Lafond Ave W.
1949-50
B. Byrne

Church of St. Louis (NRHP)
506 Cedar Street
1909
E. Masqueray

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church
958-960 Forest St. N.
1916

Knox Presbyterian Church
1536 Minnehaha Ave. W.
1912-14
Alban & Hausler

Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
105 University Avenue
1913
Buechner & Orth

Olivet Congregational Church
1850 Iglehart Ave. W.
1907, 1915
C.H. Johnston Sr.

Pilgrim Baptist Church (NRHP)
732 Central Ave W.
1928

St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church
854 Woodbridge St. N.
1914

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church
507 Dale St. N.
1918
W. Alban

St. Matthew's School (Catholic)
10 Winifred St.
ca. 1901-02
J. F. Fischer

Trinity Norwegian Evangelical
515 Farrington St. N
1902-1906

United Church Seminary (Bockman Hall; NRHP)
2481 Como Ave.
1909
Omeyer & Thori

University Avenue Congregational Church
868 Sherburne Ave.
1909
C.H. Johnston

Zion German Evangelical Lutheran Church
776 Jackson St. N.
1888
A.F. Gauger

Bibliography

Articles, Books and Reports: General

- Andrews, General C. C., ed. *History of St. Paul, Minnesota*. Syracuse, N.Y. : D. Mason and Co., 1890.
- Castle, Henry. *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*. Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1912.
- Granger, Susan W., Murphy, Patricia. *Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County, 1980-1983: Final Report*. St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society and the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 1983.
- Hoag, Robert. "Churches of St. Paul: A Directory." 1976.
- Holmquist, June Drenning, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981.
- Larson, Paul Clifford. "Architectural History of St. Paul, Chapter II" (manuscript prepared for St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission).
- Larson, Paul Clifford. *Minnesota Architect: the Life and Work of Clarence H. Johnston*. Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical Society Press, 1996.
- Markus, Neil A. "Areal Patterns of Religious Denominationalism in Minnesota, 1950." M.A. Thesis, University of Minnesota., 1961.
- Millett, Larry. *Lost Twin Cities*. St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1992.
- Murphy, Patricia, A. and Granger, Susan W. *Historic Sites Survey of Saint Paul and Ramsey County: Final Report*. St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society and Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 1983.
- Schmid, Calvin F. *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul*. Minneapolis: Bureau of Social Research, The Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937.
- Polk, R.L., and Co. *City Directories of St. Paul, MN*.
St. Paul Pioneer Press, 1890-1940.
- Sandeen, Ernest R. *St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue*. St. Paul: Living Historical Museum, Macalester College, 1978.
- Tucci, Douglas Shand. *Ralph Adams Cram: American Medievalist*. Boston: Boston Public Library, 1975.
- Williams, J. Fletcher. *A History of the City of St. Paul to 1875*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1876: Borealis Reprint, 1983.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Religious Bodies: 1900*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Religious Bodies: 1920*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1926.
- U.S. Works Progress Administration, Minnesota, Historical Records Survey; Churches, 1936-41, Minnesota Historical Society.

Zellie, Carole. *Religion Historic Context, 1850-1950*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, 1996.

Denominational, Congregational, and Ethnic Histories

African-American

Butler, Jon H. "Communities and Congregations: The Black Church in St. Paul, 1860-1900," *Journal of Negro History* 56: 118-34 (April 1971).

Catholic

Hansen, Eric C. *The Cathedral of Saint Paul: an Architectural Biography*. St. Paul, Minn.: Cathedral of Saint Paul, 1990.

Reardon, Rev. James Michael. *The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul : from Earliest Origin to Centennial Achievement*. St. Paul, Minn. : North Central Pub. Co., 1952.

Congregational

Eisenach, George J. *A History of the German Congregational Churches in the United States*. Yankton, S.D.: the Pioneer Press, 1938.

Hadden, Archibald. *Congregationalism in Minnesota 1851-1891*. Minneapolis: the Beard-Hudson Printing Co., 1891.

Lutheran

Nelson, E. Clifford, and Eugene L. Fevold. *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian Americans: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 2 vols. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960.

Methodist

Hill, Rev. J. Wesley. *Twin City Methodism: A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Minneapolis and St. Paul Minn.* Minneapolis: Price Bros. Publishing Co, 1895.

Mormons (Church of Latter Day Saints)

Willes, Fayone B. *Minnesota Mormons: A History of the Minneapolis Minnesota Stake*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Minneapolis Minnesota Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, 1990.

Norwegian

Hodnefield, Jacob. *A Short Historical Sketch of Trinity Lutheran Church: 1870-1922*. St. Paul: s.p., 1922.

Presbyterian

Edwards, Maurice D. *History of the Synod of Minnesota, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.* The Synod, 1927.

Swedish

Anders, John. *The Origin and History of Swedish Religious Organizations in Minnesota, 1853-1885*. Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1932.

Anderson, Philip J. and Dag Blanck. *Swedes in the Twin Cities: Immigrant Life and Minnesota's Urban Frontier*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001.

Maps

Bennett, L.G. *Map of Ramsey Co., MN.* Chicago: Chas. Shober and Co., 1867.

Hopkins, G.M. *Atlas of the City of Saint Paul, MN.* Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins Co., 1885.

_____. *Atlas of the City of Saint Paul, MN.* Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins Co., 1916.

St. Paul City Planning Board. *Institutional Survey.* In the *Plan of Saint Paul*, St. Paul City Planning Board (1922), 63.

Notes

¹ Henry Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity* (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), 496.

² See Castle, 515-521 and C. C. Andrews, ed. *History of St. Paul, Minnesota* (Syracuse, N.Y. : D. Mason and Co., 1890), 484.

³ Sarah Rubenstein, "French Canadians and French," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 44-45.

⁴ Rev. James Michael Reardon, *The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul: from Earliest Origin to Centennial Achievement* (St. Paul, Minn.: North Central Pub. Co., 1952, 582-85.

⁵ Rubenstein, 49.

⁶ Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Germans," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 169-70.

⁷ Ann Regan, "The Irish," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 140.

⁸ Regan, 140.

⁹ John G. Rice, "Old Stock Americans," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 55.

¹⁰ Rice, 57-58.

¹¹ Rice, 67.

¹² Castle, 531.

¹³ Castle, 534.

¹⁴ Castle, 540.

¹⁵ Hyman Berman, "The Jews," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 489.

¹⁶ Berman, 489.

¹⁷ Jon Butler, "Communities and Congregations: the Black Church in St. Paul," *Journal of Negro History* 56, vol. 2 (April 1971), 119.

¹⁸ David Vassar Taylor, "The Blacks," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 75.

¹⁹ Andrews, 491.

²⁰ See Alan Lathrop, "Edward Payton Bassford, Architect (1837-1912)," *Architecture Minnesota* (Jan-Feb 1977), 37-41.

²¹ Larry Millett, *Lost Twin Cities* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press), 44.

²² Castle, 535.

²³ Castle, 535.

²⁴ Castle 535.

²⁵ Andrews, 500.

²⁶ Rice, 262.

²⁷ Rice, 262.

²⁸ On Swedish immigrants and their religious affiliation in St. Paul see Mark A. Granquist, "As Others Saw Them: Swedes and American Religion in the Twin Cities," in Philip J. Anderson, *Swedes in the Twin Cities* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 270-285.

-
- ²⁹ Paul Clifford Larson, "Architectural History of St. Paul, Chapter II" (manuscript prepared for St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission), 10-11.
- ³⁰ Hill, 355-56. See also Donald R. Torbert, *Significant Architecture in the History of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Planning Commission, 1969), 72.
- ³¹ See *Architect, Builder and Decorator*, vol. 8, 1894.
- ³² Millett, 208.
- ³³ Paul Clifford Larson, *Minnesota Architect: the Life and Work of Clarence H. Johnston* (Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical Society Press, 1996), 170-171.
- ³⁴ John Wesley Hill, *Twin City Methodism: A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn.* (Minneapolis: Price Bros. Publishing Co, 1895), 36.
- ³⁵ "A Brief History of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church," *St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church Bulletin*, Vol. XI, No. 8 (December 1937), 3-6.
- ³⁶ Robert E. Hoag, "Churches of St. Paul: A Directory," alphabetical listing chapter, 5.
- ³⁷ Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, "The Norwegians," June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 232.
- ³⁸ Castle, 537.
- ³⁹ Larson, 107.
- ⁴⁰ Theodore Saluoutos, "The Greeks," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 477.
- ⁴¹ Deborah L. Miller, "Middle Easterners," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 517.
- ⁴² Vecoli, "The Italians," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 449.
- ⁴³ Vecoli, 450.
- ⁴⁴ Vecoli, 451.
- ⁴⁵ Vecoli, 458-459
- ⁴⁶ Louis M. de Gryse and Anne R. Kaplan, "The Romanians," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 441.
- ⁴⁷ C. Winston Chrislock, "The Czechs," in June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 342.
- ⁴⁸ Keith P. Dyrud, "East Slavs," in Holmquist, *They Chose Minnesota*, 410 and 414. See also U.S. Works Progress Administration, Minnesota, Historical Records Survey: Churches, 1936-41 "The Russian Serbian Holy Trinity Orthodox Church," May 1936.
- ⁴⁹ U.S. Works Progress Administration, Minnesota, Historical Records Survey: Churches, 1936-41, "International Righteous Government Movement," Dec 1936.
- ⁵⁰ See Millett, 160-63.