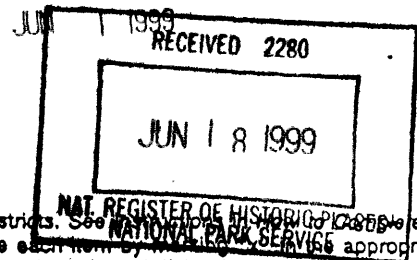


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

827



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See National Register Bulletin 16A. Complete each item by entering 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 Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church

other names/site number Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church

2. Location

street & number 1897 140th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Swedesburg vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Henry code 087 zip code 52652

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.)

Patricia Shinkins DSHPO 6-10-99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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:)

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 7-15-99

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	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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

Historical & Architectural Resources of Henry County, IA 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility/Church

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility/Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/20th C Revivals: Late Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Limestone

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928-c. 1945

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Weibley, W.F.

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	6 2 2 1 6 0	4 5 5 1 2 6 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 Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant

organization Henry County Historic Preservation Comm. date March 1999

street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone (515) 682-2743

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

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 Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church

street & number 1897 140th Street telephone _____

city or town Swedesburg state IA zip code 52652

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church (1928) is located in the far southeast corner of Section 21 (T73N R6W) at the northwest corner of Highway 218 and 140th Street (Henry County) in Swedesburg, Iowa. The church's cemetery is located to the north and west of the building.

The church was designed in the Gothic Revival style by Burlington architect W.F. Weibley. The rectangular building faces east and measures 42' x 80' with a bell tower at the southeast corner measuring 11 1/2' square. The exterior is of textured yellowish-tan brick with some orange highlights. Bedford limestone is used as the trim material. Fenestration throughout features lancet arches, with the front entrance and window recessed in stone Gibbs surrounds. The building rests on a high foundation with a double flight of broad steps leading up to the front entrance. Limestone is used for the coping along the gable roof and parapet with a stone cross at the east gable peak. This same stone serves as caps for the Gothic buttresses that surround the building (four on the façade, six on the bell tower, and five on each side elevation).

The facade (east elevation) is symmetrical with the bell tower offset to the left. The large double doors are of heavy oak construction. These doors are flanked by a narrow Gothic window on each side, and a second window is located at the north end of the façade. A lighted cross is located directly above this north window. The stained glass window above the front entrance is the largest in the church. The bell tower at the southeast corner of the building features a crenelated roofline with stone coping. A single entry door on the east side of the tower leads to the lower level of the church. Above that door is a single tall slender Gothic arched window. A stone belt course encircles the structure just below the next level which is the tower proper. It features two small rectangular windows topped by two large lancet arched openings with louvers to protect the bell. The south tower elevation replicates the east except that there is no door at ground level. On the west elevation only the upper level with twin louvered openings is visible, while the north elevation is a blank brick wall.

The 80' long north and south elevations are divided into six bays. The easternmost bay on each elevation features a tall narrow stained glass lancet window, while bays two through five each have a wider window with double lancet arches. Bay six (at the west end) contains a simple rectangular window with clear glass. The lower level (basement) features rectangular windows directly below the stained glass main floor windows. Each basement opening contains a single window surrounded by glass blocks. No date has been determined for the installation of these blocks. At the east end of the south elevation the window has recently been replaced by a door which allows access to the new elevator.

The west (rear) elevation features one Gothic stained glass window with twin lancet arches above the altar. A simple rectangular window is located to the north, and an entry door (reached by a flight of steps) is located to the south. In the center of this west wall at ground level is a vestibule that was added in 1970 to protect the doorway to the basement.

In 1978 protective coverings were placed over all the stained glass windows.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 2

On the interior the main floor consists of a narthex, sanctuary, and bell tower, with small rooms at the northwest and southwest corners flanking the altar. The southwest room is the pastor's study.

The narthex is entered from the east by the large oak double doors. Another set of double doors (oak with stained glass) opens into the sanctuary. The center aisle slopes downward toward the altar at the west end. The altar area is raised three steps above the floor. The organ and piano are located to the north, with the four pew choir loft immediately behind the instruments. The organ pipes are located in the Gothic arches on each side of the altar. The subject of the stained glass window above the altar is Christ in Gethsemene. All pews and woodwork are of oak. A balcony extends across the east end of the church. A stenciled pattern is found on the ceiling, and there are nine original hanging lights with opal glass. The new elevator shaft occupies an area in the southeast corner of the sanctuary. Although several sections of pews had to be removed for this, it is remarkably non-intrusive. The bell tower contains steps leading to the balcony as well as a Sunday School room.

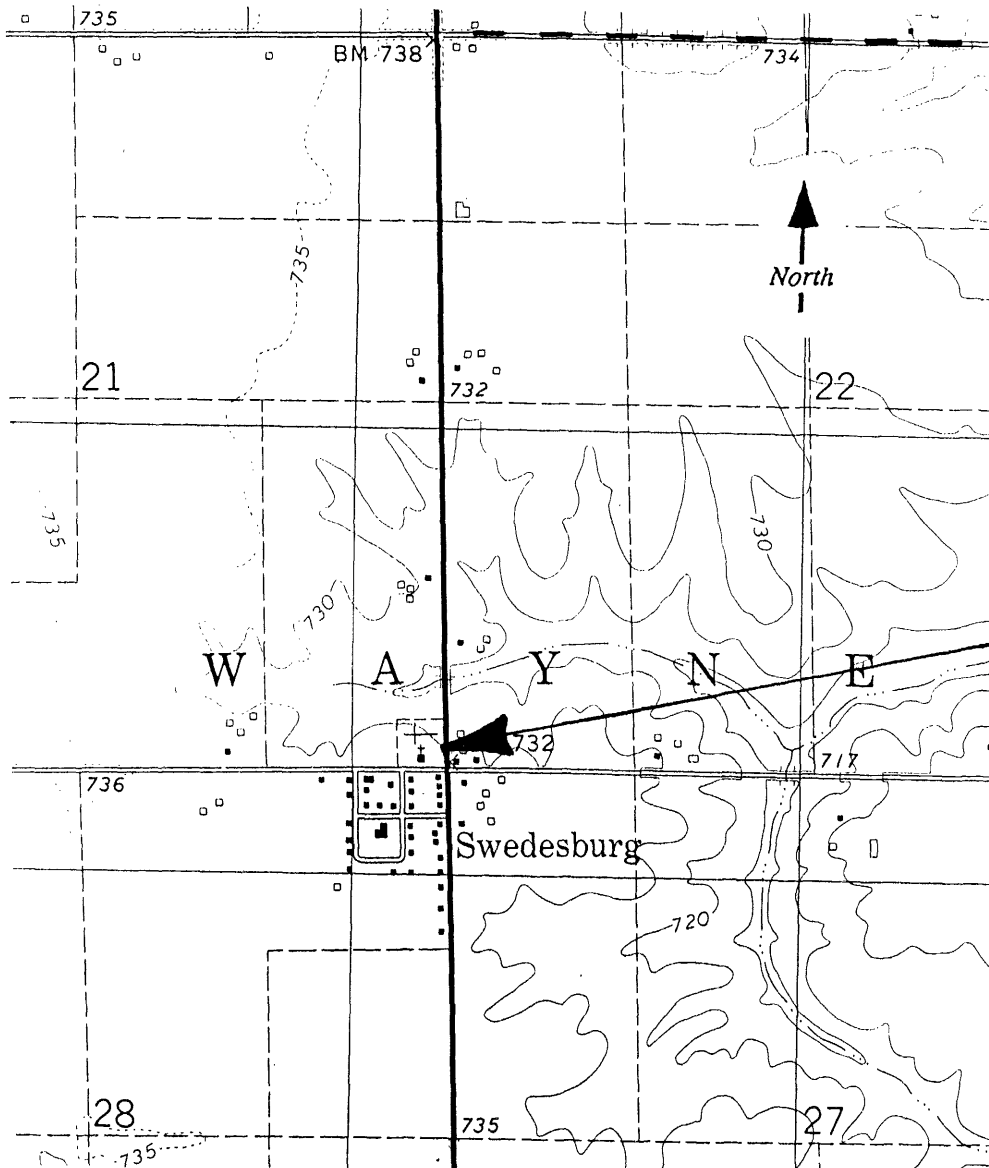
The basement was remodeled in the late 1950s to house a number of small Sunday school rooms along the outside walls with a larger common room in the center. No large community room, or fellowship hall, is found in the church. The Parish Hall (located in the Public Square one block south) provides the space for large congregation dinners and events.

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church retains a high level of integrity, with the major alterations being the addition of the vestibule on the rear elevation, and the installation of the elevator. It is representative of a popular 20th century ecclesiastical style, Gothic Revival, executed in a rural environment.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 3

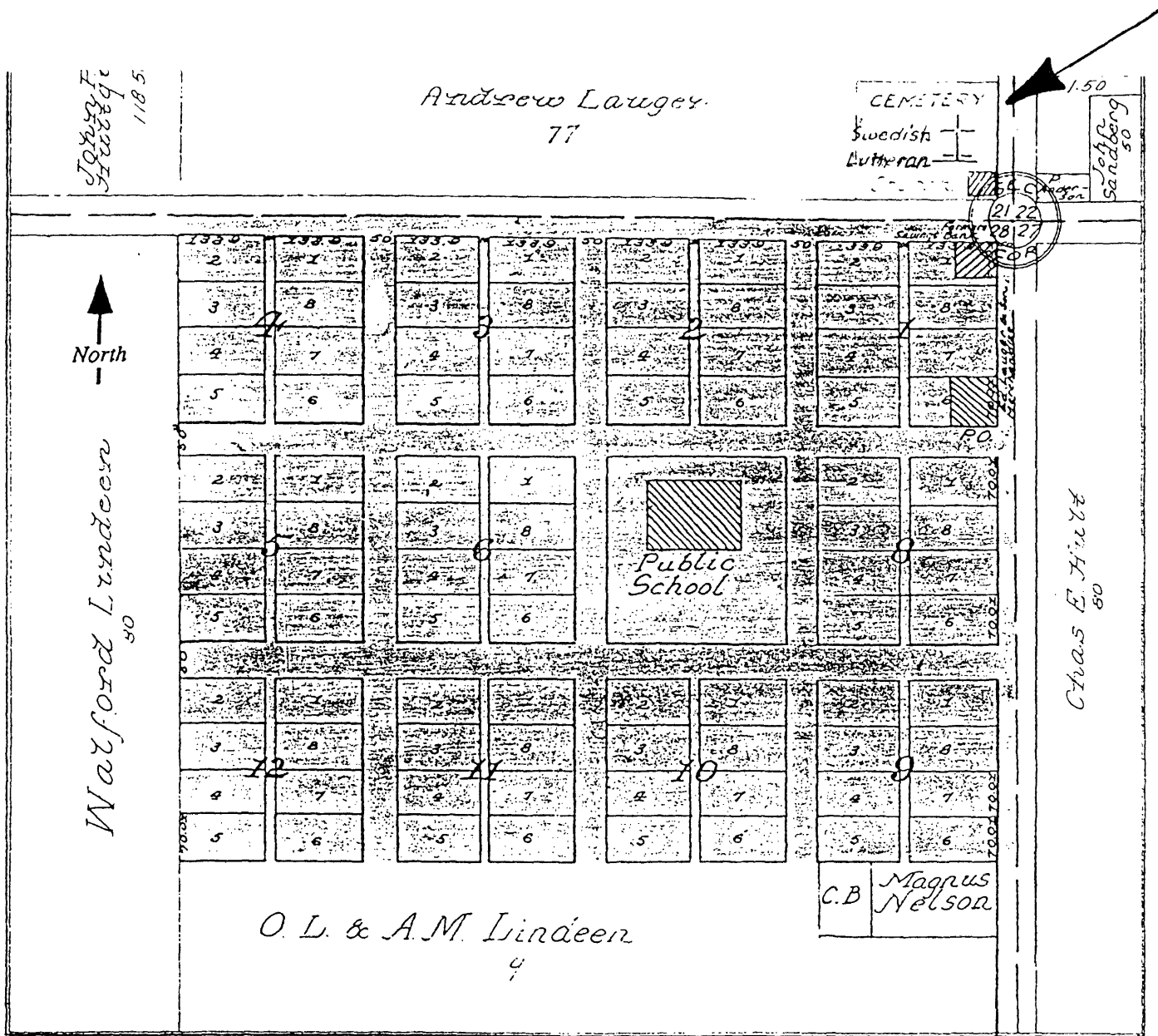


U.S.G.S. map showing location of church.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 4

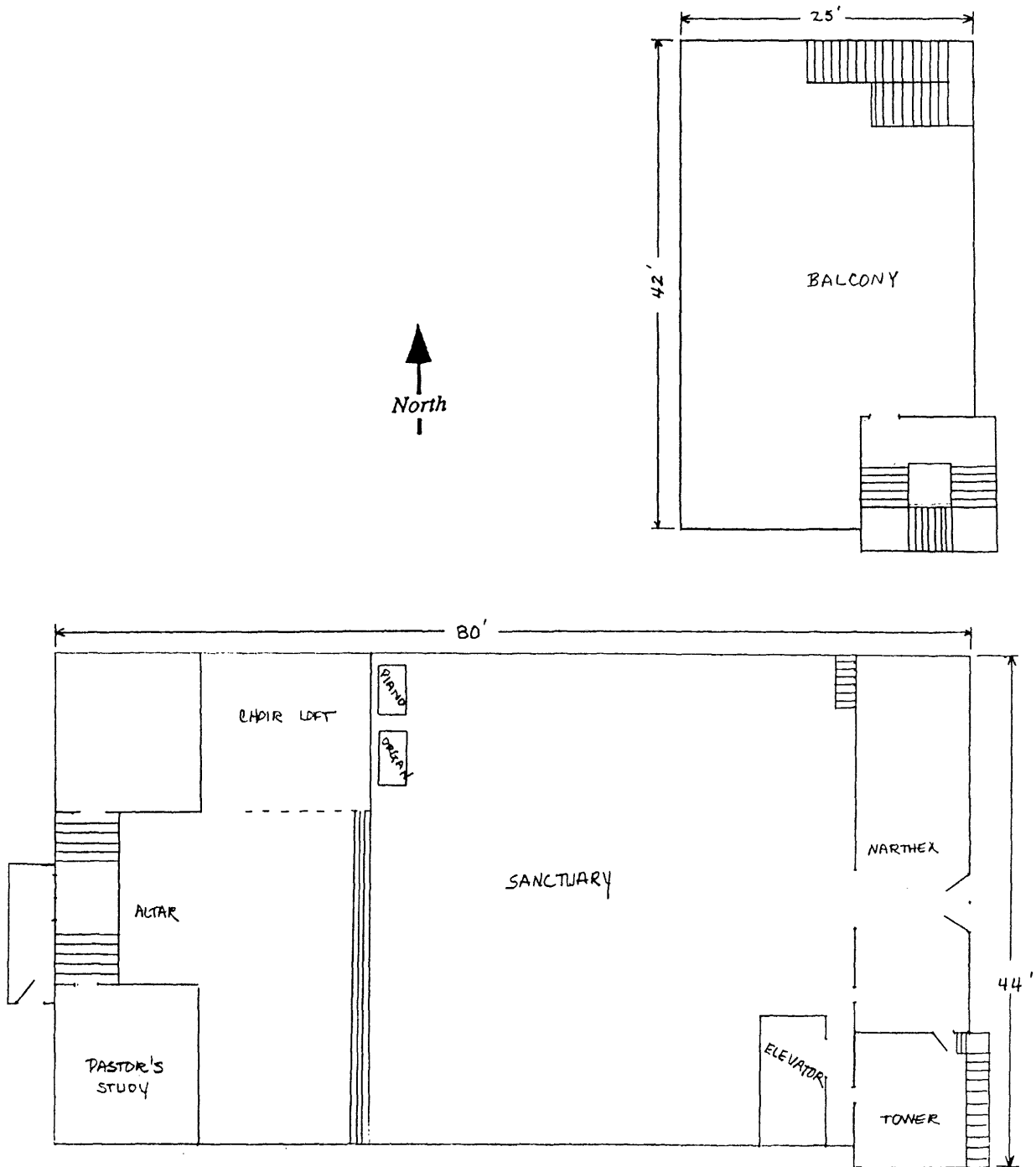


Plat map showing location of the church
in regard to the village of Swedesburg.
(From 1917 Standard Atlas of Henry County)

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 5

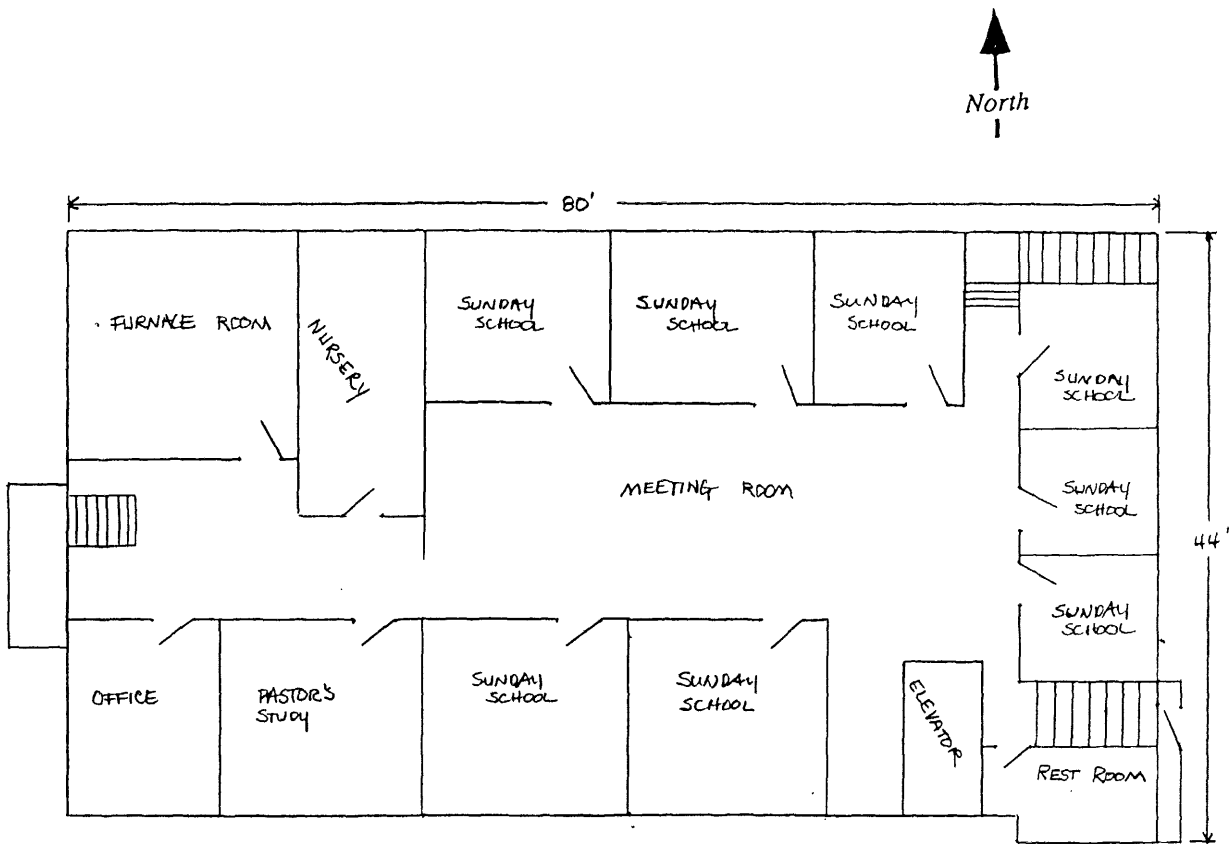


Floor plan of first floor and balcony of church.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 6



Floor plan of basement of church.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 7

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church (1928) is locally significant under Criterion A as the cultural center of Swedish heritage in Swedesburg and Wayne Township, and under Criterion C as a good example of the popular Gothic Revival style as executed by Burlington architect W.F. Weibley. It meets criteria consideration A as it derives significance from its architectural design and ethnic association.

The present building is the third church on this site. It continues the strong Swedish traditions on which the original church was established in Wayne Township in 1866. The Swedesburg church is a descendent of the Lutheran church established in New Sweden (near Lockridge in Jefferson County) in 1848. By the early 1860s there was a need for a new Swedish settlement, and Pastor Hakan Olson of New Sweden set out to locate a site. He visited Wayne Township in 1863, liked what he saw, and started promoting the area. The first Swedish settlers arrived in 1865. On May 7, 1866 the first meeting was held to establish the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church at Swedesburgh (note the use of the "h" at the end which was dropped in the 1890s). Almost immediately Moses Lemmon donated one and one-half acres in the far southeast corner of Section 21 for a church but it was two years before the structure was actually built. During this period there was no regular pastor, with a student serving the congregation during the summer months. Hakan Olson came from New Sweden every third Sunday to preach. In 1868 the young congregation began the construction of a white frame church on the donated land. The carpenters who built the church roomed with the Charles Hult family across the road. The following year, 1869, Hakan Olson accepted the call to become the pastor at Swedesburg and moved to the community. The village of Swedesburg developed as Olson sold lots to many individuals and built a house for himself on the land he owned just south of the church. The church was the focal point for community activity, social as well as religious.

By 1882 the church had become too small for the growing congregation and there was talk of building a larger one. The need became immediate when fire destroyed the original church in January 1883. Construction soon began on a new, larger church. Located on the same site, the church measured 40' x 67', seated 500 people, and had a 110' steeple. It is said that the bell in this tower could be heard for seven or eight miles. The new wood frame church was painted white and it became known as "The Big White Church in the Little White Town." Traditions established in the original church continued to be an important part of the new one as well. These included the sewing societies, quilting bees, and Ladies' Aid Society. A choir had been established in 1879 and that same year the decision was made to toll the bell at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday to signal the beginning of the Sabbath. The traditional Christmas morning service was held at 4:00 A.M., then moved to 5:00 A.M., and finally to 6:00 A.M. Although all services were originally conducted in Swedish, beginning about 1910 the children's Sunday school classes were conducted in English, and slowly, more and more classes and activities in the church began using English on a regular basis. The last group to speak Swedish was the men's Sunday school class, and by the 1920s it too had adopted English. This transition from Swedish to English was undoubtedly caused by several factors, including

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 8

the fact that many of the children were speaking English at school and learning Swedish as a second language, and, with World War I there was the hostility of many toward non-English speaking neighbors.

In June 1927 the Swedish church was again ravaged by fire. It occurred on a Saturday night during a thunderstorm. Roads in the area had not yet been paved, and it was very difficult for fire equipment to get to Swedesburg from Mount Pleasant and other towns. The church was destroyed before help arrived. Life had changed in the decades since the "Big White Church" was built. Automobiles had become popular, if not common, and it was possible to travel comfortably to nearby towns. A highway system was in place, with paving scheduled for the Red Ball Route through Swedesburg in the next few years. It would have been very easy for the congregation to decide not to rebuild, to simply join a neighboring church. However, just as in 1883, the congregation made a unanimous decision to rebuild on the site. An architect from Burlington, W.F. Weibley, was commissioned to design the new building. (Little has been learned of Weibley's career. At about this same time he was responsible for some interior remodeling for the Brazelton House Hotel, NRHP, in Mount Pleasant, Iowa.)

Weibley's plans called for a Gothic Revival style church of tan brick with trim of Bedford limestone. It was somewhat larger than the "Big White Church," measuring 42' x 80' with the entrance on the east elevation, facing the highway. Gothic Revival had become very popular in the early decades of the 20th century, with many churches in the 1920s being built in the style. The decision to invest in an architect and the use of brick for this rural church speak to the importance of the building to the people of the congregation, the deep faith they had in the continued existence of both their church and their community, and the continuing prosperity of the area. With the dedication of the new building, services and activities continued as before. An organ was installed and the choir continued to sing. Sunday school and many other activities were held in the church proper, while large congregation dinners and other special events were held in the Parish Hall one block to the south. Local customs included not only the Christmas morning service, but Thanksgiving Dinner (held until 1952), mission suppers, and an annual "Smorgasbord" (which began prior to WW II). With the U.S. entrance into WW II the era of European emigration basically came to an end. The world after the war was one of rapid and major change. In 1966 the Rev. Delmar Karstens, the first pastor who was not of Swedish descent, was called to the pulpit. While this was a departure from previous pastors, Swedish traditions continued to be practiced. The bell signaling the beginning of the Sabbath tolled each Saturday at 6:00 P.M. until the 1970s when it was discontinued due to structural concerns.

Today (1999) the Swedish heritage of the Swedesburg church is still readily apparent. Each Christmas morning the 6:00 A.M. service includes the choir singing "Hosianna" and "All Hail to Thee O Blessed Morn" in Swedish. Funeral services include one hymn in Swedish "Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara" (Children of the Heavenly Father). The traditional "smorgasbord" is served in December. There is a strong Swedish presence in the village of Swedesburg, and it is centered on the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. This building is significant because of this link to this Swedish heritage in Wayne Township.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number 9 & 10 Page 9

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_____. Unpublished writings. Collection of the Swedish Heritage Museum, Swedesburg.

Brooks and Whiting. Atlas, Henry County, Iowa 1895. St. Louis: W.E. Stephens & Co., 1895.

Fulton, Charles J. History of Jefferson County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914, Vol II, p 202.

Hult, Inez. Oral History Interview conducted 1 March 1997 by Herbert Hult, and unpublished manuscript.

Ogle, George A. Standard Atlas of Henry County, Iowa Including a Plat Book. Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1917.

Stephenson, Oliver. Unpublished letters. Collection of the Swedish Heritage Museum.

Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church, 100th Anniversary, 1866-1966. Swedesburg, IA: Published by the Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1966.

_____. Official Minutes of the Church (including secretary's notes in Swedish from 1866-1920).

_____. Church Year Books (2 in Swedish, 3 in English).

GEOGRAPHIC DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description

This resource is located in the extreme southeast corner T73N R6W Sec 21. It is bounded on the east by U.S. Highway 218 and on the south by 140th Street. The parcel of land includes only the church building proper and is defined as: Beginning at a point 10' south of the southeast corner of the building, thence west 90', thence north 62', thence east 100', thence south 62', thence west 10' to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This is the area historically associated with this resource. It does not include the adjacent cemetery.

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

Swedish Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Henry County, Iowa

Section number Photos Page 10

These photographs were taken by Dennis Hult in December 1998 for the Henry County Historic Preservation Commission. The negatives are stored in the files of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Community Programs Bureau, Des Moines, IA.

1. Façade looking due west.
2. Façade and south elevation looking WNW.
3. South elevation looking north.
4. West (rear) and south elevations looking NE.
5. North elevation with cemetery in foreground looking S.
6. Façade looking SW.