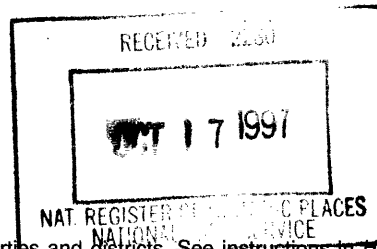


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Church of the Most Holy Trinity (Catholic)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 4938 N. Washington St. (Veseli) not for publication N/A

city or town Wheatland Township (Veseli) Lonsdale vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county Rice code 131 zip code 55046

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.)

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Title Van R. Stewart Date 10/17/97

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State of Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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

Signature of commenting 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]
Edson A. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11/13/97

Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Name of Property

Rice County, MN
County and State

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	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	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

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Romanesque - Basilican

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt, Ceramic Tile

other

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)

Social History

Ethnic Heritage: European

Period of Significance

1905 - 1947

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Johnston, Clarence H. (architect)

Mohlke, Ernest (builder)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Church of the Most Holy Trinity

Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Name of Property

Rice County, MN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References Veseli, Minn. Quad 1974
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	463470	4929060
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 David C. Anderson

organization _____ date May 28, 1997

street & number 169 Lundy Bridge Drive telephone (319) 382-3079

city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

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 Church of the Most Holy Trinity

street & number 4939 N. Washington St. telephone (507) 744-2823

city or town Veseli state MN zip code 55046

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.

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Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Rice County, MN

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Church of the Most Holy Trinity is on an approximately 330 foot square parcel of land (Lots 19-24 in Block V) in the Village of Veseli, which is located in the southwest ¼ of Section 10, Wheatland Township (112N-22W) of Rice County, Minnesota. This is a rolling, mostly treeless landscape devoted to farming, about 30 miles south of Minneapolis. The church land is on high ground at the approximate center of the original platted village, and the church tower is visible for miles around. The church shares this site with a rectory (1922), a school/convent (1916, 1926), and a storage shed.

The Veseli church, which was built in 1905, is a 110 by 64 by 30 foot brick structure laid out in a basilica plan. A tower (campanile) measuring 90 feet in height and 20 feet square on the ground is part of the church but set off to the north of the building's east-west axis.

The ground plan of the church, a nave flanked by two aisles with a small semi-circular apse at the east end, plus round arch windows and entrances and the nearly free-standing tower all suggest the early Romanesque style of northern Italy. The roof treatment of the church including the tower, however, embodies features which today suggest the Craftsman style but which also resembles the roof treatments in house plans published by A. J. Downing beginning in the 1840s: wide roof overhangs, exposed rafters and rafter tails, and knee braces at the gable ends.

The church is on a limestone foundation over a basement which houses the heating plant, meeting rooms, a kitchen, and washrooms. The exterior is faced with two shades of light reddish-brown pressed brick, running from 12 courses of the darker hue over a pale limestone water table, giving way to alternating courses of four light and two dark to the first roof level above which the lighter brick extends the remainder of the vertical distance to the nave roof. The mortar throughout is tinted to match the brick. This pattern, which gives visual emphasis to the building's various zones in elevation, also contributes to a lively surface overall, in part the result as well of slight variations in the colors and textures of the brick surfaces.¹

Brick is also used to frame windows and entrances, set off piers at the corners and in the side walls, and to provide bases for the knee braces. Limited amounts of Bedford limestone are used on the exterior; for the water table, chimney cap, cornerstone, and pillars flanking the main entrance, and to cap the corner piers. The tower roof and rose window hood are clad in red clay tile while the remainder of the roof surface is covered with green asphalt shingles. The window sash and all roof edge trim on the building are pine painted white.

There are numerous large and small stained glass windows in the church including a rose window over the main entrance, six pair on each long side at the lower level, and seven single windows in the clerestory. There is clear glass in the basement and tower windows. The tower belfry contains several bells which are inscribed with the names of donors.

One enters the church into a vestibule with doors left and right leading to a baptistery on the right and a stairway and confessional on the left. These three spaces together represent the narthex in the traditional basilica plan. The

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Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Rice County, MN

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choir loft occupies the upper level of this space and also projects into the nave, terminating in an oak balustrade. The original pipe organ is still in place.

The nave is defined by arcades with square piers below a clerestory terminating in a ceiling which is flat except for large transverse beams positioned above the aforementioned piers. The spandrels of the seven arches in each arcade are decorated with a painted vegetative motif below beatitudes in Czech. The arches and clerestory window frames as well as the east wall framing the sanctuary are painted to look like stone. The lower four to five feet of the piers and certain portions of the lower wall surfaces are marbled. The paint scheme is a significant departure from the original interior. Historic photos indicate much more richly decorated surfaces in the areas now painted off-white and to resemble stone.

The architect's specifications also called for pressed face brick on parts of the interior, though the locations are not specified. On the outer walls of each aisle there are painted depictions on pressed metal of the stations of the cross accompanied by Czech inscriptions which identify them as such. These images, the decorative elements and inscriptions just mentioned, plus painted roundels in the clerestory and on the east wall are the remaining elements of the original surface treatments.

The east wall was designed to echo key elements of the ancient Roman arch of triumph and serves also as a frame for the apse, or sanctuary, and the main church altar. There is a niche on either side of this opening which contain smaller altars. All three altars are elaborately hand-carved wood with both painted and naturally finished surfaces. Just inside the sanctuary a door on each side leads to sacristies and the tower.

The woodwork, including all doors, trim, and the pews (with kneelers), is white oak. The floors are now partially carpeted and otherwise covered with vinyl tile which is laid over the original 1½ by 7/8 inch hard maple.

The alterations to the interior discussed above were carried out in 1951. In 1955, toilet facilities were added on the south side of the church at the basement level. The original wood shingled roof on the main body of the church has been replaced with green asphalt shingles. The church has been well maintained and is in excellent condition.

Turning to the other buildings on the site, a 30 by 34 foot rectory stands north and east of the church. This is a two-story brick building with an attached two-car garage. The rectory is an undistinguished structure with attic dormers on two sides and projecting entrance porches. The low pitch, hipped roof and low profile of this building serve to enhance the large scale of the church. The rectory would appear to have been altered very little since its construction in 1922.

To the south of the church stands a school/convent which was first built in 1916 as a school only. This portion of the current structure, measuring 57 by 40 feet, occupies roughly 2/3 of the complex. The 36 foot square convent on the east side was added in 1926. This is currently rented out for apartment living, but the school continues to function as such, serving K-2 students in a consolidated parochial district.

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Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Rice County, MN

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The school/convent is a modest brick building with two stories over a raised basement and includes four classrooms and other spaces housing school functions. The cream-colored brick exterior includes a modest rectilinear roof parapet capped with limestone which is also used for the window sills and cornerstone. The window openings no longer contain the original windows, as these have been replaced with brown panels on the upper one-half and windows below. Otherwise this building has good historic integrity.

There is a noncontributing 10 by 12 foot storage shed east of the rectory.

¹The architect's specifications call for Bedford (Indiana) limestone and Twin City brand pressed brick, nos. 440 and 501.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Church of the Most Holy Trinity is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a property which is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in the areas of social history and European ethnic heritage. As the parish church in a Czech Catholic community in southern Minnesota, the history of this property illustrates the role of the American Catholic Church in facilitating and sustaining the settlement of Minnesota by European immigrants of diverse ethnic origin. In particular it illustrates important aspects of Czech immigration to the state. Since it was built in 1905, Holy Trinity Church has been an important focus in the social and cultural life of the predominantly Czech inhabitants of the parish and village, and it has been instrumental in helping parishioners maintain their identity as Czech-Americans. This property also relates to the Minnesota statewide context, "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940." The social and historical significance of this building satisfies the criteria considerations which apply to religious properties being nominated to the National Register.

Czech Settlement in Minnesota

European-American settlement in Minnesota began in 1851 when native Americans (Dakota) tribes ceded most of the land they occupied in southern Minnesota to the U.S. Government via the treaties of Mendota and Traverse des Sioux. Settlement first occurred in the newly founded cities and adjacent areas along the Mississippi and other major rivers, since these were the most important transportation routes before the advent of railroads.

Veseli is located within the largest of four Czech settlement areas in Minnesota, which were established in the 1850s and subsequently attracted immigrants into the early 20th century. This is a triangle which includes portions of LeSueur, Scott and Rice Counties with the city of New Prague in approximately the center. The other principal centers were in McLeod County (Silver Lake), and Steele County around Owatonna plus the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The twin cities of St. Anthony (later Minneapolis) and St. Paul grew rapidly in the 1850s and 1860s, and one of the state's first railroads, the Minnesota Central, ran a line south from Minneapolis to Faribault, seat of Rice County,

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in 1864. This railroad was later to be extended into northern Iowa to McGregor on the Mississippi (1867) and on to Milwaukee and Chicago. This resulted in the rapid growth of towns and cities directly on the line such as Fari-bault and Owatonna, but also encouraged settlement on lands nearby which could be developed for farming. This would have been the closest railroad to the Czech triangle until 1901, when the Milwaukee Road ran a line from Farmington and established the town of Lonsdale four miles south of Veseli.

The designation "Czech" as it is used here and in the communities under discussion encompasses people of central European descent from what is today the Czech Republic. This state now includes lands known since Medieval times as Bohemia and Moravia, with the Bohemians being the larger of the two peoples. The Czech Republic and the neighboring Slovakia were briefly united at the end of World War I (Czechoslovakia). From 1620 to 1918 Bohemia and Moravia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire where the official religion was Roman Catholicism. Czechs in the Minnesota triangle came mostly from the Budejovice region of Bohemia and are predominantly Roman Catholic. On the whole, however, Czech immigrants to the U.S. were perhaps 55% non-denominational as to religion ("free-thinkers"), 5% Protestant, and 40% Catholic.¹ The free-thinking Czechs depended more on fraternal, benevolent, and gymnastic societies plus journals and independent schools to maintain their ethnic identity than the Catholics and Protestants, who relied on their churches for most of their social and cultural needs. Many of the fraternal and social organizations maintained by Catholics had been created for them by the church to ward off the influence of free-thinking.²

In Minnesota most Czechs in the rural areas were and remain Catholic unlike in other Midwestern states, e.g. Nebraska, where free-thinkers were more numerous. Although Czechs do not represent one of Minnesota's larger ethnic groups, it was ranked number seven in 1910 with a population of 33,247. As to occupation, "agricultural pursuits" was listed by 32% and 42.8% of foreign-born and second-generation Czechs respectively nationwide in 1900, which made it by far the largest category.³ The ethnographic pattern of Veseli parish and the triangle is typical for Czech settlements in rural Minnesota, and while Protestants and free-thinkers can be found here and there, Veseli appears to be solidly Catholic.

The Establishment of Veseli Parish and Veseli Village

As noted above, the largest concentration of Czech settlers in Minnesota was in the area around New Prague comprising parts of three counties. The New Prague parish was the first to be established (1858) and the period following this until about 1880 was the most active in terms of Czech immigration to southern Minnesota. As population numbers increased, other Czech parishes were organized here including Budejovice (1877), Litomysl (1878), Veseli (1874), Montgomery (1881) and Lonsdale (1905). The first two of these were located in LeSueur County and are long since defunct, essentially because they were bypassed by railroads. Montgomery is in LeSueur County, New Prague is on the border between Scott and LeSueur Counties, and Veseli and Lonsdale are in Rice County.

The St. Paul diocese in the early days required that prospective parishioners provide a 40-acre parcel of land to the Bishop which would be used for church purposes, meaning to be used as a location for parish buildings and a cemetery, or to be sold to raise money for parish needs. In some cases, as at Veseli, a village would be platted if

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Church of the Most Holy Trinity
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conditions for growth seemed propitious. In time, the parish would be incorporated and governed by a five-member Board of Directors comprising three church officials and two lay persons from the parish.⁴

The first settlers in what was to become Veseli parish arrived in the early 1860s. In 1874 there were sufficient people in the area to create a separate parish (20 families) and by 1879, 100 families were registered.⁵ Until they got their own church and pastor, these pioneers walked the eight to ten miles to New Prague for church services. The necessary 40-acre parcel was deeded over to Bishop Thomas Grace also in 1874, having been donated by four local farmers. It was at this point in time that the church lot was set aside and established, since construction of a permanent church edifice was begun the same year and completed in 1878 by the parishioners. This was a wood frame structure and was followed in 1881 by parish school and rectory buildings. This plot is the same piece of land where the current buildings are located and it included a cemetery which was moved out of the church lot in 1904 to make room for the present church building.

Following the decision of where to locate the church and soon after it was built, the first segment of Veseli Village was platted (1880). This parcel is east of the church grounds and consisted of four blocks divided by the intersection of Main and Grace streets, with Bishop Grace listed as the "Proprietor of the town of Veseli." Lots were sold to the amount of \$1585.00 shortly thereafter to pay for the construction of a school and rectory. In 1889 the village plat was enlarged to nine blocks with the church lot in the center and on the highest point of land in the village.

At this point Veseli Village was incorporated and became an entity legally separate from the parish, which had been incorporated in 1885. A post office had been located here since 1879, and the name was given to the settlement by pioneer Vaclav Smisek in memory of the location in Bohemia from whence many of the earliest settlers had come. It was also for a short time known as "Wesley," thanks to the first local postmaster who "took great delight in Americanizing the Czech names."⁶ When the village was incorporated, the original name was reaffirmed, but postal authorities refused to change it until 1908 when the case was taken to the Postmaster General by church authorities who were especially displeased at the possible association with John Wesley, founder of the Methodist creed.⁷

The village grew along with the settlement of the lands around it. As for population figures, and in other respects also, it is difficult to separate Veseli Village from Veseli parish. As to the village, a descendant of Vaclav Smisek, who grew up in Veseli and still belongs to the church, asserts that it was a "booming town" until after about 1901 when the Milwaukee Road Railway established Lonsdale and ran its track four miles from Veseli. At its most prosperous, Veseli had three dance halls, grocery and hardware stores, two blacksmiths, one barber and a jail.⁸

With the inevitable decline of Veseli Village after being bypassed by the railroad, the church grew more important as the social center of the parish. Since the majority of the parishioners never lived in town, the church and its school continued to function well beyond the advent and then decline of the railroad. And in recent years the automobile has made it possible for people with roots in Veseli to continue living there or return, while holding jobs in the megalopolis to the north, the Twin Cities.

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This is not to say, however, that "losing" the railroad would only have consequences for the *village* of Veseli. With the new town of Lonsdale having been platted, Veseli parishioners feared that their numbers could decline if a separate parish were to be set up in Lonsdale, itself in the midst of Czech-American farmers.⁹ In fact, construction of a church in Lonsdale was begun in 1903, and this may have been the decisive event in convincing the Veseli parishioners to put up the money for the present church. Parish records indicate that Rev. Robert Polasek, who came to Veseli in 1895, had tried to get a new church under construction because of the small size and poor condition of the 1878 edifice. He made little progress, however, and only when it became clear that Lonsdale would get the railroad did the idea gain acceptance. Polasek's successor, who arrived in 1904, was able to convince the community that a new church was necessary. As the Diamond Jubilee history put it:

"Father Kotouc (Polasek's successor) realized that the new mission of Lonsdale would grow to a large parish some day and that Veseli would decrease in numbers. Accordingly he started immediately to build a new Veseli church."

These years mark the high point in terms of population in the parish and in the triangle as a whole. In 1901, 1100 people were parish members including 73 children in parochial school. In 1910 the number was down to 600, but in 1937 it was back to 927.¹⁰ Veseli parish was also able to build a new school (1916), convent (1926), and a rectory (1922) during these years.

The Architecture of Holy Trinity Church

Parish records indicate that in 1904 a building committee was formed to oversee the building of a new church. The new parish priest was clearly a key person in this decision and he apparently made contact with St. Paul architect Clarence Johnston, who would have been well known in Catholic circles as the designer of the recently completed (in 1904) chapel at the newly built St. Paul Seminary, his first Catholic church design. He had also won the post of Minnesota State Architect in 1901. For these reasons choosing Johnston was significant as a means of enhancing the prestige of the new church and also the parish. With funding from railroad magnate J. J. Hill, the initial project architect, Cass Gilbert, was replaced in 1902 by Johnston to complete the project by designing a chapel. The seminary project had been initiated in 1892 by Bishop John Ireland as an important element in his plan to ensure an ample supply of priests for the upper Midwest as settlement continued.

Johnston's first plan for the Veseli church, which has survived only as a copy of a rendering in the parish records, was very close in style to the seminary chapel. Both strongly suggest a north Italian Romanesque edifice on a Roman basilica plan. The Veseli church as built, however, is a composite of these elements with a Craftsman-like roof treatment. The exposed rafters, wide eave overhangs and projecting gable ends with knee braces at Veseli were important features in certain house designs by A. J. Downing published in several editions beginning in 1842.¹¹ In any case, this wide-ranging eclecticism, which characterizes much of Johnston's output, was a feature of the Ecole des Beaux Arts approach to design taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where Johnston was trained.

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Certainly the church demonstrates fewer stylistic links with the European Christian architectural heritage than does the initial proposal. Its large size, prominent bell tower, and rich decoration do, however, make a statement about the strength of the parish and its determination to survive. It seems likely that there was a contest of sorts going on between some of the parishes in the triangle at this time. Lonsdale was building, and at the center of the area, New Prague was putting up a new, larger church as well (completed in 1907 and listed on the NRHP). Holy Trinity cost the parish a total of about \$30,000 and the prestige of having Johnston as their architect cost them a grand total of \$25.00 in architect's fees.¹²

Czech Ethnicity and the Veseli Community

A number of students of European immigration to the U.S. have pointed out the importance of religion in serving many needs of the large and diverse numbers of 19th century immigrants to North America. It would be well to remember also that there can often be no meaningful distinction between religion and ethnicity.¹³ Moreover, many non-English speaking peoples, in particular of the first generation, were not disposed to abandon their ethnic identity and language in an attempt to become assimilated into the lifeways of a new nation which itself was in the process of self-definition.

Where immigrants belonged to churches which had American counterparts, the transition was greatly facilitated. The American Catholic Church, for example, obviously made an effort at providing priests who were fluent in the language of the newly created parishes, at least for the first generation. At Veseli the first five parish priests were foreign-born and subsequently all but one down to about 1950 were American-born of Czech ancestry and were fluent in Czech. The one exception asked to be transferred out of Veseli just after he arrived in 1946 because he felt that, "his lack of knowledge of the Czech language would be a handicap in his work."¹⁴

Certain immigrant groups, for example Czechs and Germans, set up parochial schools as part of their effort to sustain their ethnic identity. Insofar as it meant teaching in a foreign tongue, however, this practice was not tolerated beyond the First World War period, either by church authorities or State government. While the Germans were the main target of this nativist campaign, all foreign languages were discouraged. This change in official attitude is recalled in Veseli by parishioners who remember being strongly discouraged against speaking Czech in school.¹⁵

The Veseli church itself does not embody anything specifically Czech in architectural terms. As noted above, however, the interior decoration scheme does include several Czech inscriptions, and parishioners have maintained their long-standing practice of singing one hymn in Czech each Sunday.

It is clear also that the immigrant churches did more than sustain ethnic identity. At Veseli and elsewhere, the church became the heart of the community and the location of and vehicle for a wide range of social activities. Some of this was a matter of physical proximity and included things like ringing the church bells each day at 6, 12, and 6, which served as a convenient way to mark off the major segments of each day as well as to note the hours when the Angelus (a devotion in memory of the annunciation) is to be said.

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Church of the Most Holy Trinity
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Veseli natives and the Diamond Jubilee history provide many examples of how the church met the community's social needs. And with the decline of Veseli Village since about the time Holy Trinity was built, church facilities have been increasingly important for things like dances and meetings of the 4-H Club. Veseli had a local band and it provided music both for entertainment and for funeral processions. Dances were held on special occasions which were either church or American holidays or both.¹⁶ Sunday Mass and funerals and weddings are occasions for social intercourse which would otherwise not be available locally except in the homes of parishioners or at the sole remaining commercial establishment in the village, a combination tavern/liquor store.

Defining assimilation as "the substitution of one nationality pattern for another," Chrislock has found that the degree of assimilation among Czechs varied from one settlement to another and that the important factors retarding assimilation included "strong concentrations of Czechs in specific areas, effective organizations interested in perpetuating selected features of Czech culture, competent leadership" and more.¹⁷

When reviewing the history of Czech and other European ethnic groups in Minnesota, it would appear that Veseli parish has sustained its Czech identity over the years better than many, notwithstanding the general reawakening of interest in ethnicity in recent years among many descendants of European immigrants in the U.S. Chrislock noted a strong persistence of Czech culture roots in Veseli while other centers in the Czech triangle, such as Montgomery, had declined in this regard. For example, "Veseli Ho-Down," an annual church-sponsored parish festival held on the third Sunday in August since 1968, drew thousands of Czech-Americans in 1980.¹⁸

The author of this nomination noted the same ethnic consciousness in the area evidenced by the large number of people who speak and read the language and who are taking steps to establish contacts in the recently constituted Czech Republic. This is all the more remarkable given the long period of chilly relations with Czechoslovakia during the Cold War when contact between U.S. and Czech citizens was difficult.

Veseli parish still has a resident priest, and the parochial school has joined forces with New Market and Lonsdale so that together they can offer all the elementary grades. And on the periphery of historic Veseli there are new residential subdivision tracts which are the homes of people with ties to this community but who are not farmers and who earn their living in the Twin Cities.

¹Chrislock, 342. Garver, 148.

²Chrislock, 342-343. Capek, Chapters 11, 15.

³Garver. Capek, Chapter 17. Chrislock, 341. Capek, 60, 81.

⁴Chrislock, 340.

⁵Information on parish membership and its early history is based on parish records, and this was published in the Diamond Jubilee booklet, which is unpaginated.

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⁶ibid.

⁷Neil, 549.

⁸Smisek Memoir. Chrislock cites a rather different mix of enterprises for Veseli on p. 339.

⁹Diamond Jubilee booklet. It was anticipated that 80 families could be lost to the Lonsdale parish.

¹⁰Chrislock, 338. Parish records as published in the Diamond Jubilee booklet.

¹¹Best known of these is probably The Architecture of Country Houses, which was first published in 1850. The roof treatment at Veseli is very similar to that in another design by Johnston from the same time (1905), namely the Caretaker's Cottage at the Walker (MN) Sanatorium (see p. 116 in Larson). Johnston himself referred to this as a "farmer's cottage," which also suggests its source in Downing. See Note 56 on p. 168, Larson.

¹²Larson, 167, note 44.

¹³e.g. Kloberdanz, Stout.

¹⁴Albert Slechta, quoted from the Diamond Jubilee booklet.

¹⁵Evelyn Novak.

¹⁶Smisek Memoir.

¹⁷Chrislock, 343.

¹⁸Chrislock, 344.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies a parcel of land described as Lots 19 through 24, Block V, Veseli Village Plat, Rice County, MN.

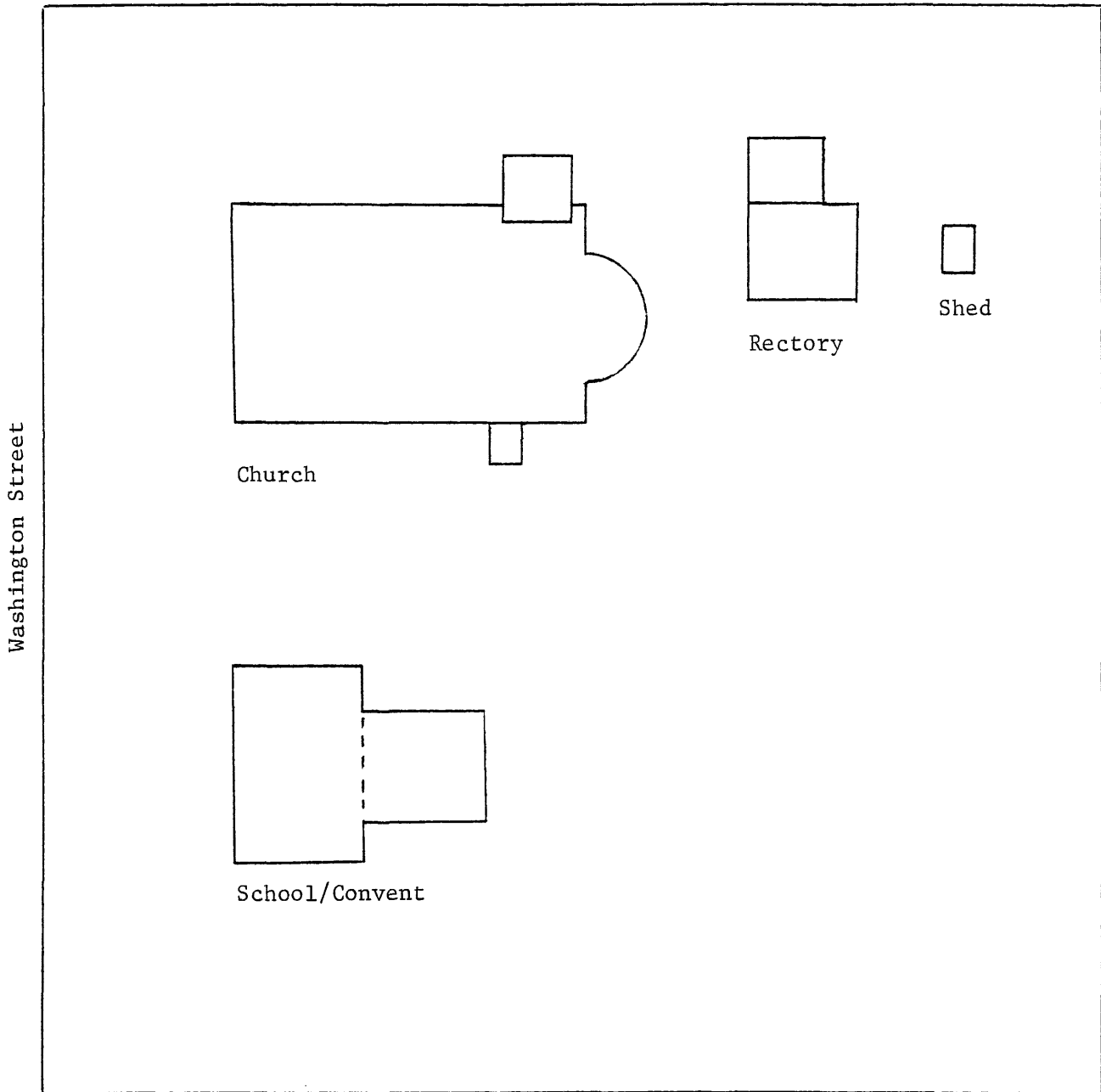
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

Church of the Most Holy Trinity
Veseli - Rice County, MN
Site Map
Approximate Scale: 1" = 50'



Main Street



Co. Highway No. 6 (Harrison Street)