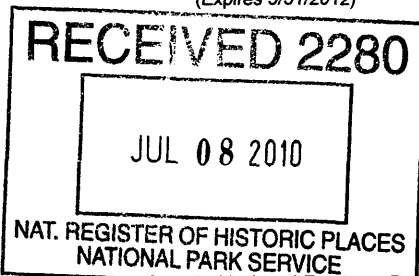


501



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 33022 U.S. Highway 75 not for publication N/A
city or town Almond Township Vicinity Clinton
state Minnesota code MN county Big Stone code 011 zip code 56225

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Britta L. Bloomberg 6/30/10
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, MN Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

For Edson Beall
Signature of the Keeper

8.26.10
Date of Action

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
1		site
		structure
		object
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

foundation: Stone
walls: Wood
roof: Asphalt Shingle
other: _____

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church is a white-painted wood frame structure of Late Victorian/Gothic design, located in Big Stone County in the western border of Minnesota. The nomination comprises two contributing resources, the church and cemetery which are sited on a two acre parcel two miles south of Clinton and nine miles north of Ortonville. The address is 33022 U.S. Highway 75. The church property is surrounded by an agricultural landscape. The main body of the church was built in 1896 and measures 46 by 30 feet. There is a 1911 addition on the north side of the church that measures 30 by 20 feet. The church demonstrates a high level of historic integrity. The church and cemetery are located within a fenced area measuring 210 feet on the north and south sides, and 335 feet on the east and west sides. The cemetery area is east and south of the church. The inside perimeter of the fenced area is lined with evergreen and cottonwood trees. The front entrance of the church faces west toward U.S. Highway 75.

Narrative Description

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/EUROPEAN

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1896-1957

Significant Dates

1896, 1911

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mr. Wallin of Belgrade and congregation members

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance begins in 1896 with the construction of the church and the establishment of the cemetery. It ends in 1957 when two congregations once split by doctrinal issues reunited.

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The property is and always been used for religious purposes; however, under Criterion Consideration A, its main historic significance demonstrates the Religious and European Ethnic Heritage of the Norwegian settlers in the area. The church serves as the focal point around which the issue of what it meant to be a Norwegian-American Lutheran was debated.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Almond Township, Big Stone County, Minnesota is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places Under Criterion A, with Areas of Significance being Ethnic Heritage and Religion. The property meets National Register Criteria Consideration A in that it is locally significant for the important role it played in the ethnic and religious history associated with the Norwegian-Americans who lived in the area. The church represents the activities of the area residents to maintain an ethnic heritage through language retention, worship, education, and a variety of church sponsored social activities. St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was the religious and community focus for the Norwegian families from the construction of the church in 1896 to its reunification with a neighboring congregation in 1957. The property also relates to the statewide historic context, "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940."

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): BS-ALM-003

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Clinton, MN
1971

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 14 700990 503328
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The legal description of the church property is such: Commencing at the northwest corner of Section 34 in Township 123 north of Range 46 west of the 5th Principal Meridian, running thence south along the section line 22 rods. Thence at right angles each 14½ rods. Thence due north, at right angles 22 rods. Thence west along the section line 14½ rods to the place of beginning, the same containing one acre and 159 square rods.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the parcel of land that has been associated historically with the church and cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tyrone L. Steen
organization Trinity Lutheran Church, PO Box 374, Clinton, MN 56225 date March 31, 2010
street & number 15577 Cala Rojo Drive telephone 719-576-2273
city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80926
e-mail tysteen@msn.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church

City or Vicinity: Clinton

County: Big Stone

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Tyrone L. Steen

Date Photographed: July 3, 2006, Negatives in possession of photographer.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 8. Camera facing east – exterior view of church front facing west with frontage on U.S. Highway 75.
- 2 of 8. Camera facing south – exterior view of north side of church.
- 3 of 8. Camera facing east – interior view through open vestibule doors into sanctuary.
- 4 of 8. Camera facing east – interior view of sanctuary with altar.
- 5 of 8. Camera facing northwest – interior view of vestibule doors and education addition doors to the sanctuary.
- 6 of 8. Camera facing northeast – interior view of north windows and east door of the education addition.
- 7 of 8. Camera facing northwest – exterior view of four windows on the south side of the church.
- 8 of 8. Camera facing west – exterior view of east end of church, and a window and door on east side of education addition.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Trinity Lutheran Church
street & number PO Box 374 telephone 320-325-5178
city or town Clinton state MN zip code 56225

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
County and State Big Stone County, Minnesota
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church is a simple white-painted frame building of Late Victorian/Gothic design. The church is located in Big Stone County on the western border of Minnesota almost midway between the north and south borders of the state. Clinton, two miles north of the church, and Ortonville, nine miles south are the closest cities.

The church and cemetery are sited on a two acre parcel on the northwest corner of Section 34, Almond Township, with a 911 address of 33022 U.S. Highway 75. The west boundary of the property is U.S. Highway 75, and the north boundary is County Road 8. The east and south boundaries adjoin farm land.

The church was built in 1896, facing west on the frontage of a country road that with the onset of the automobile extended from Winnipeg, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. In 1917, this road was designated "The King of Trails," and in 1926, became U.S. Highway 75.¹ The site of the church is nine miles north of the U.S. Highway 75 intersection with U.S. Highway 12.

The church property is surrounded by a sparsely populated agricultural landscape. The town of Clinton had a population of 453 at the 2000 census, and Almond Township, with a total area of 34.8 square miles, had only 190 people.

The church and cemetery are located within a metal-wire fenced area measuring 210 feet on the north and south sides, and 335 feet on the east and west sides. The cemetery portion of the fenced area lies to the east and south of the church. There are no physical barriers, or landscape boundaries, separating the cemetery area from the church. The burial ground has approximately 130 graves with ten remaining plots (four to six grave sites in each plot). The listing of "Cemeteries in Big Stone County" stated that the earliest birth date in the cemetery is 1831, and the earliest death date is 1898.² Almost all of the burial monuments are made of the estimated 3.5 billion years old Dakota Mahogany granite, from quarries near Big Stone Lake. The church and cemetery began together when the land was acquired in 1896. There are access gates on the north and west sides, with evergreen and cottonwood trees along the inside perimeter of the fenced area.

The location is approximately five miles from Big Stone Lake on the western edge of the county bordering South Dakota. Big Stone Lake lies in a valley channeled by the River Warren which flowed from glacial Lake Agassiz. Today the Minnesota River meanders through the valley until it merges with the Mississippi River. The land is rolling prairie with clay loam soil that was a strong attraction for early settlers. It is an area devoted to diversified farming. The organizing members had an awareness of place, and connected the location of the church with Big Stone Lake. Archivist Thoreson reviewed the microfilms of church records at the Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He stated that the 1878 constitution gave the name of the congregation as St. Pauli Menighed ved Big Stone Lake (St. Pauli Congregation by Big Stone Lake), and in 1895 the name given was St. Pauli Norske Evangeliske Lutherske Menighed i Big Stone County, Minnesota.³

The main body of the wood frame church was built in 1896 and measures 46 by 30 feet. The front entrance faces west toward U. S. Highway 75 and entry is by a double door in a 12 by 12 foot vestibule under the steeple and bell tower. The bell rope is still in place, coming through the vestibule ceiling. There is a small arch window over the front entry door. Double doors open from the vestibule to the sanctuary. A center aisle passes between rows of pews to a semi-circular communion rail and an altar which rests on a short platform. A raised pulpit is to the right, when facing the altar, on the south side wall.

The ceiling is clad in pressed metal. The walls are covered with beige, compressed-wood fiber panels and dark brown wainscot. All interior doors, window and door casings, and pews are done with a matching dark brown stain.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Name of Property St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
County and State Big Stone County, Minnesota
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

DESCRIPTION (continued)

In 1911, a 30 x 20 foot addition was made to the north side of main body of the church. This expansion was built to serve as a kitchen and meeting room for summer parochial school, and other church and social activities. There is a three panel door and one window facing to the west, with a single door and one window facing east. There are two single windows and one double window on the north side of the addition.

There are four windows on the south side of the main body of the church, no windows on the east side, and two windows on the north side with the doors to the 1911 addition. These doors can be raised for open access from the addition to the sanctuary. All windows have a pointed Gothic arch design with a combination of clear and painted panes of glass.

The church is in good condition with a concrete and fieldstone foundation. The exterior is covered with wood siding that is painted white, as are all other exterior surfaces. All roof surfaces, except for the steeple, are clad in asphalt shingles. In 2007, the Friends of St. Pauli assisted Trinity Lutheran Church in raising funds for repair work on the steeple. The patterns of the wood shingles were replicated to an exact match of the original design.

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church demonstrates a high level of historic integrity. Since the original construction of the "Kirke" in 1896 for approximately \$3,300, and the "Skolehus" in 1911 for approximately \$900, there has been little modification.⁴

¹"King of Trails" 2007-2008 Highway 75 Visitor's Guide, p. 5.

²Sparrow, p. 71.

³Joel Thoreson, Chief Archivist, Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Elk Grove Village, IL, e-mail to Tyrone Steen, March 10, 2008.

⁴Norlie (1918), p. 676.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Almond Township, Big Stone County, Minnesota is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a property associated with significant events in the areas of European ethnic heritage and religion. The history of the St. Pauli Lutheran congregation reflects important patterns, impact, and influence of the Norwegian emigration on western Minnesota. The church, built in 1896 by Norwegian immigrant farmers, maintains a high level of historic integrity. Social and religious circumstances, combined with their desire to own and control land with a rural lifestyle that was no longer possible in Norway, led these settlers to a fertile land that had been occupied by a native people for centuries. The church represents the activities of the early settlers to maintain an ethnic heritage through language retention, worship, education, and a variety of church sponsored social activities. St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was the religious and community focus for the Norwegian families in the surrounding area, from when the congregation was founded in 1877, divided in 1885, constructed the church in 1896, and reunited in 1957.

Lutheranism in Norway

The Viking kings introduced Christianity into Norway in the middle of the 10th century. They went from valley to valley and forcefully made known that the days of the old gods were numbered. The influence of the gods diminished as the young Norwegian Christian church grew. The first church built was dedicated by King Olav Trygvasson (995-1000).¹

The Lutheran Reformation arrived in Norway in 1537. Norway has had a Lutheran state church since that time. The introduction of the Lutheran Reformation into Norway was not accompanied by a religious awakening among the people. It was a political-economic change imposed from above by government authority. It was a long time before the common people were indoctrinated in the Lutheran faith. This change took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was one the major contributions of the "Age of Orthodoxy" to the church life of Norway.²

Possibility the most significant movement in the history of Christianity in Norway was started by a lay preacher Hans Nielsen Hauge, born to farmers in 1771. He advocated that his supporters among the common people should remain in the State Church. The "Hauge movement" had deep and lasting impact in Norway, and immigrating members brought the movement to America.³ Lutheran historians Nelson and Fevold wrote that "The vigorous religious revivals which loom so large in the history of Norwegian religious life in the nineteenth century.contributed greatly in shaping the religious view and convictions of the emigrants."⁴

Migration

Norway had little tillable land with its vast mountains and forests. Farmland throughout America was attractive to this industrious people. Historian Blegen noted that the Norwegian population growth synchronized with religious and political changes in Norway provided numerous causes and motivating factors for emigrating.⁵ During the 1925 Norwegian-American Centennial celebration of the coming of the sloop "Restaurationen," representing the uninterrupted stream of migration from Norway to America, tribute was paid to the 750,000 who came across from Norway, while noting that only 10 percent of Norway was inhabitable and only one percent was being tilled.⁶

America was a magnet to Norwegian immigrants from all areas of Norway, and was especially attractive to those living in the mountains and valleys of western Norway. Nordfjord on the west coast of Norway (Latitude 61°+) was the predominate place of origin for members of the St. Pauli congregation. As the United States has fifty states, Norway has nineteen divisions

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran
Church

Name of Property
Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

known as fylkes. The fylke is made up of districts similar to counties in the United States. Nordfjord is one of three districts in the fylke of Sogn og Fjordane.

Severin O. Steen, first chairman of the congregation, and wife Malena Abelsdatter Isene Steen were some of the first to leave Nordfjord in 1870. After spending time in Wisconsin they began to "look out toward the great Minnesota prairies" and settled in Big Stone County in 1877.⁷ The Nordfjord connection is present in the names of the Norwegian settlers inscribed on the memorial headstones throughout the cemetery. An example is Samuel M. Steen, listed in 1915 as a St. Pauli Church trustee.⁸ He immigrated from Davik, Nordfjord, and wife Karen Marie Kvile Steen immigrated from Briem, Nordfjord. They and their descendents are buried in the cemetery along with Samuel's two immigrant brothers, Abraham M. Steen and Martin M. Steen and their family members. Another example is Johan B. Aasebo, a 1915 St. Pauli Church trustee, who immigrated from Domsten, Nordfjord.⁹

Names of members of the St. Pauli congregation appeared on the membership lists of the Nordfjordlag, a member society (bygdslag). Historian Lovoll explained the bygdslag during a celebration of the Norwegian-American heritage when he wrote of "a sense of place, the images of a geographical landscape engraved from childhood, regardless of distance from the place of birth" that provided belonging and comfort:

The many *bygdslag* – 'old home societies,' if you will – that came into being in the early 1900s, each cultivated a specific geographical place and landscape in the old homeland. These societies, early on finding their main support in farming communities and small towns in the Upper Midwest... At the time of their founding, the *bygdslag* gave evidence of success in Norwegian farming communities that provided extra energy and time to nourish emotional ties to the immigrants' past and to recreate in a new environment the treasured local aspects of their cultural heritage.¹⁰

The Nordfjordlag was formed in June, 1910 with a constitutional purpose to "foster and preserve the cultural values of the emigrants from Nordfjord, Norway and their descendents." Annual meetings (stevne) were held in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Norway. The well-established presence of Norwegian immigrants in Big Stone County from Nordfjord is reflected in the annual meetings of the Nordfjordlag that were held in Ortonville in 1921 and 1941, and in Clinton in 1938.¹¹

Settling in Big Stone County

Western Minnesota was a fertile land that had been inhabited by Native Americans for centuries. The area that would become Big Stone County was included in the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, which in 1851 took nearly twenty-four million acres from the Dakota. The Dakota were initially promised a reserve that extended for ten miles on either side of the Minnesota River from Lake Traverse to the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River.¹² The location of St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church and cemetery is approximately five miles from Big Stone Lake, at the source of the Minnesota River, and places the church upon land that had been promised to the Dakota nation. Historian Gilman writes that there had not been many farms in Minnesota territory, but "after 1851, hundreds and then thousands of new farmers moved each year into the opened lands."¹³ However, following the United States – Dakota Conflict of 1862, Congress abrogated its treaties with the Dakota in 1863 and sent them to live out of state. It was this banishment that allowed settlement and the later arrival of Norwegians in Big Stone County.

Big Stone was established as a county in 1862, but there were only six houses in the county on August 13, 1870, and the county remained unorganized until 1881. People came in gradually after government surveys that were conducted in 1871 and 1872, but even as late as the spring of 1875 there were only 85 families in the county.¹⁴

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran
Church

Name of Property
Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The first Norwegians in Big Stone County were farmers that arrived in 1869, and by the mid-1870s they were a major ethnic group in the area. The taming of the land and building homes challenged their strength, but the establishment of the church was done simultaneously with their other labors. After fifty years in America, the writer N. N. Ronning stated that "No person can write adequately about the Norwegians in America and leave out religion, for that has been their chief interest outside their interest in things material." He observed that the history of the Norwegians was to a great extent a church history and proudly noted that Lutherans in America were in the forefront of progressive movements.¹⁵

Founding the Congregation (Religion)

The Norwegian settlers had a strong desire to meet with their neighbors and worship in the Lutheran faith they brought with them from Norway. Whenever possible, the families would meet at one of the homes on Sunday. One of the men who found it easiest to express himself would conduct the service. Occasionally, a missionary pastor would travel through the settlement and hold services. Pastor Peter Reque was one of the first missionary pastors to serve this territory. He was grandfather to Pastor Paul S. Reque who served, in 1928-1938, as a shared pastor to the St. Pauli and Big Stone (name changed to Trinity in 1935) congregations. The number of settlers gradually increased, and there was a desire to establish a congregation. Pastors Peter Reque and H. A. Hartman met with the Lutheran pioneers in October, 1877, at the home of Severin O. Steen and Malena Steen, to organize a congregation.¹⁶ Malena Steen recalled that early time in a 1922 memoir:

...when we began 'the life of the settler' here in Big Stone and had ministers only during the fall and spring, we used to gather together every Sunday, once with each family that had enough room in their house, and we sang hymns and read the sermon in our huspestill (a household devotional book, then common in Norway, which included sermons for use on Sundays when the congregation was not served by a minister) for that particular day. We also catechized the children in lessons which their parents had instructed them to learn. Most of our friends had taken a huspestill with them from the fatherland.¹⁷

There is a description of the humble accommodations and circumstances of the organizational meeting that took place in 1877:

This home, where the organization meeting was held, was a one-room sod house cut into a side hill. The room measured about 14 feet by 16 feet; when the food, utensils, clothing and furniture for the family was placed in it there was little space to accommodate a large group of people. The desire to belong to the congregation was so intense that many pioneers came as far as ten miles to attend. The pastors were amazed as they stood outside the home and saw the gathering getting larger and larger. They looked at the size of the group in numbers— thirty or forty people; at the size of the house in available seating space; and then at a large sod stable that was just completed, but as yet unused. They considered using the stable for the meeting, but finally decided in favor of the house.¹⁸

A constitution was drawn up and the name "St. Pauli Congregation by Big Stone Lake" was chosen. The congregation was named after the Apostle Paul, with Pauli being the Norwegian equivalent for Paul. The first recorded meeting of the newly organized congregation was held May 5, 1878 in Ole Lillesater's house. Severin O. Steen was elected chairman and Ole Lillesater was elected secretary. Pastor Hartman was the first pastor called to serve the congregation. From 1877 until 1880 he traveled from his home in Benson, about four or five times a year to conduct services in the various homes. During this time, 1877-1880, there were two initial congregations, East and West Big Stone, both served by Pastor Hartman.¹⁹ Historian Granquist, Luther Seminary, stated that "St. Pauli seems to be the continuation of West Big Stone, and perhaps the elements of the East congregation after 1880; it was a member of the Norwegian Synod."²⁰

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran
Church

Name of Property
Big Stone County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 4

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Election Controversy

There were a number of doctrinal conflicts within Norwegian Lutheranism. For example, there was a controversy over the common (public) school versus the role of parochial schools as the sole or primary source of education for the Norwegian Lutheran children. Blegen wrote that the roots of the Norwegian-American controversy on the school question "strike into a subsoil in which Lutheran orthodoxy is the chief ingredient, with a considerable admixture of Norwegian nationalism." But noted that the "Swedes did not quarrel about the public schools, and yet they were, for the most part, orthodox Lutheran in their faith." He attributed this difference to a set of circumstance present in the Norwegian-American school discussions which were not present among the Swedish-American Lutherans:

This was the extreme Lutheran orthodoxy of the clergy of the Norwegian Synod, whose theological training in the national university of Norway was reinforced in America by the absorption of the religious and educational ideas of the German Lutheran Missouri Synod. This factor, buttressed by a genuine concern about retaining the native speech and traditions of the Norwegian immigrants in conjunction with "pure doctrine," was unquestionably the pivot of the school controversy.²¹

This orthodoxy of the Norwegian Synod was challenged by other movements within the Norwegian Lutheran communities. Those in opposition to the influence of the German Lutheran Missouri Synod were identified as "anti-Missourian." The opposition theologians, pastors, and lay persons also used this identification, but preferred the term "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood." Nelson, while acknowledging that the Evangelical Lutheran Church had been blessed, stated that there "have been some unpleasant, even ugly, episodes in the life of the church."²² One conflict in particular, the Election Controversy, descended upon the St. Pauli Congregation. Nelson and Fevold wrote that the "doctrine of predestination, or God's election of men to salvation, is not a central doctrine in Lutheran theology, and predestination to damnation (reprobation) is completely alien." They went on to write that:

The most bitter episode in the history of theological warfare among the Norwegians was the Election Controversy during the eighties. Restricted to the Norwegian Synod-the other synods were anti-Missourian but adopted a "hands-off" policy-the conflict was immoderately bitter. In some measure the immoderate character of the struggle was rooted in the disclosure that the Synod, which had prided itself on its "pure doctrine" and had charged other groups, notably the Conference (another organization of Norwegian and Danish Evangelical Lutheran congregations), with unorthodoxy, was itself doctrinally disunited. The bitter struggle rocked the well-organized Synod to its very foundations, and when the smoke of battle cleared, one-third of its pastors and congregations, the anti-Missourian party, had seceded.²³

Pastor A. H. Gjevre served the combined congregation from 1881 to 1884. He also ministered to the Long Lake congregation near Artichoke and the Boe congregation of Wilmot, South Dakota. Pastor Gjevre lived near Artichoke and drove a horse and buggy to the other churches in his call.²⁴ Of this time, Malena Steen recalled that "there were so many who settled here that we thought about calling a minister. We got Pastor Gjevre and we were happy. But the happiness didn't last long, because a short time afterward the election controversy came up."²⁵ The Election Controversy reached this rural community and resulted in a split of the congregation:

The dispute spread throughout the entire church and the local congregation did not escape the controversy. Pastors Hartman and Gjevre, the first two pastors to serve the congregation were anti-Missourians, and the congregation was split during the mid 1880s into two groups: St. Pauli and Big Stone (Trinity). St. Pauli affiliated with the Norwegian Synod and Big Stone with the United Lutheran Church.²⁶

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Norwegian historian Semmingsen stated that the conflicts "were evidence of an intense commitment to religious institutions" and made the average Norwegian "more aware of questions of faith." She wrote that "Congregational splits were reflected in the building of rival churches; it was said that if one saw a white-painted church on each side of a road, one could be sure of being in a Norwegian community."²⁷ The 1885 split of the St. Pauli congregation resulted in the building of two white-painted churches in 1896, just two miles apart.

Synod Affiliation

There were five ecclesiastical groupings of Norwegian Lutherans in America in 1876: the Eielsen Synod, the Norwegian Synod, the Norwegian Augustana Synod, the Conference, and Hauge's Synod. St. Pauli was organized with membership in the Norwegian Synod. The Norwegian Synod was the second Norwegian Lutheran church body to form in America and was organized in 1853. Nelson and Fevold stated that "it rapidly assumed a position of preeminence and was not seriously challenged for a quarter of a century."²⁸

After the 1885 split of the congregation, St. Pauli was identified as the Almond group, and maintained their adherence to the Norwegian Synod, which it rejoined in 1896. The other group was identified as the Big Stone group, and joined the United Norwegian Lutheran Church Synod. It was not until 1917, when on the national level, the Norwegian Synod and the United Synod merged, with the Hauge Synod, to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, a synod which embraced 95-percent of the Norwegian Lutherans. This brought the St. Pauli and Big Stone (Trinity) congregations together on the same synodical level. At the time of the union of the synods in 1917, both St. Pauli and Big Stone were well organized congregations and they each chose to continue functioning as separate churches in close cooperation with each other.

Joel Thoreson, Archivist for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provided a summary of synod membership. He stated that "St. Pauli was a member of the Norwegian Synod from 1877-1885, then an independent congregation drawing upon the Norwegian Synod for pastors from 1885-1896, and a Norwegian Synod member from 1896-on." The congregation's record divided into two with a separation occurring in 1885 when a faction broke away to join the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood. The Norwegian Synod merged in 1917 with two other synods to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, which changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1946.²⁹ After the Election Controversy split of 1885, the St. Pauli congregation adhered to the Norwegian Synod, but during 1885-1896 was not a member of the synod. Granquist further explained that:

... the controversy and split occasioned some hard feelings locally, and that perhaps they were independent for those 11 years because it was better to be independent and not force the issue of denominational affiliation, rather than rising further hard feelings. This would not have been all unusual for the time – congregations came and went from denominations, and could have been independent for some length of time.³⁰

At the start of the independent period, 1885 until 1887, the St. Pauli congregation was served by several temporary pastors. Pastor Abel Anderson served from 1887 to 1895. Pastor Anderson traveled by train from his home in Montevideo and would be met at Rupert Station, a whistle stop about one-third mile southwest of the present St. Pauli church. The family whose turn it was to "keep" the pastor would meet him and then return him to the station when his stay was completed.³¹ The Fargo and Southern Railroad Company built the Rupert loading platform in 1883. It moved their station two miles north to the village of Clinton (platted in 1885 and incorporated in 1890) where the railroad depot was called Batavia as late as 1899.³⁴

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Pastor T. T. Wiprud arrived to serve the congregation in 1895. Granquist stated that Pastor Wiprud probably had more to do with the affiliation of St. Pauli with the Norwegian Synod in 1896 as "pastors were really more concerned professionally with denominational affiliation than were many congregations."³³

Thoreson reviewed the microfilmed records of the congregation's minutes from 1878-1885 and 1895-1931, all in the Norwegian language. There was a gap in the minutes when the original book of minutes went with the anti-Missourian faction (the Big Stone congregation that changed its name to Trinity in 1935). Some of the records were lost when the Big Stone church was destroyed by a tornado in 1908. The missing records of 1886-1894 are partially accounted for by two books, in the Norwegian language, at Trinity church. One book contains minutes of congregational meetings for the years 1878-1889. A second book is a record of marriages and deaths for the years 1881-1890. Thoreson stated that the "1878 constitution gives the name of the congregation as St. Pauli Menighed ved Big Stone Lake, with the next name given in 1895 as St. Pauli Norske Evangeliske Lutherske Menighed i Big Stone County, Minnesota."³⁴ St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was the name of the congregation when land was acquired, and the church built in 1896.

Forty years more would pass before the union was completed on the congregational level. The closeness of the two congregations is exemplified by the sharing of pastors from 1920 to 1944. It was during this time that both congregations started the gradual process of changing services in the Norwegian language to services in the English language, so that after 1944 all services were in English. In the spring of 1957, St. Pauli congregation began proceedings to merge with the Trinity congregation. Each congregation voted approval and the union was consummated in May, 1957.³⁵

Construction of the Church

After the split, neither the St. Pauli congregation nor the Big Stone (Trinity) congregation had a permanent church building until both congregations built churches in 1896. It was a time when Norwegian Lutheran churches dominated the landscape of west-central Minnesota. They were built at the beginning of a period when, as described by Lovoll, the "Norwegians in west-central Minnesota demonstrated their cultural loyalty to an ancestral homeland." A period called the "golden age of Norwegian-America, the thirty years between 1895 and 1925."³⁶ The churches were wood structures of similar design. Mr. Wallin of Belgrade was engaged as contractor for both churches, with assistance in labor from the respective congregations. Unfortunately, only St. Pauli church remains today. The Big Stone church was built in the Village of Clinton, two miles north of the St. Pauli church, and was destroyed by tornado on June 27, 1908. A second Big Stone church was built in 1910 and used until the present Trinity church was dedicated on September 27, 1953.³⁷

In 1895, St. Pauli congregation formed a call with the Long Lake and Wheaton congregations and was served by Pastor T. T. Wiprud. During this time the congregation was rapidly enlarging and plans were being made to build a church. On February 14, 1896 the members met and the finance and building committees were elected. The congregation accepted an offer by Severin J. Huselid of the northwest corner of his land for a church and cemetery.³⁸ The land for the church and cemetery was given to St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church for \$5.00 by Severin J. Huselid and Elizabeth (Lisbet) Huselid on June 10, 1896.³⁹

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church built an addition to the main church in 1911. The addition was built by E. G. Dalseth and the men of the congregation "in order to provide more room for Ladies' Aid, Luther League and especially for Parochial school."⁴⁰

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Service to the Church Community (Ethnic Heritage)

The social and religious activities of St. Pauli church were essential components in the rural lives of the Norwegian immigrant families. Semmingsen reported that the immigrants formed church organizations that were based on their religious heritage from Norway where: "The church became a focus in the life of the local society: always filled at services and a meeting place after services. Even if all of them did not come to hear the minister, they could meet people and discuss other matters."⁴¹

The chief means of transportation in Big Stone County during the early years was by horses pulling wagons, buggies, sleds or sleights.⁴² Starting in the 1920s, with increased use of the automobile, the St. Pauli and Trinity (Big Stone) congregations, in churches only two miles apart, belonged to the same synod and shared pastors from 1920 to 1944. Trinity Pastor Martin B. Thompson served as temporary pastor for St. Pauli in 1947-1948, and Pastor Leon O. Holtan served as temporary pastor from 1956 until the merger of the two congregations in 1957.⁴³ Many of the church activities were organizationally combined by the two congregations.

In September, 1920, a Sunday School was started by Pastor and Mrs. Sigurd M. Moe and "for some years it was called St. Pauli-Big Stone Lutheran Sunday School." Pastor Moe served the St. Pauli and Big Stone (Trinity) congregations in 1920-1926.⁴⁴

Pastor Moe also organized a joint Luther League for the St. Pauli and Big Stone (Trinity) congregations in 1920. The constitution stated that: "The object of the organization is to quicken the spiritual life among its members, to promote the study of the Word of God, the confessions, and activities of the Lutheran Church, and to assist the pastor and congregation in the spiritual care of the young." The organization met once a month and occasionally twice a month. The activities of the Luther League were both religious and social. Religious activities included Luther League topics, Bible Study, films, musical selections, and congregational singing. Social activities included ice cream socials, wiener roasts, roller skating, and family nights.⁴⁵

An L.D.R. (Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation) was organized December 5, 1939, "together with St. Pauli Congregation." During the eleven years that the organization functioned it supported mission projects, and donated money to child placement and Lutheran Welfare, and to Bible Schools in South America. The L.D.R. "gave of their time and money to local churches and organizations," and held several bazaars and Mother-Daughter banquets.⁴⁶

The St. Pauli congregation provided leadership and support for cultural activities that perpetuated their Norwegian heritage from the Nordfjord. When the Nordfjordlaget held its meeting (stevne) in Clinton in June 6-8, 1938, Ole I. Steen was vice-president of the organization.⁴⁷ He served as Nordfjordlaget Vice-President from 1933-1944, and during this period he also served as trustee in the St. Pauli congregation. The Nordfjordlaget's resolutions of 1938 extended "congratulations and hearty thanks to all of the Committee of Arrangements with S. P. and Ole I. Steen taking the leading part." Rev. Paul Reque served as pastor of both St. Pauli and Trinity (Big Stone) congregations 1928-1938. The resolutions of 1938 thanked Rev. Reque for the welcome, while representing "the Mayor of the city of Clinton," and to the "two Ladies Aids of Rev. Reque's charge, St. Pauli and Trinity and their Pastor for the splendid banquet served."⁴⁸

The members of the St. Pauli congregation continued in America to have sense of shared interests as represented by historians Gjerde and Qualey when writing that: "Once built, the church quickly became the heart of the community... 'If one did not come to worship God, one might come for other purposes, such as trading horses, assigning road work, hiring thrashers, or hearing the latest news.'" They pointed out that the "most visible manifestation of the bridges between the Norwegian and Norwegian American cultures... as a whole was the

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Lutheran church.” They noted that the white spires still dotting the rural Minnesota landscape “once marked the social and religious centers of the rural communities.”⁴⁹ The countryside location of St. Pauli church in Almond Township enabled it to serve as just such a religious and community center for the surrounding farm families.

Historian Marilyn Chiat emphasized that the immigrant generation was “the group that really defined this country and gave it the great religious diversity that America is all about.” Descendents of the early congregants of St. Pauli church share and understand the feelings for the spiritual quality, historical significance, and preservation of the church when she writes that “Their building is important to who they are and to their identity in that area.”⁵⁰ The continuously rural, agricultural location of St. Pauli church can be identified with the observations made by author Hassler: “a small country church standing among the cornfields... the excitement and pride of the founding congregation... life-changing ceremonies at the altar. Generations of baptisms, weddings, and funerals account for the holiness we feel.”⁵¹ Author Norberg, while relating the history of the fraternal benefit society Sons of Norway, acknowledged the role played by these religious and cultural centers, when he wrote in 1970 that: “True enough, the world of 1895 is no more. . . The small Norwegian country churches, where the pioneers gathered for their Sunday *hoymesse*, stand locked up, if they are not torn down. The hallowed ground, where the pioneer generations were put to their final rest, have become unnoticed acres of a thousand human memories.”⁵²

The 1911 addition to the church for parochial school also enabled larger attendances at Sunday services, and allowed for expanded social activities such as wedding receptions, potluck dinners, and ice cream socials. The summer parochial school became a characteristic institution in Norwegian-American Lutheran communities.⁵³ St. Pauli members, while in support of the common or public schools, took the Christian education of the young people seriously. The summer parochial school as conducted by the St. Pauli congregation was an essential religious activity, but as a strong and vigorous supplement to the civic schooling of the children. A clear description of the St. Pauli parochial school was provided:

As early as the 1890’s, Parochial school was held for two months every summer. The class was instructed by the pastor, a student from the seminary, or a local teacher. A great deal of stress was laid on memorizing hymns and Bible verses and of course, the catechism. These sessions were well attended; the early classes numbering from 40 to 45 young people. At one time the enrollment at St. Pauli was so large that part of the group met in District No. Four school and part met in District No. 21 school.⁵⁴

The large enrollments at the St. Pauli summer parochial school are represented in a photograph taken in about 1915 that showed 38 students and their seminary student teacher.⁵⁵

Reuniting of Congregations

The congregations, that started in 1877 as St. Pauli Congregation by Big Stone Lake and suffered the division of 1885, were joined together again in 1957. It is important to recognize that, while the Election Controversy resulted in two separate churches for over sixty years, the healing of the conflict on the personal level was rapid and enduring. The congregations often functioned as one, with shared pastors and combined community, social, and religious activities. The cooperation was facilitated by the closeness of the location of the rural church to the small town church. They are only two miles apart and there developed a generational history of intertwining families and neighbors. Of utmost importance was the reality that the congregations shared an abiding Norwegian Lutheran heritage and a common origin. At the 80th Anniversary Celebration (1877-1957) on July 28, 1957, the tribute to the important milestone in church history declared that: “The original congregation which had its beginning in a sod house in 1877 is again functioning as one congregation.”⁵⁶

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After reuniting with Trinity Church, the continuing responsibility for the maintenance of the St. Pauli Church building, cemetery, and grounds was established by the formation of the St. Pauli Cemetery Association. The Friends of St. Pauli, a support group was formed in 2006 to enhance communications, and provide focus for assisting in the protection and preservation of St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Conclusion

The simple frame structure of St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, with its contiguous cemetery, is indelibly associated with the significant religious, cultural, and social events that occurred in the Norwegian Lutheran immigrant farming community in Almond Township, Big Stone County, in the upper Minnesota River area of western Minnesota during the period 1896-1957. The listing of St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in the National Register of Historic Places recognizes the countryside religious center that served and nurtured the Norwegian immigrant families during the times of climatic and economical challenges of farm life in a new land, and through a period of turbulent religious division. The church also provided the congregation with the joys and comfort of a secure gathering place to participate in a shared Lutheran faith, and to foster the common cultural identity they brought to America from the mountain and fjord communities of western Norway. The amalgamation of time, place, and an industrious immigrant congregation created a history that made St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church (1896) an important spiritual heritage landmark that remains today, visible for miles around on the flat prairie landscape of western Minnesota.

¹Vanberg, pp. 43-44.

²Nelson and Fevold, p. 10.

³Vanberg, pp. 45-46.

⁴Nelson and Fevold, p. 12.

⁵Blegen (1931), pp. 165-168.

⁶O. M Norlie, "Why We Celebrate," in Norse American Centennial Program Booklet, p. 51.

⁷Steen, p. 3.

⁸Norlie (1918), p. 676.

⁹Gimmestad (1940), pp. 256-257.

¹⁰Odd Lovoll, "They're All Bound for Minnesota," in Celebrating our Norwegian-Minnesota Heritage: A Sesquicentennial Celebration of Minnesota's Norwegian Pioneers, ed. Anne Sladky, p. 223.

¹¹Nordfjordlaget 75th Anniversary, 1985, pp. 1-4.

¹²Risjord, pp. 65-66, 88.

¹³Gilman, p. 97.

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¹⁴ "Historical Sketch of Big Stone County," www.bigstonecounty.org, p. 2.

¹⁵ Ronning, pp. 17, 107.

¹⁶ 80th Anniversary Booklet, pp. 2, 8.

¹⁷ Steen, p. 6.

¹⁸ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 2.

¹⁹ *ibid*, pp. 2-3.

²⁰ Mark Granquist, Historian, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, e-mail to Tyrone Steen, November 13, 2008.

²¹ Blegen (1941), p. 244.

²² Nelson, p. viii.

²³ Nelson and Fevold, pp. 253-254.

²⁴ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 3.

²⁵ Steen, p. 6.

²⁶ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 3.

²⁷ Semmingsen, p. 137.

²⁸ Nelson and Fevold, pp. 124, 151.

²⁹ Joel Thoreson, Chief Archivist, Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Elk Grove Village, IL, e-mail to Tyrone Steen, March 10, 2008.

³⁰ Mark Granquist, Historian, Luther Seminar, St. Paul, MN, e-mail to Tyrone Steen, March 02, 2009.

³¹ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 5.

³² Sparrow, p. 37.

³³ Granquist, March 02, 2009.

³⁴ Thoreson, March 10, 2008

³⁵ 80th Anniversary Booklet, pp. 4-7.

³⁶ Lovoll, p. 224.

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³⁷ 80th Anniversary Booklet, pp. 3-4, 6.

³⁸ ibid, pp. 5-6.

³⁹ Deed Record, Big Stone County, Minnesota, June 10, 1896, Book U, p. 58.

⁴⁰ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 6

⁴¹ Semmingsen, p. 82.

⁴² Sparrow, p. 18.

⁴³ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church 1890-1953 Booklet, p. 18.

⁴⁵ ibid, p. 20.

⁴⁶ ibid, p. 21.

⁴⁷ "Nordfjord Laget's Resolutions Of 1938," Clinton (Minnesota) Advocate, 1938, vol. 43.

⁴⁸ ibid.

⁴⁹ Gerde and Qualey, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁰ Amy Douma, "An Interview with Marilyn Chiat," in The Minnesota Preservationist, January-February 2007, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹ Hassler, p. 7.

⁵² Norborg, p. 184.

⁵³ Blegan (1940), p. 247.

⁵⁴ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Photograph, The Northern Star, (Clinton, Minnesota), 18 September 1975.

⁵⁶ 80th Anniversary Booklet, p. 7.

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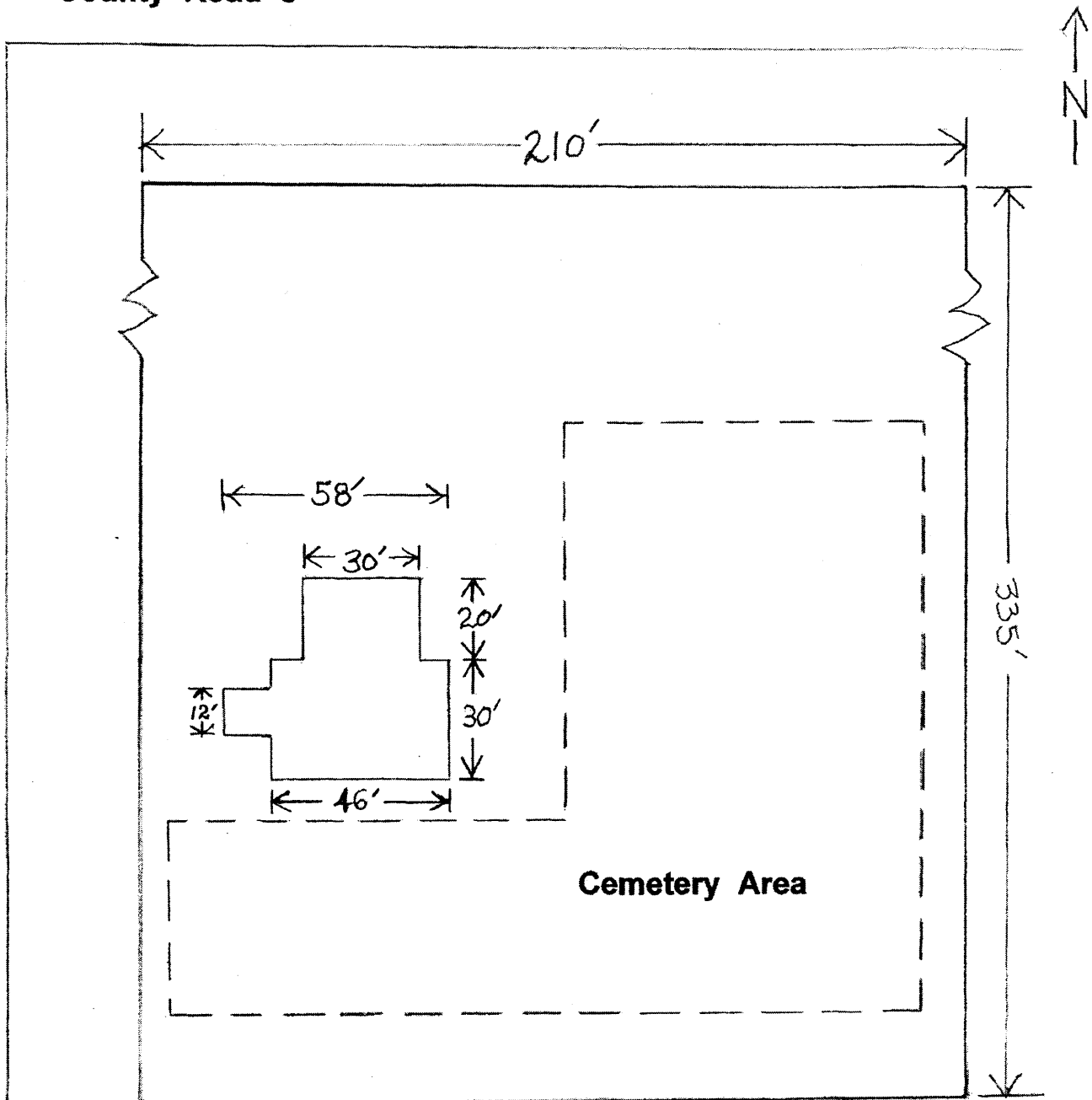
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SKETCH MAP (Figure 1)

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical
Lutheran Church (1896) and Cemetery

County Road 8

U.S. Highway 75



Scale: One inch equals 40 feet

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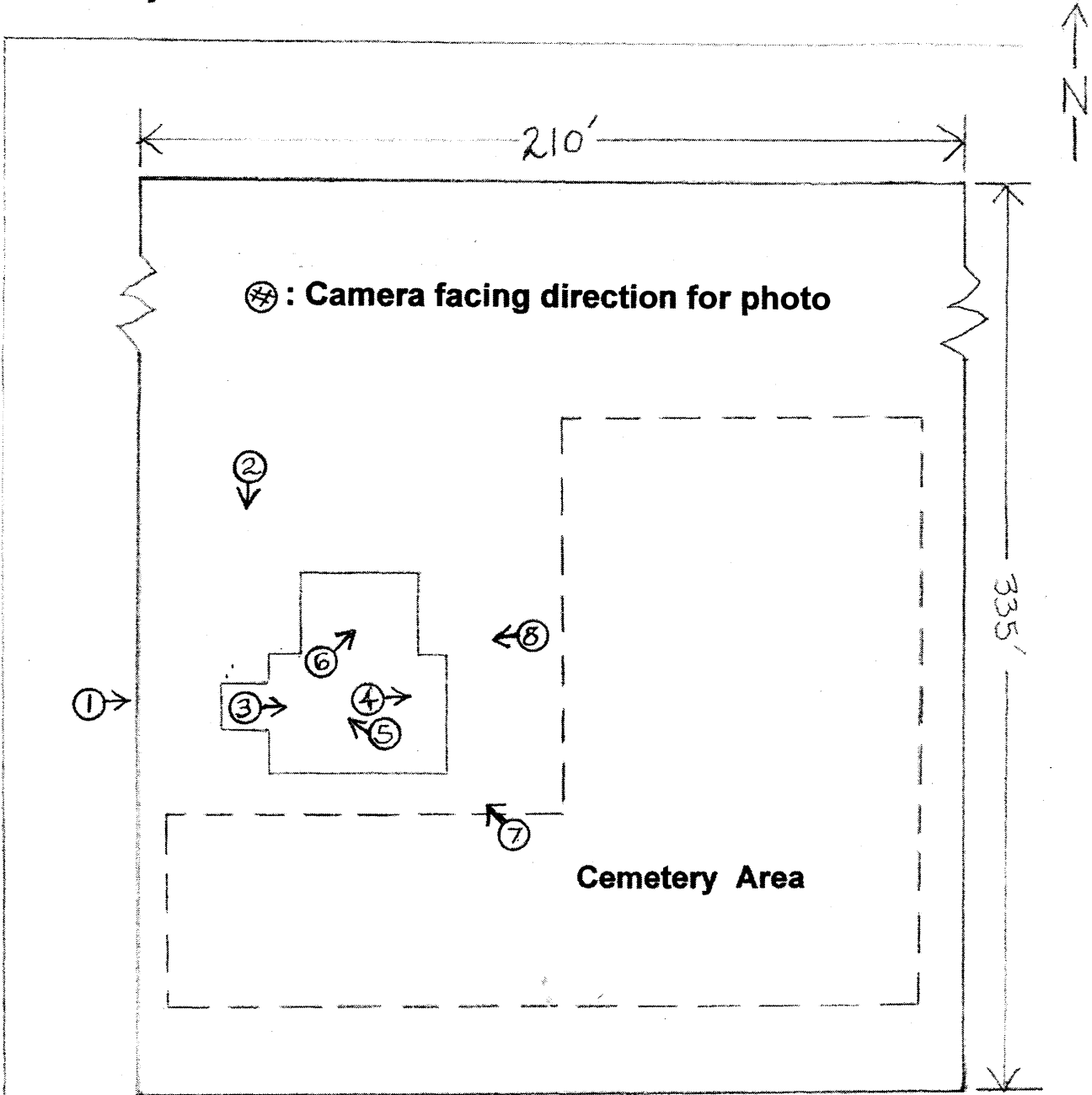
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PHOTO KEY (Figure 2)

St. Pauli Norwegian Evangelical
Lutheran Church (1896) and Cemetery

County Road 8

U.S. Highway 75



Scale: One inch equals 40 feet