

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 25 1979
DATE ENTERED AUG 7 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Flambeau Mission Church

AND/OR COMMON

St. Francis of Assisi Mission Church

2 LOCATION

W of Ladysmith

STREET & NUMBER

South Side of Chippewa River, east of County

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Ladysmith

Road "D" bridge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Holecombe

X VICINITY OF

7th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Wisconsin

55

Rusk

107

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___DISTRICT

___PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

___UNOCCUPIED

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___STRUCTURE

___BOTH

___WORK IN PROGRESS

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ENTERTAINMENT

X RELIGIOUS

___OBJECT

___IN PROCESS

___YES: RESTRICTED

___GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___BEING CONSIDERED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___NO

___MILITARY

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bishop George K. Hammes, Diocese of Superior

STREET & NUMBER

1201 Huglitt Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Superior

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 54880

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Rusk County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

311 Miner Avenue East

CITY, TOWN

Ladysmith

STATE

Wisconsin 54848

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

July 1975

___FEDERAL X STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (slightly)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on a flat plain along the Chippewa River, the Flambeau Mission Church is a gable roofed clapboard building with a projecting vestibule and bell tower in the gable end. Built in 1881, the rectangular church building has a one story clapboard gabled rear section, once used as the priest's quarters. In 1884 a two-story rectangular monastery was added, cross-gabled to the church.

Windows in the church are 6 over 6 sash, while the windows in the rear addition are 4 over 4. Most glass panes are original. The square bell tower was added circa 1903 and features small sash windows at the entry. A small rosette window embellishes the tower and an octagonal spire tops the closed belfry. The spire and the roof on the priest's quarters are covered with wood shingles. The rest of the building was covered with asphalt shingles circa 1945. All portions rest on fieldstone foundations.

The nave of the church has a vaulted ceiling, and walls feature wainscots. A balcony supported by chamfered wood columns is at one end of the nave, above the entrance. The decorative woodwork at the balcony is the only ornate woodwork in the building, as all window and door frames are very simple. Because of the materials used, it is suspected that the balcony was constructed at the same time as the bell tower (1903).

Walls and ceilings are painted and the sanctuary is panelled with imitation wood sheetboard. The altar and pews were formerly in St. Charles Catholic Church at Chippewa Falls, but were brought here in 1945. The original plain wood pews are still used in the balcony. The original wood floor of the church has been covered with linoleum. With the exception of these changes, the church is virtually unaltered since its construction.

The original priest's quarters, now used as the sacristy, has been panelled with the type of sheetboard used in the sanctuary. Little remains of any interior woodwork in this wing. The 1884 addition has only been slightly altered. Originally, the two stories were divided into four rooms each. A wall on the lower level has been removed, creating three rooms. Doors, windows and the wide plank floor are original. This first level is now used for church socials. All the woodwork, plastering and hardware on the second floor is original. Since this level was never used as planned, it has survived in a completely unchanged state since 1884. It is now used for storage.

A cemetery located just east of the church contains the graves of dozens of early parishioners, including those of many American Indian converts. The latter are marked by plain wood crosses, while the white settlers' graves bear stone markers. The earliest of these tombstones is dated 1864. Most stones date from the 1800's and 1890's.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1881, 1884, 1903¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas Orthman et al²

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Flambeau Mission Church is significant as one of the few Amerind missionary churches remaining in the Chippewa Valley, and as the oldest church in Rusk County. It is one of the few structures surviving from the county's oldest pioneer settlement. The church represents an early religious vernacular structure and is significant for its plain craftsmanship and relatively unaltered state.

White settlement of the Flambeau community, located near the confluence of the Chippewa and Flambeau Rivers, began in 1847 and developed in the 1860's with the logging explorations in the Chippewa Valley. The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company farm was a key stopping place along the river and on the stagecoach line from Chippewa Falls. Franciscan missionaries moved into the area about this time, with one of their mission stops being a Chippewa Indian village about a mile and a half east of the Shaw farm. Here, they also administered to the needs of the numerous French-Canadian Catholics in the area.

Whether a mission building existed at the Flambeau mission site before 1881 is uncertain. In that year the present church building was erected near the Indian village, under the supervision of Franciscan missionary Father Chrysostom Verwyst and Father Casimir, who directed Indian missions in the northwest region.

The mission was built by residents of the Flambeau farm area and all materials used were locally supplied. Local builder Thomas Orthman did much of the carpentry and plaster work, as he later did on the monastery addition in 1884. Decoration was minimal and simple, in keeping with the missionary spirit. All windows are plain glass, and the altar, wood trim, and homemade pews are simply crafted. Door hinges are plain. A bell was placed on a stand in front of the church, remaining there until it was moved to the belfry built by Gust Dakota in 1903. A balcony was added at this same time, and its woodwork is a bit more decorative.

1. St. Mary's Church records
2. Ibid.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chippewa Herald-Telegram, October 3, 1972, p. 3.
Chippewa County, Wis., Past and Present. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913.
St. Mary's Church records, Bruce, Wisconsin.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

QUADRANGLE NAME Flambeau Ridge

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 64112410 50178910
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated is bounded on the north by the Chippewa River and on the west by a gravel driveway. It is located in the Southeast 1/4 of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 35, Township 33 North, Range 7 West.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Peters, Project Surveyor (continued)

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

September 1, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

301 Walnut Street

(715)635-2197

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Spooner

Wisconsin 54801

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Richard Mewey

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

5/7/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

John Carl Shull

DATE

8-7-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Emma Jane Saxe*

DATE

8-7-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

Regional Coordinator

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 25 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 7 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER **See below** PAGE 1

Significance (continued)

8. At the church dedication ceremonies one missionary noted that about 70 Chippewa Indians were confirmed. He wrote: "(Here) is one of their (the Franciscans) largest and most promising flocks and here they soon hope to locate a monastery of their order."³ That monastery building remains nearly completely intact today. However, it was never used as a monastery, as the Indian settlement dwindled and the area residents became mostly transient loggers. Traveling missionaries used the addition for living space, and in the early 1900's a local schoolteacher used the building for Catholic religious instruction.

In about 1910 the Flambeau settlement, once bustling with 11 saloons, began to dwindle as logging operations decreased. Since destruction of the 1864 Shaw farm two years ago, the Mission Church is one of the few surviving structures of the Flambeau community. Although the Flambeau Mission has never become a full-time parish (Masses in the summer only), a dedicated group of parishioners has kept the building well-maintained, with only minor alterations.

3. Chippewa County, Wisconsin Past and Present, S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913.

11. Form Prepared By (continued)

Barbara Wyatt

State Historical Society-Preservation Division

816 State Street (608)262-8904

Madison Wisconsin 53706