

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JAN 16 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ryssby

and/or common Ryssby Church

2. Location

street & number ~~North 63rd Street~~ n/a not for publication

city, town ~~vicinity of~~ Boulder

state Colorado code 08 county Boulder code 013

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Longmont

street & number 803 Third Avenue, P. O. Box 327

city, town Longmont n/a vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Boulder County Courthouse

street & number 13th at Spruce Street, P. O. Box 471

city, town Boulder state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Ongoing federal state county local

depository for survey records Colorado Preservation Office

city, town Denver state CO

7. Description

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Ryssby Church is located on a three acre site on the east side of Boulder County's North 63rd Street. The site is surrounded by farmland, principally crop and pasture land. A farm house and improvements which date to the active years of the church are located directly across the road.

The site features the church, a one-room with narthex stone structure of tan sandstone; a cemetery on the back of the property; a large, grassy churchyard lined with shade trees; and two frame outhouses.

The church is rectangular in plan with a square tower/narthex centered on the west end, which originally was the only entrance. Identical Gothic windows were originally installed throughout; four, evenly spaced on the side walls; two on the east wall; and one facing the road in the west wall of the tower. The second window from the east wall of the sanctuary in the south wall of the church was converted into a doorway in the 1960s to provide a fire escape.

Each window is double hung with two over two transparent glazing. A gable roof covers the sanctuary, while a small, bellcast mansard roof topped by a cross covers the tower. Originally, the building had a tall, stone tower topped by a smaller, cubical bell chamber with a bellcast mansard roof. (See historic photo.) Lightning destroyed the upper portion of the original tower shortly after the turn of the century and it was removed and replaced with a gable roof over the vestibule. This roof was removed and replaced with a frame tower in 1969. This tower was patterned after the original and features shingled walls with louvered vents on its three exterior sides. (A new stone tower was structurally prohibitive. (See historic photo.)

Exterior walls are constructed of sandstone quarried from a nearby homestead. Stones are rough-cut and randomly coursed, including those around the windows, except for protruding stone window sills. The roof is of wood frame construction. Tan asphaltic shingles have replaced the original cedar shingles. Window frames and facer boards are wooden, painted white.

The interior features beaded tongue and groove siding applied to a framed ceiling on a flattened barrel-vaulted shape. The original hand-made altar, communion rail, and pews remain, supplemented now with additional pews. The sanctuary also features a pot-belly stove.

Also included within the nomination is the historic cemetery, located in the northeast corner of the church property. It is of an approximate size of 175' (east-west) by 231' (north-south). Boundaries of the cemetery are loosely defined by a grove of trees on the west and an irrigation ditch and fence on the south. The oldest graves date from the mid-1800s. Several of the tombstones indicate the place of the person's birth as Sweden. Some of the gravestones also exhibit verses of scripture in Swedish.

¹In 1914, the steeple was destroyed by lightning. In 1969, a renovation was completed, which included replacing the roof, all walls were reinforced and regouted; and interior walls were replastered. In 1970, the new tower was built by Leland Schneider (contractor).

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1881–82

Builder/Architect Builder: L. P. Kimmons¹

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ryssby, located in rural Boulder County, is the structure most associated with the early Swedish community of Ryssby--the first Swedish settlement in Colorado.² In addition to its religious function, the church served as a central social center for the community during the late 19th and early 20th century period. The design of the building is also of interest in demonstrating vernacular adaptation of traditional Swedish vernacular architecture.

In 1870, Colorado had a total population of 39,864, of which 16.5% or 6,599 were foreign born. The largest groups among the aliens³ were Irish (1,685); German (1,456); and English (1,359), with Swedes numbering only 180.

The first permanent Swedish Lutheran church in Colorado, the Augustana, was in Denver and dates to 1878. (There was a church established in Golden in 1877, which lapsed after a few years.) The church in Ryssby dates also to 1878. Many of the settlers of Ryssby were from the parish of Ryssby in Sweden, from the province of Smaland.

Among the first were eight families who took adjoining homesteads in Left Han Valley to the southwest of Longmont, at a new Ryssby, between 1869 and 1871. This became a Swedish center in northern Colorado. By 1873 the Ryssby settlement included 14 families who had taken up two thousand acres of land. Soon a church was organized. . . Later a church was built modeled in design after the parish church in old Ryssby.

With the passing of the years the congregation declined in numbers and the church was finally abandoned. However, in 1924 the survivors and the descendants of the Ryssby colonists met for a memorial service; this was so successful that the practice of having an annual summer meeting at the old Ryssby church has been continued.⁴

The church in Ryssby had several features similar to the native church in Sweden. Common to both buildings are the floor plans, the tower design, window placement, semi-circular communion railing, and the vaulted ceiling with a distinctive sky-blue coloring. However, there are some differences. The original Swedish church was much larger, had smooth white exterior walls, as compared to the rough-hewn sandstone of the Longmont church, had round arched windows rather than Gothic; and was more elegantly appointed.

The church merged with the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Elim Congregation of Longmont, in 1914, having operated as a joint parish since 1907. In 1936, the Elim Church changed its name to "First Lutheran Church--and is the oldest remaining Lutheran congregation of the Augustina Synod (now part of the Lutheran Church in America) in the Rocky Mountain West.⁵

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Hygiene

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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4	8	2	5	6	0
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4	4	4	3	1	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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4	8	2	5	6	0
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4	4	4	3	0	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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4	8	2	4	4	0
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4	4	4	3	0	3	0
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D

1	3
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4	8	2	4	4	0
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4	4	4	3	1	1	0
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E

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Commencing 34 rods South of the NW Corner of the SW¹/₄ of the NW¹/₄ of Section 14, Township 2 North, Range 70 West of the 6th P.M.; thence South 21 rods; thence East 24 rods and 11 feet; thence North 21 rods; thence West 24 rods and 11 feet to beginning.

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 Stanley O. Elmquist

organization _____ date _____

street & number 2405 29th Ave. telephone home: (303) 330-6679
work: (303) 353-1232 X54

city or town Greeley state Colorado

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 *Babsara Sudler*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 12-28-83

For NPS use only

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

John M. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/16/84

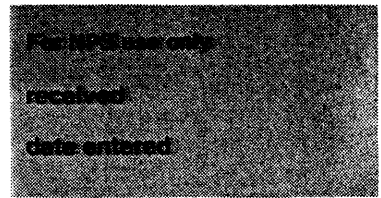
Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

United States Department of the Interior
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Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church

Continuation sheet of Ryssby, Boulder County Item number 8

Page 2

By 1918, there were fifteen Swedish Lutheran churches in Colorado, the largest being in Denver--Augustana (692 parishoners), Bethania (226); Longmont--Elim (which merged with Ryssby in 1907) (162); Pueblo--Tabor (174); Victor--Nebo (183); Greeley--Immanuel (214); and Ault--Nebo (451).⁶

Ryssby Church today is an important landmark building for those of Swedish descent residing in the state. Services held in the building biannually attract visitors from a wide region, including, on occasion, those from Sweden.⁷

¹Nelson, David P., "Ryssby: The Country Church," late 1970s.

²Brown, Seletha A., Inventory Data Form for Ryssby Church, January 28, 1974.

³Goodykoontz, P.80.

⁴Ibid., P.108.

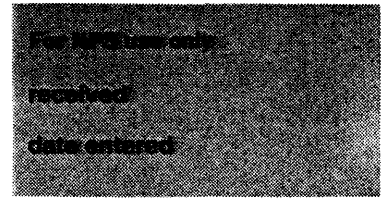
⁵Segerhammar.

⁶Goodykoontz, p.80.

⁷Communications with the Ryssby congregation in Sweden continue on an informal basis with the assistance of travelers from Sweden to Colorado and those from Colorado to Sweden.

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Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church

Continuation sheet of Ryssby, Boulder County **Item number** 9

Page 2

Nelson, David P. "Ryssby: The Country," (pamphlet)

Segerhammar, Carl W. "First Lutheran Church of the Rockies, First Lutheran Church,"
1946 (booklet).

Abbott, Carl. Colorado: A History of the Centennial State. Boulder: Colorado
Associated University Press, 1976.

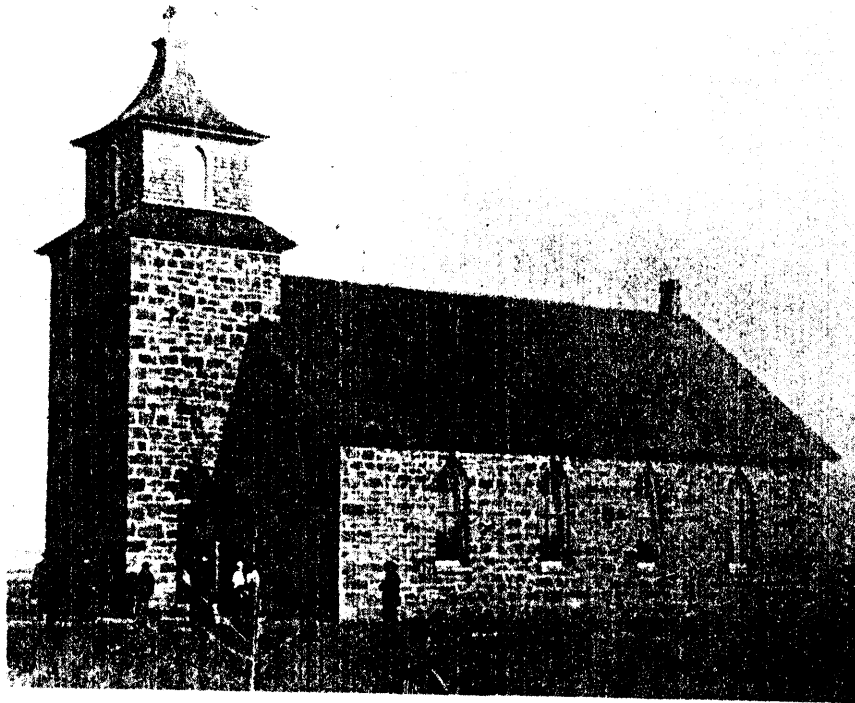
Andersson, Ingvar. Introduction to Sweden. Stockholm: The Swedish Institute, 1951.

Goodykoontz, Colin B. "The People of Colorado." Colorado and Its People. Vol. II.
Edited by LeRoy R. Hafen. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.,
1948.

Smith, Phyllis. A Look at Boulder: From Settlement to City. Boulder: Pruett Publishing
Company, 1981.

Stone, Wilbur Fisk, ed. History of Colorado. Vol. I. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke
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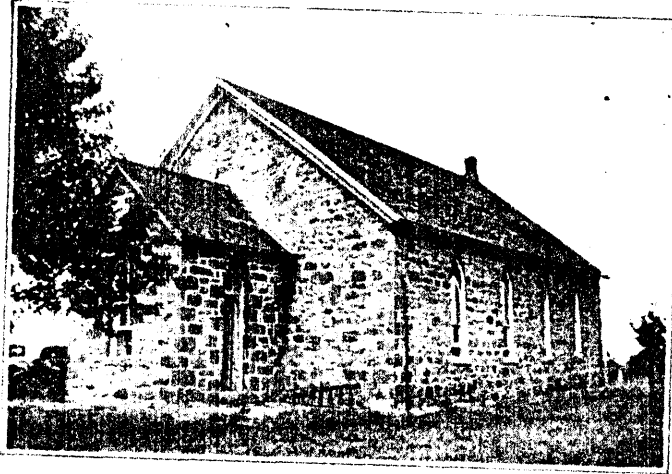
Wattenberg, Ben J.; with Scammon, Richard M. This U.S.A. Garden City, New York:
Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965.



Ryssby Church
Boulder County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photo: Unknown

Showing church as originally constructed
with stone tower.



Ryssby Church
Boulder County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photo: Prior to 1946

Showing church prior to replacement of tower (in 1969)