

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 27 1986

date entered DEC 1 1986

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

1. Name

historic Christian Record Building (LC13:F3-113)

and/or common Union Bank and Trust Company Offices

2. Location

street & number 3705 South 48th Street n/a not for publication

city, town Lincoln n/a vicinity of

state NE code 031 county Lancaster code 109

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 checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Union Bank and Trust Company

street & number 3643 South 48th Street

city, town Lincoln n/a vicinity of state NE

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number 555 South 10th Street

city, town Lincoln state NE

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date on-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state NE

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Christian Record Building in the College View neighborhood of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, is a two story brick and limestone structure of rectangular plan with a full basement. Built in 1936 (per cornerstone and Lincoln Building Permit #24836) on a corner lot opposite the campus of Union College, it displays elements of the Art Deco style, especially in the symmetrical, limestone east facade. The other, red brick facades have irregular fenestration, with limestone sills and lintels. The north side, facing Bancroft Street, constitutes a secondary but important facade, with irregular but balanced fenestration and a projecting entrance bay. The exterior of the building has a high degree of integrity, while the interior has been substantially altered. This nomination contains one contributing building.

The Christian Record Building is a two-story, flat-roofed structure of rectangular plan measuring approximately 40 feet wide (north-south) and 56 feet deep (east-west). The building site slopes down from east to west, providing grade-level access from the west to the full basement story.

The principal, east facade of three bays is sheathed in yellow limestone, cut in large, smoothly dressed ashlar blocks. The tripartite configuration is underscored by tapered pilaster strips that frame the bays and by a stepped parapet. The configuration is echoed in the tripartite east windows and three-light north and east doors. Both of those original wooden doors have three vertical lights, with the central one taller than the flanking pair, repeating the pattern of the east facade.

On the east, the central bay contains a recessed entry with sidelights and transom. Above the doorway is a fluted aluminum sign board. Historic photos show that this band was an early addition (ca. 1950) and that it formerly provided a base for individual red letters, probably illuminated with neon, spelling "CHRISTIAN RECORD." On the second floor above the entrance are three windows, with a wide central one flanked by two very narrow sash. Centered on the parapet is the inscription "CHRISTIAN RECORD" carved in the stone. The side bays of the east facade also feature tripartite windows within a single opening. All the windows on the building are double-hung sliding sash, with a 6-over-6 configuration on the secondary facades and a variety of heights and widths on the east front, ranging from 2-over-2 (second floor) and 2-over-3 (first floor) in the narrow side lights of the tripartite windows to 8-over-8 in the second floor central window and 6-over-9 on the first floor. The east facade is further embellished with vertical lines incised in the stone, between the first and second story windows on the side bays, alongside the entrance, and between the central windows.

The other sides of the building are faced with red brick and trimmed with limestone sills and lintels. The north side facing Bancroft Street has six bays, irregularly spaced, with a projecting entrance bay near the center. This bay is further emphasized by a step in the parapet; the doorway itself is framed in limestone. The south facade has five bays of single and double windows. The rear, west side includes a ground-level entrance and a plain, new (1986) brick stairtower, replacing an exterior wooden staircase.

[SEE CONTINUATION SHEET]

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On the builder's plans, the basement was to include a garage, laundry room, rest room, and large unmarked space accessible by a large west doorway which probably was the shipping room. The first floor accommodated a library, proofreader's office, stereotype room for producing the braille printing plates, and large, open space, probably the press and collating room. The top floor provided the manager's and stenographer's offices and a sizable, two-bedroom apartment. The principal stairway is directly inside the east entrance; a secondary stair (since removed) opened off the north vestibule.

The interior was substantially altered after the Christian Record Association moved to new quarters in 1963. The interior was subdivided and altered for numerous offices; tenants included a beauty salon. The interior partitions were again rearranged in the 1986 adaptation of the building as an operations office and cafeteria for a nearby bank. In the few areas that survive relatively unchanged, such as the front vestibule and main stairway, textured plaster walls and simple woodwork appear to be original finishes.

The exterior retains a high degree of integrity, including original windows and east and north doors. Small basement windows on the north and south sides have been bricked in. On the west (rear), a central, windowless brick stairtower has been added and a large ground-level entrance has been bricked in.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1936	<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 1936 Builder/Architect Felix A. Lorenz

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Christian Record Building is significant in the area of social/humanitarian services for its association with an early and longtime publisher of reading materials for the blind, including the oldest continuously published braille periodical in the U. S., the Christian Record (Criterion A). Furthermore, the building is locally significant in the area of architecture as an example of the Art Deco style as designed and built by a local contractor (Criterion C).

The Christian Record Association was founded in 1899 in Battle Creek, Michigan, with support from the Seventh-Day Adventist General Conference, at a time when virtually all braille publishers in the U. S. were offshoots of schools for the blind. The founder was A. O. Wilson (1873-1957), an Adventist who was blinded by diphtheria as a child. He attended the Nebraska School for the Blind in Nebraska City and was trained as a piano tuner. After graduation he pursued further religious study, but was frustrated by the lack of reading material in braille. He appealed to the Adventist General Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan, and persuaded it to purchase a stereotyper in 1897, just four years after the invention of that machine which produced braille printing plates. Wilson produced a few religious tracts, then in 1899 received support from the General Conference to commence a monthly magazine--the Christian Record. The first issue of 75 copies was produced in January 1900 in Battle Creek, using stereotyped plates to emboss paper run through a modified, hand-operated washing machine wringer.

In 1900 the General Conference Bulletin stated the purpose of the new magazine as "to educate, and to suggest lines of work that may supply many blind people with an independent livelihood." Helen Keller wrote to the magazine in 1911 that "I rejoice in the encouragement which you have given to the blind to be as self-supporting as possible." She also commended Christian Record's "messages of love and peace..." and "cheery stimulating spirit...." The magazine followed its own recommendations by employing blind editors, stereotypists, proofreaders, and other workers throughout its history.

Christian Record Association remained in Michigan four years, as circulation of the magazine grew to 500. Then as part of a general movement in the Seventh Day Adventist Church to decentralize from Battle Creek, the Association relocated to College View, Nebraska, a strongly Adventist community organized around Union College (founded 1891). The Central Union Conference, the regional branch of the Adventist church, was also headquartered in College View. Monthly circulation grew from 600-700 in 1905 to 2,000 by 1908 for the temperance-oriented magazine featuring condensed news, bible chapters, and Adventist study lessons. A circulating library service was added in 1909, taking advantage of a federal law of 1904 which exempted books for the blind from postal charges. When the exemption was extended in 1912 to all blind publications, the modest subscription charge for the Christian Record magazine was permanently eliminated.

[SEE CONTINUATION SHEET]

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lincoln, Nebraska

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	4	6	9	8	0	4	0	4	5	1	6	3	6	5
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 This property is described as the east half of Lots 1 and 2, Block 11, College View Addition to the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, including all historically associated property.

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

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edward F. Zimmer, Ph. D. / Historic Preservation Planner

organization Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Dept. date Sept. 15, 1986

street & number 555 So. 10th Street telephone (402)471-7491

city or town Lincoln state NE

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 James A. [Signature]

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date 10/22/86

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

Entered in the National Register

date 12/1/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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From an early date, principal support for the Association came from donations from businesses, solicited by field representatives. The first such efforts were made in 1904 and the system of field representatives was formalized in 1915. The Adventist General Conference voted a yearly appropriation for Christian Record in 1911, placing it on similar footing to other Adventist missionary projects. Around the time of the construction of the Christian Record Building in 1936, the annual appropriation ceased, replaced by an annual or biennial offering by Adventist congregations to support the publication of purely sectarian material. The Christian Record and other publications of the Association evolved into a "benevolent nonsectarian enterprise," (Seventh Day Adventist Encyclopedia) in keeping with its public support.

The Association was housed at four different sites on the Adventist Union College campus and on nearby Prescott Street before building its own separate facility in 1936 at 48th and Bancroft Streets. None of these earlier offices is extant, leaving the Christian Record Building as the only historic structure associated with the organization (Criterion A). The location west of the campus reflected the organization's continued connection with and support from the Adventist Church, while the separate building expressed the Association's diverse support and separate incorporation (1942). By 1950, four publications were issued from the building with a total monthly circulation of nearly 10,000, including a magazine specifically for children and 5,000 copies of Christian Record. In 1958, the monthly circulation of 18,000 included subscribers in all 48 states and 52 foreign countries. The organization moved to new quarters in the College View neighborhood of Lincoln in 1963 and changed its name to Christian Record Braille Foundation, Inc. "Talking" magazines for non-braille reading blind were added in 1955, large print publications in 1959, and services for the hearing impaired in 1980.

While the Christian Record Building's primary significance rests in the Association that it housed, it also has local architectural significance as an example of the Art Deco style, designed and built by a local contractor (Criterion C). The building permit, associated drawings, and cornerstone identify Felix A. Lorenz as both designer and builder. Lorenz was an Adventist and a graduate of Union College who engaged in religious work prior to a building career that spanned ca. 1925-1940. His known works are mostly houses in southeast Lincoln, especially in College View. He resumed theological studies in the '40s and was a preacher and teacher in Texas and California until his recent death. Lincoln has a relatively small number of Art Deco buildings, mostly in the downtown area and almost exclusively the design products of Lincoln architectural offices--"academic" designs on the academic/popular/vernacular/folk design continuum. The Christian Record Building is a locally rare example of the style credibly executed at the "popular" level by a designer/builder without architectural schooling.

A historic rehabilitation project has recently been completed on the building to convert it into offices for a local bank. In connection with that project, the National Park Service made a preliminary determination on May 14, 1986, that the Christian Record Building "appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register..."

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Bibliography

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Interview with Prof. Everett Dick, Ph. D., historian of Union College and history professor emeritus, by E. F. Zimmer, 9-9-86.

Also see Journal-Star, 3-30-1958, 2D;
Magazine of the Midlands (Omaha World-Herald), 3-8-1970, 8;
Journal-Star, 12-13-1970, 1B, 2B;
Omaha World-Herald, 2-28-71, 10B.