

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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| First Church of Christ, Scientist |
| ----- |
| <i>Name of Property</i> |
| Reno, Washoe County, NV |
| ----- |
| <i>County and State</i> |
| 99000939 |
| ----- |
| <i>NR Reference Number</i> |

Additional documentation for First Church of Christ, Scientist (NRIS 99000939)

The following paragraphs should be added to Section 8, pages 6-7.

Since the original nomination for Reno's First Church of Christ, Scientist was written in 1999, additional details about the funding of the church, the selection of the architect, and principal donor Luella Garvey have come to light. In particular, a researcher recently located a handwritten history of the church's construction in the church administrative archives. In addition, the church should be considered eligible at the statewide level of significance for its association with Paul R. Williams, as is the case with the Williams-designed Luella Garvey House (NRIS #03001510). Mr. Williams designed more than 15 properties in Nevada and is recognized for his contributions to architecture nationally and internationally.

By 1936, the members of the church recognized the need for a larger and more suitable place of worship. Toward that end, the members appointed the Committee on Church Property to locate a site for a new building. The chairperson of the committee was Anna Frandsen Loomis, a highly esteemed long-time member and Christian Science practitioner (Anonymous, n.d., 1).

The committee identified a number of potential parcels including: lots on Jones at Winter Street, valued at \$13,000; Hill and California Avenue for \$9,000; the Leete property on North Virginia; and the I.O.O.F. lodge and orphanage parcels on Riverside Drive and Ralston. The I.O.O.F. property was especially desirable for its position overlooking the Truckee River. After considerable deliberation, the church membership selected the I.O.O.F. parcels. In order to move forward, the Board of Directors established three more committees, a Building Committee, a Purchasing Committee, and a Selling Committee. The latter was tasked with selling the current church and reading room at 210 Granite Street. It was, quite obviously, the responsibility of the Purchasing Committee to find sufficient funds for the project. Their efforts were rewarded on January 4, 1937, when Mrs. Luella Garvey, who was herself a student of Christian Science, made a gift of \$15,000 towards construction of the church (Anonymous, n.d., 2).

The document in the church archives identifies Mrs. Garvey as living at 450 Rossmore Avenue, Los Angeles and who "having visited Reno and being attracted by the beauty and climate, ect. [sic], had built a lovely home here." Mrs. Garvey was the widow of a wealthy steel magnate, Clayton Garvey, who had died in Pasadena in 1925. What drew her to Reno in the first place had been unknown until recently. Thanks to online newspaper databases, the announcement of the marriage of Mrs. Luella Rhodes Garvey to William Schupp of Seattle in New York on June 2, 1926 was carried in the *Indianapolis News* on the 6th of June, followed a year later by the filing of a divorce suit for Luella Rhodes Schupp vs. William Schupp in the October 28, 1927 issue of the *Reno Evening Gazette*. Who William Schupp was, how he came to meet Mrs. Garvey, and what happened to end the marriage within a year is as yet unknown.

With her final divorce decree, Luella returned to calling herself Mrs. Luella Garvey. Although, she apparently maintained an apartment in Los Angeles, her name appeared in the Reno City Directory and the census at several different addresses in Reno from 1926 until 1934, when she commissioned the Los Angeles architect Paul Revere Williams to design a "large, artistic home" for her at 589-599 California

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Avenue in Reno (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 23 June 1934, 3). In actuality, the home was a duplex, one half of which was occupied by Mrs. Garvey's attorney and friend, Edward Lunsford and his family. The Luella Garvey House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 (Harmon, 2003).

Mrs. Garvey's donation to the First Church of Christ, Scientist allowed the Purchasing Committee to open negotiations with the I.O.O.F. Grand Lodge for the purchase of the parcels. The Church's initial bid was \$15,000, but the Lodge asked \$20,000, to which the Church ultimately acquiesced, paying \$12,000 cash with the remaining \$8,000 to be paid off over three years at 8% interest. Once again, Mrs. Garvey stepped in with an additional \$25,500, allowing the Church to pay for the lots in full and turn the focus on the building itself (Anonymous, n.d., 2-3).

Anna Loomis, the Building Committee chairperson, used lessons from Mary Baker Eddy's teachings as well as biblical accounts of the building of Solomon's temple to aid the committee's identification of the features and elements they wanted for the new building. Several architects attended the Building Committee meetings offering sketches and discussions. The four participating architects were R. Gwynn Officer of Berkeley, California, Paul Revere Williams of Los Angeles, Russell Mills, and Lehman Ferris, both of Reno. Mills and Ferris were well-known and their work highly regarded in Reno. Williams had, by this time, designed two houses in Reno.

On April 19, 1938, the Building Committee unanimously selected Paul Revere Williams. Paul Williams submitted plans on May 2, and on July 2, the Committee chose Walker Boudwin as the building contractor (Anonymous, n.d., 6-7). Williams's estimated cost of the new building was \$83,000, but after review by Mr. Boudwin, it became clear the cost would far exceed that amount. After a delay for the architect to revise the plans to better fit the budget while meeting the needs of the church, ground was broken on September 22, 1938 (Anonymous, n.d., 8-9). Construction took two years to complete and the new church was dedicated on Sunday, November 24, 1940. A \$4,000 grant from Mary Baker Eddy's estate allowed the church to clear all the debts associated with the construction (*Nevada State Journal*, 24 November 1940, 2).

On February 18, 1942, Luella Garvey died in Los Angeles from a stroke she had suffered several weeks before. She had left Reno two months prior to her death to visit her 90-year-old mother. She was survived by her mother and two brothers (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 18 February 1942, 14). Mrs. Garvey's estate, which totaled \$3,500,000, was the largest filed in Nevada at that time (*Pasadena Star-News*, 26 February 1942, 11). Her will made bequests to numerous individuals and organizations in California and Nevada. In addition to the University of Nevada, the Boy Scouts, The Nevada State Orphans' Home in Carson City, the American Red Cross, the Young Women's Christian Association, and others, Mrs. Garvey created a trust fund of \$100,000 to the First Church of Christ, Scientist. The income from the trust was to go for the support and maintenance of the church she funded (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 March 1942, 8).

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Bibliography

The following entries should be added to Section 9, pages 16-18.

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Reno Evening Gazette

1927 Suits filed. 28 October, 1928 (8).

1934 (Sketch) Construction of a large, artistic home. 23 June 1934 (3).

1942 Mrs. Garvey Dies in South. 18 February 1942 (18).

Many Bequests Are Made in Will of Mrs. Garvey. 16 March 1942 (8).

1966 Mrs. Loomis, Native Nevadan, Dies. 24 October 1966 (20)