

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **First Presbyterian Church of Connell**
Common Name: North Franklin Heritage Museum
Address: 350 West Adams Street
City: Connell County: Franklin

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

Property is on the NE corner of North Third Avenue and West Adams Street and faces West Adams Street. Property has parking in front of the building including handicap parking with sidewalk to back entrance for handicap access.

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: North Franklin Heritage Museum
Address: PO Box 1185
City: Connell State: WA Zip: 99326

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: 109811205
Boundary Justification: CONNELL LOTS 13 TO 16 BLOCK 13 TOGETHER WITH SOUTH HALF OF VACATED EAST/WEST ALLEY AND TOGETHER WITH A PORTION OF LOTS 11 & 12 DAF: COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 12, SAID POINT BEING THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE ALONG THE WESTERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID LOT 12 AND LOT 11, N 00°46'00"W, 35.20'; THENCE S89°19'32"E, 50.71'; THENCE S01°36'35"W, 16.34' TO A POINT ON THE SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID LOT 12; THENCE ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY S89°13'59"W, 72.60' TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, TOGETHER WITH THE EAST HALF OF ALLEY ADJOINING AS VACATED BY CITY OF CONNELL AFN-1866147. BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT DONE BETWEEN 109811063 AND 109811205 FOR 2019

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Shelly Harper, Executive Director of North Franklin Heritage Museum
Address: PO Box 682
City / State / Zip: Connell WA 99326 Phone: 509-395-9594
Email: northfranklinmuseum@gmail.com Nomination Date: 8/15/2023

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- ☒ building ☐ structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.) ☐ district
☐ object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.) ☐ cemetery/burial site
☐ historic site (site of an important event) ☐ archaeological site
☐ traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)
☐ cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- ☐ The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.
- ☒ The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.
- ☐ The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.
- ☐ The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.
- ☐ The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).
- ☐ The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.
- ☒ The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.
- ☐ The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.
- ☐ Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.

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G) Property Description

The First Presbyterian Church of Connell is located just west of the downtown core of the community of Connell in Franklin County. It sits at the northeast corner of W Adams Street and N 3rd Street at 350 W Adams St (originally called Main Street). The lot is steeply sloped and falls down in elevation towards the east. Landscaping on site consists of a scattering of trees, and green lawn areas, supplemented with small bushes. The lower portion of the site has been enclosed with a decorative iron fence.

The church, which faces W Adams Street, has a stone rubble basalt foundation which, due to the slopping lot, is exposed on the east and north facades. Per historic images the foundation was also originally exposed on the south and west facades as well.

Rectangular in plan, the building form is broken by the attachment of a large steeple angled on the southeast corner of the building which serves as the main entry to the church. The building has a wood shingle bellcast-hipped roof with boxed eaves. Gables with cornice returns supported by double sets of knee braces highlight the south and east facades. These gables are further defined by pointed trefoil arched fretwork. Atop with main hip roof is a small copula with four vented sides and a bellcast hip roof. Secondary dormers are found on the north and west elevations. These are clad in coursed singles and contain multi-lite diamond pane-over-one double hung wood windows. The west dormer windows are separated by a partially exposed brick chimney which rises above the gable roof.

The main body of the church is clad in horizontal clapboards and simple corner trim. Inside the two decorate gables are sets of Palladian windows with diamond pane upper sashes. Above these the siding transitions to rows of decorative cut shingles. Fish-scale, half-cove and square-cut shingles can be found. The rear northeast corner of the building boasts a wall dormer, also highlighted by decorative cut shingles. Here a round bulls-eye window allows light into the second-floor spaces. Attached to the rear of the building on the north facade is a modern open deck, recently covered with a wooden pergola. This deck sits approximately seven feet above the ground level.

The angled steeple faces southeast welcoming visitors from the downtown core. A set of modern double doors are protected by a shallow hip roof supported by knee braces. The rectangular steeple transitions to an octagonal shape above the second-floor level giving away to an open belfry. Highlighted by arched openings, the steeple is capped with a bellcast octagonal roof crested with a decorative weather vane. The existing bell is a replacement, but with a period-style cast iron swinging bell. The columns for the belfry are clad in stained wood shingles.

The inside of the church retains its original wood floors, painted door and window trim. The sanctuary space is highlighted by beadboard wainscotting and an octagonal raised alter area. Separating the main sanctuary space are sets of tall 8-paneled bi-fold doors

which lead to additional rooms. Ceilings have all been upgraded to modern sheetrock. Second-floor spaces remain intact with original trim and wood doors which are unpainted.

H) Significance

The First Presbyterian Church of Connell is historically significant for its direct connection to the spiritual needs and aspirations of a small community in Washington state. Completed c.1905, the church also serves as an example of rural ecclesiastical architecture which is found in numerous rural communities across the state. It was built by local community members and holds the distinction of being the oldest surviving church structure in Franklin County. Services at the church were conducted in English, a first for any other congregation in the county at the time. All others were primarily conducted in German and periodically had English speaking services.

The community of Connell began in the early 1880s, after the Northern Pacific (NP) Railway established a way station at the future site called "Camp 39 Mile Post". Shortly thereafter the name was changed to "Palouse Junction" when the tracks were joined with the Oregon Railway & Navigation Co.'s (OR&N) - Columbia & Palouse line. The junction was unique on NP's Ainsworth—Spokane line, since it was not located on a river. However, it served as the gateway to the rich agricultural fields of the Palouse (via the OR&N's line into Washtucna). Soon the junction slowly began to develop into a community after the first transcontinental passenger and freight train passed through the area on September 8, 1883.

The earliest residents were railroad service men and weary travelers, who supported a small hotel and a saloon. Outside of the future town were a scattering of sheep and cattle ranchers, as well as dryland wheat farmers. On December 13, 1886, Abram M. Vance, a telegraph operator, submitted an application to establish a post office at the junction. The name chosen for the post office was "Connell", derived from Joseph H. Connell, who was the Northern Pacific Railway station agent. The name was approved on January 16, 1887, and two days later Vance was appointed as the first postmaster of Connell. With no post-office building, the town's grocery store managed the mail by emptying a sack on the counter. It was then sorted and routed to other post offices for the nearby communities to pick up.

While the Northern Pacific Railroad ceased service to the station in 1890, the Union Pacific Railroad took over juncture in 1901, and the town began to grow again. A school district was formed in 1901, and that same year, the first weekly newspaper was published in the community. In 1902 the Franklin County Bank was incorporated in Connell, and the investors established the Connell Land & Improvement Company with a capital stock of \$20,000. The Improvement Company officially platted the town of Connell (on the east side of the tracks, even though most of the existing buildings were on the west side of the tracks) and began selling lots on January 15, 1903. Initially lots were sold between \$50 and \$300 depending on their location. The streets that ran east and west were named Main, Franklin, and Mottet. North and south streets were labeled A through G Streets.

Growth of the community was spurred by sheepherders who utilized the railway line to ship wool to far away markets. Among them were the Mottet brothers, who in 1902 sold 90,000 pounds of wool to the Pendleton Scouring Mills. That year they also sold

2,800 head of mutton for slaughter. Johann Schloomer and his brother Detrich, brought an additional 40,000 lbs of wool to be shipped out that same year. By then, the population of the community was estimated at 350 people.

By this time, Connell rivaled Pasco in terms of importance to Franklin County. An effort was even put forth to move the county seat to the community. However, after much of the business district was destroyed by fire in July 1905, the effort failed. The business sections were rebuilt using brick and Connell was officially incorporated on November 28, 1910.

Many of the newcomers to the community were German-born families. Among them was Reverend Adam Buehler a Methodist minister from Michigan who established a farm outside of Connell in 1900. He attracted others of the same faith to the community and more families arrived. These included the Finkbeiners, the Mittelstaedts, the Oldenburgs, the Frischknechts, the Shoms, the Nelsons, the Yagers, the Dillings, the Klugs, the Reederes, the Pepiots, the Fiegenbaums, the Langes, and the Buckleys.

With the seeds of a religious community established, by 1901 the Methodists began building the first church in the community; dedicated on March 29, 1902.

It was during this initial period of growth that the First Presbyterian Church of Connell was also established. With the help of Rev. David O. Ghormley (head of Presbyterian Synod of Washington), the Rev. William O. Forbes (superintendent of Sabbath School Missions) began to visit several communities in Franklin County with the goal of establishing various parishes. Rev. Forbes would typically first establish a Sunday school program, with the hope that a more formal church organization would follow. With the help of the Sunday School Missionary of Walla Walla, Rev. Forbes established a Sunday School in Connell in February 1902.

Early on classes were often held above the dry goods store of William A. Campbell. He and his wife, Iola, whom had come to Connell in 1900 from Illinois by way of Minnesota, would become instrumental in helping establish a permanent home for the soon-to-be congregation.

After several meetings, eighteen members officially organized as the First Presbyterian Church of Connell on March 11, 1904. William H. Panhorst and Elijah C. Brayford were elected elders. William A. Campbell, H.O. Cecil, Robert Dick, Samuel T. Bailie and C.T. Hutson were elected and installed as trustees.

With the help of Rev. James Greenslade, morning and evening services were held at the schoolhouse. Quickly the leaders of the church purchased a lot on the west side of the railroad tracks, just two blocks from the downtown core. Specific details about the construction of the building and whom may be the architect for the building has not been found. Based on the founding date, maps and other anecdotal data, as well as newspaper articles that note the building was still under construction in December of 1904, it is likely the church building was completed in 1905.

For the next 75+ years, the church became a second home to three different denominations, hosting a variety of celebrations, weddings, birthday, reunions, meetings and classes. Like many rural community churches, First Presbyterian Church, its first owner, the for most of its existence did not have a full-time pastoral staff due to budget issues. Instead, the day-to-day needs of the congregation were handled by volunteers and the Word was preached by itinerant ministers who would

travel to various churches around the region on a circuit. Various Whitworth professors from Walla Walla also filled in where needed, and soon-to-be graduated seminary students were assigned summer internships at the church.

In 1963, after the congregation dwindled to 16 members, the Presbyterian Church of Connell decided to disband and they sold the building to the Baptist Church who had also been utilizing the space for several years. Eventually the Baptist congregation outgrew the space and built a new building at another location in Connell. The Baptist Church then sold the building to the Assembly of God Church in 1974. They continued to use the space until they moved to a new building in 1980. The following year, the church was sold to John & Betty Marron, private citizens who converted the building to use as a residence and art studio (called "Under the Bell"). Reportedly they sold the bell to St. Paul's Catholic Church in Eltopia where it remains to this day.

The art studio business did not last long, and by the late 1980's the building was beginning to show signs of disrepair. Inspired by the 1989 Washington State Centennial, a group of Connell residents (who called themselves the Committee of twenty; later called the Connell Heritage Foundation) saw the value of the building to the community and sought to purchase the church privately. Plans for the long-term use of the building would come later. Led by Jill Klindworth and Marcie Davis, a group of like-minded friends formed a non-profit foundation and contributed a total of \$5,000 to purchase the building.

Once the purchase was secured, much discussion followed centered around the future use of the building. For several years the group tried unsuccessfully to obtain grants to rehabilitate the building. Desperate for funding and additional support, they turned to the City of Connell who agreed in July of 1994 to take ownership of the building and pay the back taxes. While studying long-term options for the building, the city secured the facility to protect it from vandalism.

After much fundraising and sweat equity by a variety of citizens, coupled with work from inmates who were on work release from the Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, renovation began in 1999. Inmate Carl Sauer, a skilled carpenter, guided his fellow inmates through most of the work which included resetting the stone foundation, installing new wiring and plumbing, reroofing and painting. The first phase of the restoration was celebrated on September 9, 2000. Additional interior work followed, and after the assembly of a collection, the museum finally opened to the public for the first time on September 24, 2002.

In 2018 the Connell Heritage Museum purchased the property back from the City of Connell and continued to renovate the building. That year the building was painted on the outside, a new HVAC system and windows were installed, and a new cedar porch was built on the back of the church building. That same year they also moved a c.1910 home to the property and have since added an (40'x40') annex building which holds additional local artifacts and memorabilia. As a homage to the railway history of the community, the museum installed a section of railroad ties and added a Burlington Northern Caboose (BN#10764, 1973) to the site in 2003. In 2023, the Museum was renamed the North Franklin Heritage Museum.

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I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (books, articles, newspapers):

"Troxel-Larson" Connell Statesman – February 25, 1904.

"A Presbyterian Church" Connell Statesman – May 26, 1904.

"Organize Church at Connell" Tacoma Daily Ledger – May 29, 1904.

Boyd, Rev. Robert History of the Synod of Washington of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 1835-1909, Library of the Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ – 1910.

Church Information Form: Department of Ministerial Relations – March 5, 1957.

"First Presbyterian Church" Connell Statesman – June 12, 1958.

"IOLA Meets" Franklin County Graphic – January 52, 1959.

"First Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – January 15, 1959.

"First Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – April 14, 1959.

"First Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – June 18, 1959.

"First Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – September 24, 1959.

"Church School Leaders" Franklin County Graphic – December 24, 1959.

"First Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – July 9, 1959.

"Mr. Douglas McGrath, supply pastor of the Presbyterian Church" Franklin County Graphic – September 24, 1961.

"Church Closes Doors After Half Century" Franklin County Graphic – October 3, 1963.

"Connell's Future tied to Tri-Cities: Progress 1981" Tri City Herald – ?????, 1981.

"To Preserve Connell's History, Residents Want to Buy Old Church" Franklin County Graphic – March 16, 1989.

"This Old Church – Thoughts from the Public on it's Destiny" Franklin County Graphic – July, 1989.

"Connell Working to Restore Old Church" Tri-City Herald – March 23, 1991.

"Heritage Foundation Plans Spring Benefit Auction: Proceeds to Help Repair Former Church Building" Franklin County Graphic – November 6, 1997.

"Auction/Spaghetti Feed Planned to Benefit Church Restoration" Franklin County Graphic – February 26, 1998.

"Old Church Museum Once Again Under Renovation" Franklin County Graphic – June 3, 1999.

"Reverence for History" Tri City Herald – August 16, 1999.

"Church Project in Connell Better Late Than Never" Tri City Herald – September 9, 2000.

"Old Presbyterian Church Museum Dedicated During Festival Activities" Franklin County Graphic – September 24, 2000.

"Connell Museum is Named" Franklin County Graphic – August 15, 2002.

No Author List of Connell High School Graduates and early History of the Schools, Community and Franklin County: 1917-1951

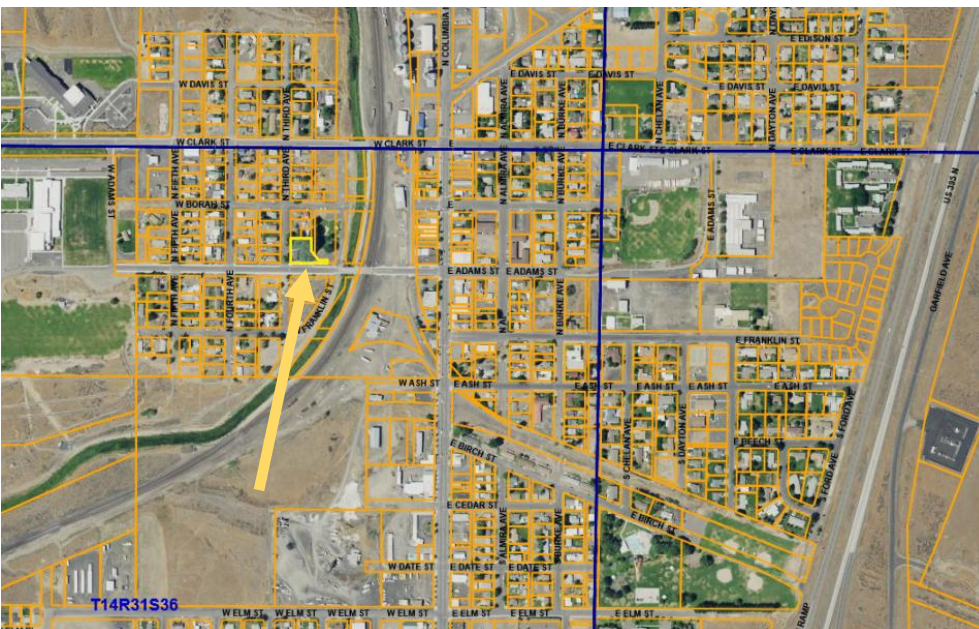
Oral History/Interviews:

None

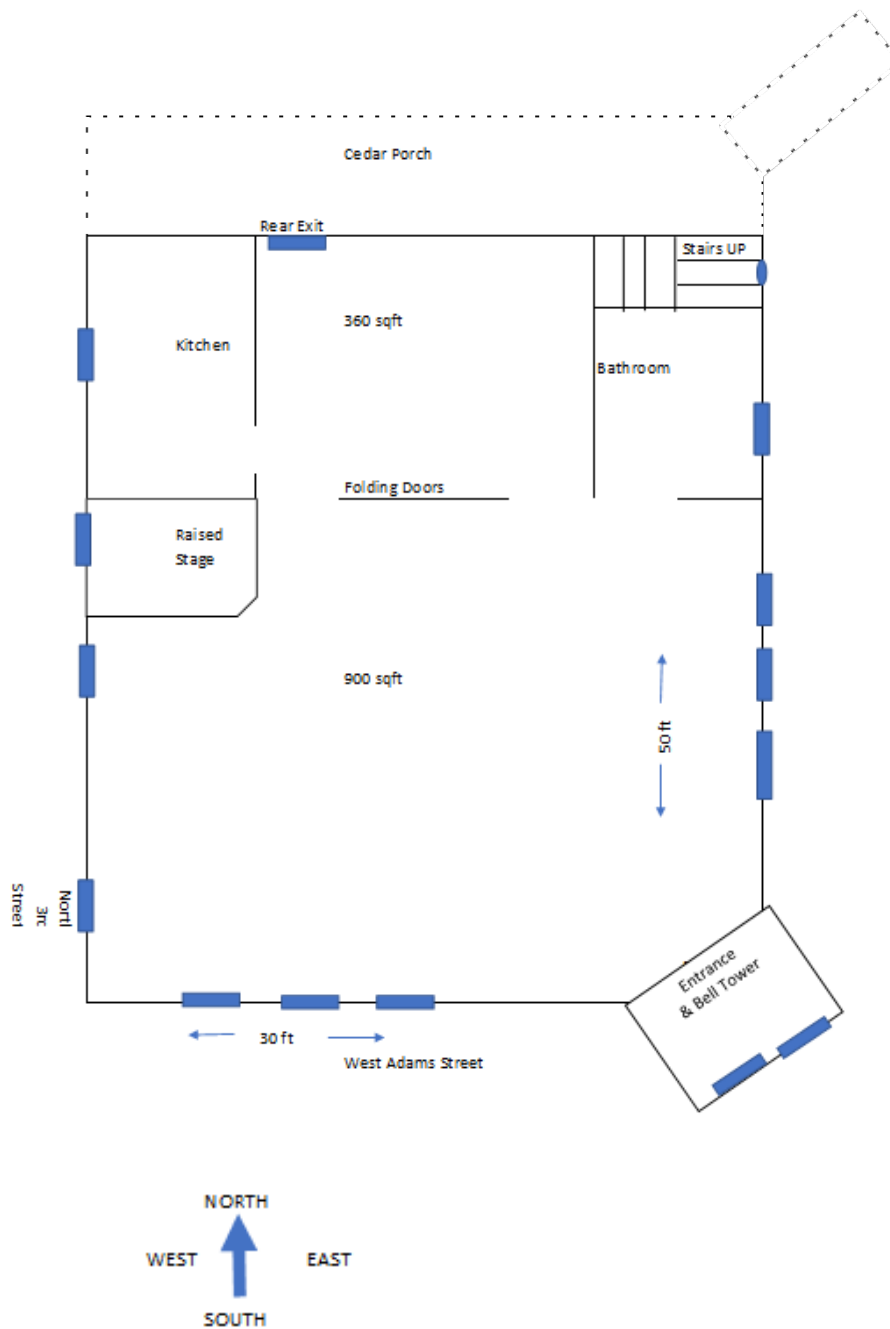
Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (min 5 x 7 digital images, 300 DPI). Include a current map – appropriate Google Earth/U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)



350 West Adams Street – Connell, Franklin County, Washington
Parcel No. 109811205



Vicinity Map - 350 West Adams Street – Connell, Franklin County, Washington

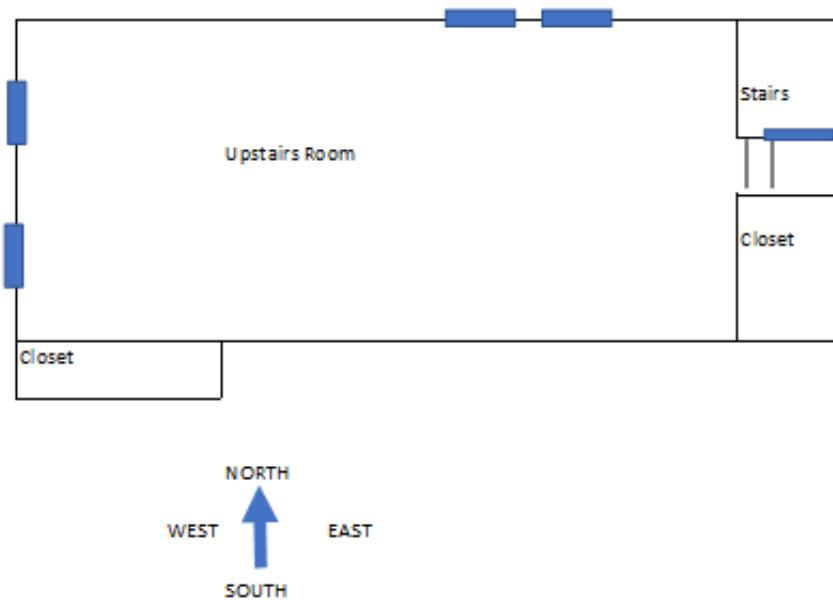


First Presbyterian Church of Connell

305 W Adams St
Connell, WA

Floor Plan

First floor

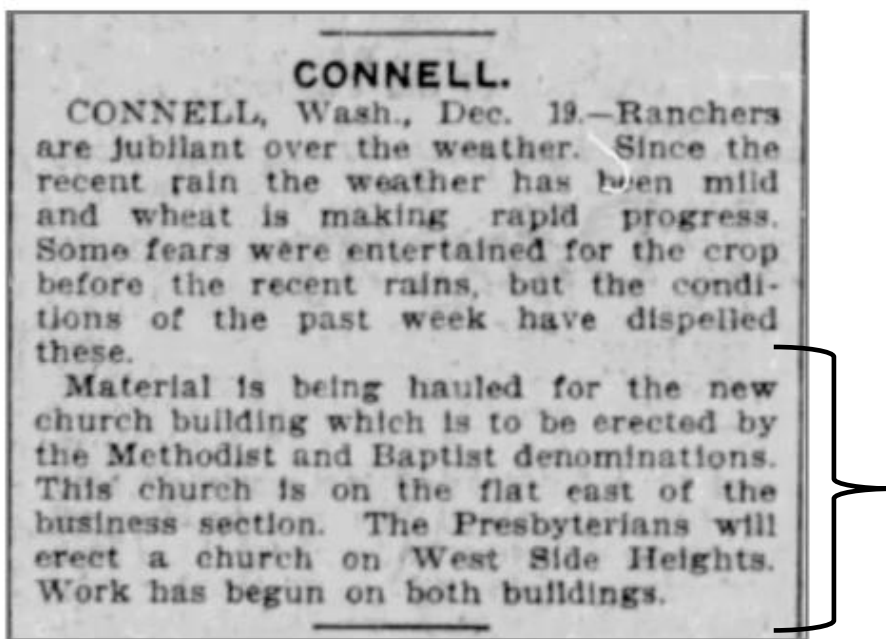


First Presbyterian Church of Connell

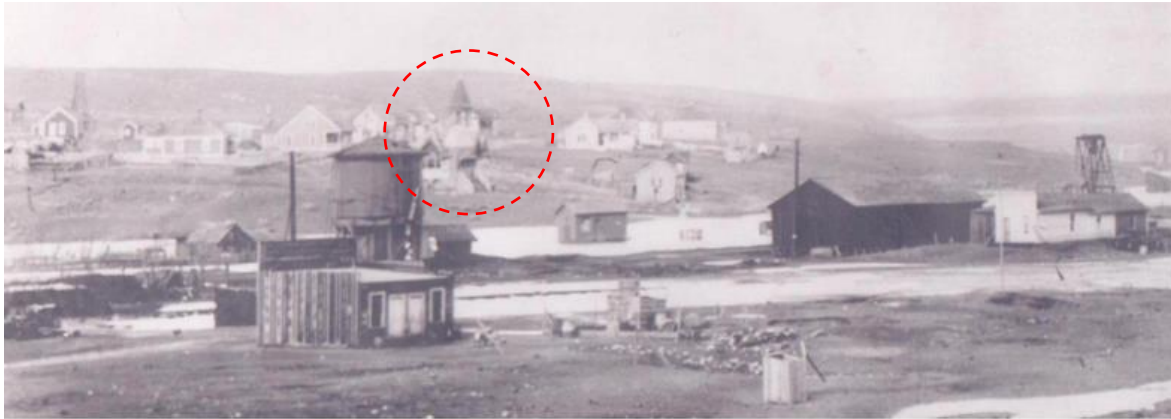
305 W Adams St
Connell, WA

Floor Plan

Second floor



Spokesman Review – December 23, 1904



View of Connell showing Presbyterian Church (background) in proximity to railroad station and water tower – c. 1906



Sheriff John Hartung driving sacks of wheat to railroad station. Presbyterian Church is at far right in foreground – c 1910.



Main Street, looking north, Connell, Franklin County. – c. 1905. Image courtesy of Washington Rural Heritage



First Presbyterian Church of Connell – c. 1906



Congregation on steps of First Presbyterian Church c.1917



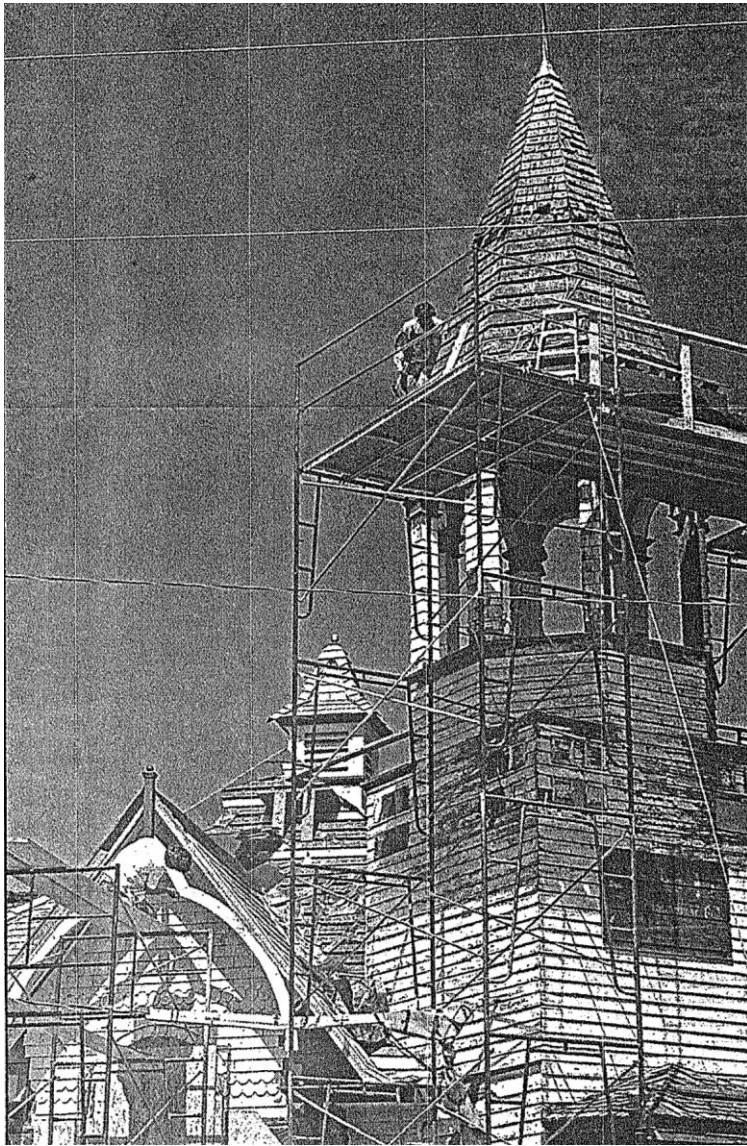
First Presbyterian Church of Connell, c.1910



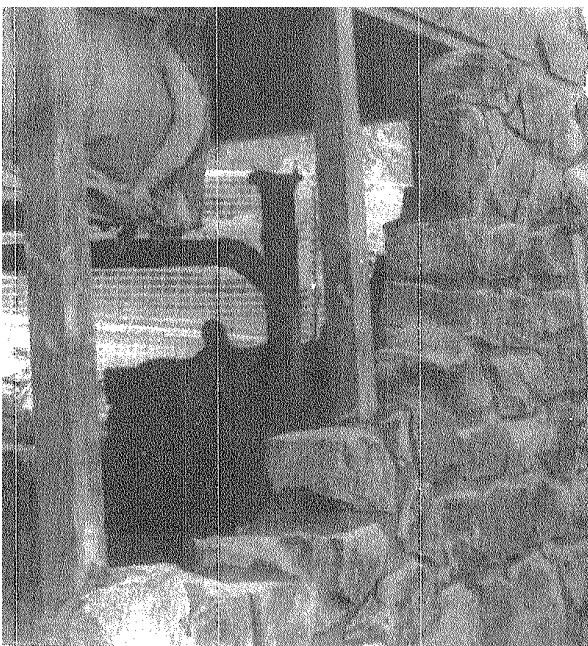
Winter scene at First Presbyterian Church – c. 1955



Downtown Connell looking north at the intersection of E Adams St & N. Columbia Ave – c. 1965



Church undergoing restoration – Tri-City Herald – August 16, 1999



Church foundation repairs – Tri-City Herald – August 16, 1999



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2003 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA after foundation/steeple/restoration project



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA Original round window on east side of building from inside



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA Original round window on east side of building from outside



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2005 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA inside church building



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2018 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA Inside church building after floors sanded to original color



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2020 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA Inside 2018



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2020 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA Upstairs of building, minister living area (now museum office) 2018



*North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA
closeups of bell tower/entrance*



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



North Franklin Heritage Museum Dec. 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



North Franklin Heritage Museum 2022 – 350 West Adams Street – Connell WA



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