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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Finnish Congregational Church & Parsonage

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number East Side of Route 131, .9 miles South
of Junction with Route 1 N/A not for publication

city or town So. Thomaston vicinity

state Maine code ME county Knox code 013 zip code 04858

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Erin S. Fitzpatrick 5/18/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

for
Elson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the
National Register 6/24/94
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

Domestic / Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Bungalow

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Wood/Weatherboard

Wood/Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Centrally Located Tower

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage/European

Period of Significance

1921-1944

Significant Dates

1921

c. 1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less Than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	4 8 7 0 3 0	4 8 7 9 6 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1994

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

FINNISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE

Section number 7 Page 2

The Finnish Congregational Church is a rectangular wooden frame building which has a centrally-located entrance tower on its front elevation. With the exception of the unusual shingled overhanging upper stage of the tower, the building is sheathed in weatherboards and rests on a stone foundation.

Facing west, the three-bay principal elevation is composed of the projecting tower and flanking six-over-six windows on the recessed walls of the nave. Paired four-panel doors open into a vestibule and a narrow one-over-one window is located between this opening and the pyramidal upper stage. Each side of this section of the tower, which overhangs the lower one by about twelve inches, is punctuated by a single six-over-six window. It is capped by a hip roof.

The main body of the church is twenty-six feet by forty feet in dimension and covered by a gable roof with broad overhanging eaves. Each side elevation contains a trio of paired six-over-six windows. There are two windows and a door on the rear wall.

Inside, the building is finished throughout in tongue-and-groove sheathing. The chancel is located within a narrow recessed opening at the east end in front of which is a low curved balustrade with steps at both ends. Doors located at the sides of the chancel lead into a kitchen and dining room (doors at the rear of the chancel are non-functional). A double row of pews separated by a central aisle occupy the nave.

To the south of the church building is the one-story three-bay parsonage. Its gabled facade has a full width hipped roof entry porch. The parsonage is sheathed in weatherboards and has a bay window on the south side elevation and a shed roofed toilet at the rear.

Immediately to the rear of the church is the small gable roofed outhouse and woodshed. The frame building is in a dilapidated condition.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

FINNISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & PARSONAGE

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

The Finnish Congregational Church and Parsonage in South Thomaston consists of a pair of modest vernacular frame buildings which were erected in 1921 and c. 1925 respectively. It is the first religious edifice built by the Finnish community in Knox County, and it continues to be used by the descendants of the original congregants. The church is significant under criterion A for its association with the ethnic heritage of the Finns. Criteria consideration A also applies by virtue of its religious use.

According to church records, the Finnish Congregational Church was formally organized in 1921. Prior to the erection of the church building, religious services had been held in the St. Georges River schoolhouse by a Finnish pastor, Lauri P. Miettinen. In its May 12, 1921, edition, the Courier Gazette (Rockland) announced the forthcoming building project, noting that the materials had been salvaged from the Booth Brothers Boarding House in Waldoboro. It further stated that:

The building has already been torn down, and the lumber will be shipped by rail the last of this week. The new church will be 26X40 feet, seating about 50 persons, and will cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000. Aid is being given by the Congregational Missionary Society. It will be ready for occupancy late in the fall.

The adjacent one-story bungalow style parsonage was built in the late 1920s.

Although a scholarly study of the Finnish immigration to Maine has not been conducted, census figures indicate that the influx of foreign born Finns into Maine between 1900 and 1920 generally followed national trends, although proportionally their numbers in this state grew at a more rapid rate. The statistical analyses of the census show that the Finnish population in Maine grew from 179 persons in 1900 to 1,393 in 1920. (There was no separate breakdown for persons born in Finland in the 1890 analysis, but their numbers were smaller simply because the "all other" category of ethnicity for Maine was 156.) By comparison, the population nationally in the period grew from 54,054 to 149,824. In 1910, slightly more than 70% of the Finnish population was concentrated in Knox and Oxford, 51% of whom resided in Knox. The settlement pattern was more disbursed a decade later, but these two areas still accounted for one-half of the total number.

The Finns in Knox County appear to have settled primarily in the areas of Long Cove, South Thomaston, Waldoboro, and Warren. Farming was probably the principal occupation for most of these people, although others were employed at nearby granite quarries. The Courier-Gazette article mentions that the first farm taken up by a Finnish family along the St. George Road had occurred twenty-five years earlier (1896). Studies of the Finnish immigration nationally underscore the fact that although employed initially

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Continuation Sheet**

FINNISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE

Section number 8 Page 3

in the relatively high wage extraction industries (principally the iron mines of the Midwest), the goal of many Finns was to acquire a farm. It is likely that this pattern was repeated in Maine where the existence of numerous abandoned farms made this goal readily achievable. However, further investigation needs to be carried out to verify this hypothesis.

The establishment of a Finnish Congregational Church by the immigrant community in South Thomaston mirrors the pattern in Massachusetts and New York where the missionary activity of the American Congregational Church had focussed on this ethnic group. Elsewhere in the country, the Finns were associated with separatist Lutheran congregations and the Methodists.

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National Park Service

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FINNISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & PARSONAGE

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

"A Finnish Church." Courier Gazette (Rockland, Maine). May 12, 1921.

Abstract of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Census. 1900 and 1910. Washington:
USGPO. 1904 and 1912.

Fourteenth Census of the U.S. Taken in the Year 1920. Vol. III: Population
Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States. Washington:
GPO. 1922.

Mernstrom, Stephen, ed. Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups.
Cambridge: Belknap Press. 1980.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FINNISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & PARSONAGE

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies the Town of South Thomaston Tax Map 21, Lot 12.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary embraces the entire rural lot historically associated with the Finnish Church.