

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NOV 14 1988

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 4 1/2 miles South of Claremont  not for publication  
city, town Claremont  vicinity  
state South Dakota code SD county Brown code SD 013 zip code 57432

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 11/2/88  
State or Federal agency and bureau SDHPO

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. [Signature] 12/20/88  
 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Structure  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Structure  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Modified Nave Plan  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Wood  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
ETHNIC HERITAGE/European  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1899 - 1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A            
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B            
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Diane Johnson, Church Secretary (w/technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO Staff)  
 organization Augustana Lutheran Church date August 12, 1988  
 street & number R R 2, Box 205 telephone 605-294-5823  
 city or town Groton state South Dakota zip code 57445

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Rising prominently above its surrounding landscape in the vast flat plain of eastern Brown County, the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church is a large wood frame country church building with both Gothic Revival and Classical Revival features. Resting on a concrete foundation, the building is rectangular in form with a large square bell tower serving as the narthex and shallow but wide transepts projecting from the center of each of the axial facades. It is sheathed with clapboard siding and capped by a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. Located behind the altar on the west (rear) gable end is a square hip-roofed room, which may have originally served as a sacristy but is now used as a kitchen. A brick chimney rises off-center on the west gable end. In the mid-1950s, a 24-foot-by-24-foot one-story dining room was connected to the southwest corner of the original church.

Fenestration includes twelve long Gothic arched stain-glass windows, which are covered with wooden storm windows. The entry door is capped by a Gothic arched overlight. Higher in the bell tower are a large Gothic arched window and a simplified rose window. The belfry is pierced on each side by paired Gothic arched openings with louvers. It is capped by a tall shingled steeple with a Latin cross at the peak. The corners of the bell tower are marked by pilasters. Dentils surround the tower just below the belfry. A wide band of diagonal siding (reminiscent of a flat frieze) marks the eave line on both axial sides and on the east (front) gable end.

The interior is appointed with a variety of traditional hand-carved furnishings including an altar and communion rail, an elevated pulpit (on a four foot high pedestal) covered by a suspended hood, and pews. Free form wooden pillars support the balcony. All original baseboards and trim are intact. The lighted transepts are used for seating. Modern paint colors and carpeting have been applied to the ceiling, walls, and floors; however, these items do not detract from the original architectural elements of the church.

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Under Criteria A and C of the National Register Criteria, Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church is significant in the areas of architecture and ethnic heritage/European. It is an excellent example of ornate country churches once common to South Dakota and a particularly good example of Swedish-American vernacular church architecture. In addition, it is associated with the emigration of Swedes into Dakota Territory during the expansion years of the 1880s and displays many of the ethnic symbols they brought with them. Under the South Dakota Historical Preservation Plan, the property relates to the historic context and sub contexts labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, B. 6. Ethnic Enclaves/Swedes; and Religion.

Brown County was created in 1879 and organized in 1881. It lies in the middle of a fertile, relatively stonefree plain that once was the bed of an ancient glacial lake. The topography of the region is extremely flat. Snaking its way through the county from north to south is the slow-flowing non-navigable James River. During the Great Dakota Boom of the 1880s, many European immigrants came to this treeless prairie in response to promotion schemes sponsored by railroads, land companies, and the territorial government. These European ethnic groups tended to settle in seemingly isolated communities where many traditions of their Old World homelands, including language and religion, could bind them together and in some ways make life in the new country easier. Over time, at various rates, the groups assimilated into a mass society, still keeping some of their cherished customs. Among the diverse European ethnic groups that came to Brown County were the Swedes, who settled primarily in Riverside and Claremont townships at the eastern edge of the county. Many of them had first settled in Chisago County, Minnesota, and already had ties with established Swedish-American Lutheran congregations.

Shortly after their arrival in Brown County, in the early 1880s, the Swedes formed the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Church and arranged for a visiting pastor. In 1887, a sister congregation, Highlanda, was formed and soon began sharing pastors with Augustana. By 1897, the combined pastorate arranged for the services of a resident pastor. In 1899, construction was begun on the church edifice. A barn to shelter horses was also built but was destroyed by a storm in 1927.

William Carlson, a Swedish immigrant from Center City, Minnesota, was hired as general contractor, while much of the labor was supplied by congregation members. The church is similar to the Chisago Lake Church in Minnesota, where many of the founders had worshiped before coming to Dakota Territory. This parent Chisago Church is said to be modeled after the church of Madesjo parish in Smaland, Sweden.

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Mr. Carlson carved the elevated pulpit by hand in Center City and brought it in pieces to the church for assembly. By the time the church was dedicated in March of 1900 the sanctuary was completely furnished with the pulpit, an altar, a communion rail, and pews, all of which are extant today. In 1903, a bell was purchased and installed in the belfry. In 1911, a full basement was constructed under the church and a coal furnace was installed. That same year, a pipe organ was presented to the congregation by the "Happy Circle".

In 1952, the Luther League helped the congregation buy an electric organ. In 1953, a fellowship hall annex was attached to the southwest (rear) corner of the church. In 1957, the room behind the altar (sacristy) was remodeled into a kitchen and rest rooms were installed in the basement.

Augustana Church also has an interesting cemetery history. Shortly after the congregation was organized, member Sven Henstrand donated a parcel of land a few miles from the church for use as a cemetery; however, for some unknown reason, the congregation did not get a deed to the ground. Eventually, Henstrand lost his homestead to a loan company foreclosure. The trustees of the church were reluctant to approach the mortgagee for fear of having to pay an exorbitant price for land they thought they already owned. Instead, they arranged to purchase the entire quarter section around the cemetery on a crop-sharing contract with members farming the ground for the financial benefit of the church and cemetery. The farm land is now leased to private operators. In 1983, the Augustana Cemetery Corporation was established as a separate entity. This non-profit corporation continues to use revenue from the farm land to support the Augustana congregation.

Swedish was the only language used in services until 1925. At that time, it was decided to use Swedish only one Sunday per month. That practice is now discontinued.

Several other symbols of Swedish-Lutheran ethnicity can be found about the church. Most obvious are such interior furnishings as the elevated pulpit and the Gothic carvings on the altar. At the church meeting of January 1927, a decision was made to have the pedestal of the pulpit cut down two feet and to move the entire unit toward the altar. This action was never carried out, and the pulpit remains in a traditional location and appears exactly as it did when built by the Swedish immigrant Carlson. The exterior, too, exhibits such symbols. Unlike many of their Lutheran brethren on the frontier who preferred less ecclesiastical architecture for their churches, these Swedes retained many of the Gothic features of churches in the Old Country. Prominent among these is the tall steeple with a cross at the peak.

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In addition, the church incorporates classical revival components like pilasters, a modified or simulated frieze, and dentils. Symmetrical transepts are also not often found on frontier Lutheran churches, which favor a simpler nave plan. Almost mimicking the detached nature of a Romanesque campanile, the bell tower is larger than most of its contemporaneous counterparts. David Murphy of the Nebraska State Historical Society has recorded similar structures in that state. He offers the explanation that this classical revivalism mixed in with Gothic features is a product of 'Swedish-American Romanticism'. The design influences are from both 19th-Century Sweden and 19th-Century America.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church continues to serve a tiny yet vibrant congregation made up of descendants of the founders. Except for the 1950s annex and slight decor changes, the church appears much as it did when it was constructed. In excellent condition, it remains a tribute to those Swedish immigrants who settled the region and to the architectural influences they brought with them.

The period of significance of the nominated property extends from its date of construction in 1899 to 1938, the established 50-year cut-off date for the National Register. The property derives its significance from its architectural and historical distinction and therefore qualifies for listing in the Register under criteria consideration A.



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A:son-Palmqvist, Lena. Building Traditions Among Swedish Settlers in Rural Minnesota: Material Culture-- Reflecting Persistence or Decline of Traditions. Uddevalla, Sweden: The Nordiska Museet/ The Emigrant Institute, 1983. pp. 85-86.

Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, Claremont, South Dakota: 1884-1894, One Hundredth Anniversary, June 9-10, 1984. N.p. 1984.

Board of Trustees Records. Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church.

De Jong, Gerald F. "Dakota Resources: A Preliminary Guide for Studying European Ethnic Groups in South Dakota: A Bibliographic Essay." South Dakota History. XV, n. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1985): pp. 66-114.

Erpestad, David and David Wood. "The Architectural History of South Dakota." Draft Ms. Vermillion, SD: State Historical Preservation Center, N.d. Chapter 8 (Early Churches).

Groton (South Dakota) Independent. various issues from 1884 to the present.

History Committee of the Brown County Museum and Historical Society. Brown County History. Aberdeen, SD: North Plains Press, 1980. Passim.

Johnson, Emeroy. A Church is Planted: The story of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference, 1851-1876. N.p. 1948. p.89.

Murphy, David. "Swedish-American Romanticism: Cervin's Church at Wakefield, Nebraska." Architecture Nebraska. IV (1983): pp.45-49.

Nordstrom, Byron, ed. The Swedes in Minnesota. Minneapolis: T. S. Denison and Company, Inc. p. 43.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES: Since the appropriate U.S.G.S. quad map does not have UTM marks for calculating the UTM references of the property, that reference has been calculated in longitude and latitude.

Reference: 98 degrees 00 minutes 02 seconds longitude/  
45 degrees 36 minutes 04 seconds latitude.

Huffton Quad (1952), scale= 1:24000.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated property is bounded by a set of imaginary lines that intersect to form a rectangle centered around the rectangular building. The eastern boundary line lies 20 feet east of the easternmost wall of the bell tower and is parallel to that wall. The southern boundary line lies 20 feet south of the southernmost wall of the modern addition and is parallel to that wall. The western boundary line lies 20 feet west of the westernmost wall of the kitchen and is parallel to that wall. The northern boundary lies 20 feet north of the northernmost wall of the north projecting transept and is parallel to that wall. The property is located in the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 35, Township 125 North, Range 60 West, 5th Principal Meridian, in Brown County, South Dakota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundaries of the nominated property are set to include only the church building and its attached addition. Surrounding shelterbelts and public roadways are excluded.

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PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

1.  
Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by John Rau  
May 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
East and north facades, camera facing southwest  
Photo No. 1

2.  
Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by John Rau  
May 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
West and north facades, camera facing southeast  
Photo No. 2

3.  
Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by John Rau  
May 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
East and south facades, camera facing northwest  
Photo No. 3

4.  
Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by John Rau  
May 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
East facade, camera facing west  
Photo No. 4

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5.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by John Rau  
May 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Close-up detail of east facade, camera facing west  
Photo No. 5

6.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by Carolyn Torma  
July 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior toward altar, facing west  
Photo No. 6

7.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by Carolyn Torma  
July 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior toward north transept, facing northwest  
Photo No. 7

8.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by Carolyn Torma  
July 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior toward pulpit, facing southwest  
Photo No. 8

9.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church  
Claremont Vicinity, Brown County, South Dakota  
by Carolyn Torma  
July 1988  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior, detail of column, facing west  
Photo No. 9