

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain

Name of Property
Pembina County, ND
County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD


NRIS Reference Number: 13000862

Property Name: Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain

County: Pembina County State: ND

Multiple Name:

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

11/7/18
Date of Action

Amended Item in Nomination

This SLR is issued to make the following substantive correction:

Based upon the nomination submitted, Criterion B is not appropriate, but the property will be listed under criteria A and C.

Section 8

The property is being nominated under criteria A, B, and C. Under Criterion B it is nominated at the national level of significance: "The Vikur property has national significance under Criterion 'B' because the property's direct associations with Thorláksson and his role in establishing both Icelandic-American settlements in Pembina County (from 1879 to 1882)." The statement of significance goes on to elaborate on this justification: "Taken together as a single eligible site, the church and cemetery occupy a parcel of land that was the original pioneer home of Pastor Thorláksson, and bequeathed to the community by him for the purpose of creating a church and cemetery immediately after his early death from tuberculosis, six months prior to his fortieth birthday. Together with Icelandic-American communities in Pembina County, this single property is the best embodiment of the Thorláksson's intense efforts to help situate Icelandic immigrants in a viable agricultural enclave in North America."

The church was constructed in 1886-1887, several years after Pastor Thorláksson's death in 1882. National Register guidelines state that following in regard to Criterion B: "Properties eligible under Criterion B are usually those

associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. Properties that pre- or post-date an individual's significant accomplishments are usually not eligible."

While the nomination supports eligibility under criteria A and C at the state-level of significance, Criterion B has not been demonstrated. The importance of the pastor's work was the assistance he provided Icelandic-Americans. The church is not eligible under Criterion B as he never saw or participated in its construction. The nomination notes several other Icelandic-American communities that constructed churches within a few years of this church. That this is the first one to be built, and was constructed near the site of his house, does not support eligibility under Criterion B.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

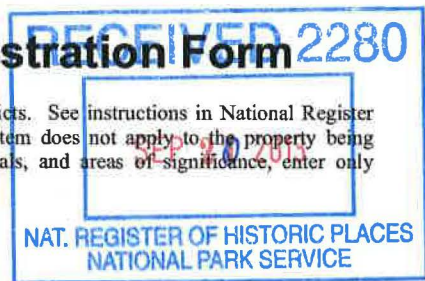
Distribution

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



862

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain
 Other names/site number: 32PB52; Vikur Icelandic Synod Church and Cemetery
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 290 Main Avenue, near Third Street
 City or town: Mountain State: ND County: Pembina (067)
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.
 I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
 level(s) of significance:

X national X statewide X local
 Applicable National Register Criteria:
X A X B X C D

Mark E. [Signature] Sept. 16, 2013
 Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
NDSHPO
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
 Signature of commenting official: Date
 Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government


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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

for 
Signature of the Keeper

11/7/13
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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	objects: Thorláksson stone cemetery marker #1 Bronze and stone property donation marker #2 Bronze and stone heritage commemorative monument #3
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility; Church
FUNERARY: Cemetery, burial grave

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility; Church
FUNERARY: Cemetery, burial grave

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th Early 20th Century Revival; Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Lap siding over wood framing, Concrete basement/
foundation, asphalt shingles

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Narrative Description

*(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)*

Summary Paragraph

Vikur Lutheran Church in Mountain, North Dakota, is situated adjacent to the original church cemetery, facing Main Street. The church, as it currently stands, is approximately 28-feet x 70-feet in its overall dimensions, including front narthex (vestibule) and west end alter extension, positioned over a fully finished site cast concrete basement built in 1947. The first phase of the church, a 28-foot x 46-foot structure with hand-hewn oak beams supporting the floor, was constructed beginning March 10, 1884, and completed that same summer. The church was dedicated June 24, 1887, with liturgical furniture purchased by the Vikur Ladies' Aid, which played a major part in furnishing and finishing the church interior. Though the church is located within the village of Mountain, together with its adjacent cemetery it conveys more the feeling of a country church, built on land gifted in 1881 by the congregation's original pastor, (Séra) Páll Thorláksson, who was critically important to the settlement of Icelandic-Americans in northeastern North Dakota, introduction of their cultural traditions, and establishment of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod. The cemetery (now south of the church) is 250-feet by 200-feet in dimension, containing about forty graves, with several monument/ markers of historic significance, including the burial place of Pastor Thorláksson (b. 13 November 1843 – d. 12 March 1882). Taken together as a single eligible site, the church and cemetery are bounded by a shallow drainage swale to the north and a densely planted shelterbelt to the west, at the back of the platted parcel that is overall 356-feet north-south by 200-feet east-west (front to back).

Narrative Description

Pastor Thorláksson's original log home (no longer extant) is believed to have been located toward the northwest corner of the one-acre cemetery parcel. Overall dimensions of the nominated property now include the cemetery and the adjacent parcel of land on which the church is now situated, which was given by Silvia Johnson in memory of her mother at the time the church was relocated in 1947. (Lots 3 and 4 of Block 5 in the replat of the village of Mountain, defined on the north by a drainage swale. In 1900, a parsonage for Vikur Church was located on this parcel and the Johnson gifted parcel was probably included within the original 160-acre Thorláksson homestead land grant.) From 1919 to 1979 a wood framed parsonage existed on the site to the west and slightly north of the original church and cemetery location.

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The site is characterized by clusters of mixed spruce and pine conifers and mature oak deciduous trees, combined with informally ornamental low shrubs (mostly cedars). Denser plantings along the west boundary form a windbreak shelterbelt. In addition to the stone marker at Thorláksson's grave, two other historically significant monument/markers are located on the property. One is a bronze plaque attached to an upright granite stone monolith near the center of the cemetery, bearing the message, "Largest Icelandic Settlement in the United States. Pembina, Hallson, Akra 1878. Mountain and Gardar 1879. Erected by the Pembina County Pioneer Daughters Chapter 1948; on site of first Icelandic Lutheran Church in America, 1884". This bronze and stone monument was erected on the original position of the Vikur Church altar, at the time the church was relocated 100-feet further to the north in 1947. The other historical marker is a small bronze plaque attached to a lower stone in front and to the right of Vikur Lutheran, commemorating the gift of land in the name of Silvia Johnson that enabled the 1947 relocation of the church within the period of historical significance.

Construction method and characteristics:

Vikur Church is constructed of a variety of timber framing and light wood framing methods, reflecting substantial skill on the part of itinerant carpenters who constructed the building. The first phase of construction was originally of hewn log construction, erected in place over shallow footings and a crawl space. Lighter gage, milled wood roof rafters with a collar tie form the ceiling of the sanctuary space. In 1947 the church was repositioned 100-feet further north, over a site cast concrete basement that allowed additional space for Sunday School and other church activities. Access stairs to the basement were added at that time as well as a number of physical improvements like modern forced air heating. Exterior walls were clad with cedar lap siding over sheathing boards, and the original roof was cedar shingles. Doors, window trim, and original windows were all field-built in a late Gothic Revival detailing vocabulary (e.g.; simple wood mullions in lancet windows, roundels, and trimwork).

Over time a number of modest changes to the historic architectural fabric (both exterior and interior) were made, traced through historic photographic documentation of the building. Many of the alterations and improvements were undertaken by the congregation within the period of historic significance, with some changes being part of an ongoing effort to complete and finish the church design. Since there were no architectural drawings of the original design concept, these alterations are largely an instance of "working out the vision" first proposed by Pastor Thorláksson and his successor, Pastor Thorgrimsen.

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The earliest historic photo available to support this nomination [*Additional Documentation, Fig. 5*] is from the collections of the Icelandic Cultural Heritage Museum, dated from about 1905, before the altar extension was added to the back of the church. This photo shows striped, high-contrast polychrome cedar shingles on the steeple roof, as is often found on early Gothic Revival church designs. In the 1905 photo, the belltower was enclosed on all four sides with louvers surmounted by a roundel window and pointed Gothic arch in the third stage up from the narthex roof. The second (middle) stage of the tower was trimmed with contrasting-colored repetitive Gothic arch motif in wood. The original brass bell appears entirely open to the air in one early photo of the church [*see Additional Documentation, Fig. 6; ca. 1930*].

Under the fundraising initiatives of an especially active Ladies' Aid organization, simple Gothic arched lancet windows shown on the original design at the sides of the nave, were replaced with more ornate stained glass as part of modernizing and enhancing the church interior after World War II. Several architectural discoveries were made in the course of remodelings over time. Reportedly, rag chinking from the original log structure was revealed while installing new electrical services, and straw-horsehair padding was discovered while reupholstering the altar kneeling rail.

In 1993, narrow profile steel replacement siding was added over original clapboards, which remain in place. This necessary concession to long-term maintenance is unfortunate, inasmuch as it obscures the historic wood clapboards, placed with care by the carpenter-builders. However, it can be reasoned that from a preservation perspective, the pragmatic addition of a substitute cladding material is a "reversible" treatment that retains the historic fabric underneath. Care was used in matching the window trim, eaves, and corner boards. All stained glass windows have been covered over with protective exterior clear-glazed storm panels, with three panels articulated at each window.

The east (front) exterior elevation is symmetrical and formally balanced, using late Gothic Revival proportions and motifs. A pair of entrance doors (replacement doors added in 1993 for weathertightness and security, as part of an overall rehabilitation of the church exterior) are positioned as a podium, at the top of five exterior steps. A Gothic-arch transom window is located above the doors, with a stained glass roundel window in the pediment area of the narthex/ vestibule. The centered narthex is flanked by two additional stained glass roundel windows in a geometric motif. These roundels, set just below the eave line, do not appear in the earliest photos of the church.

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The east elevation is anchored by the prominent and well-proportioned steeple, with three stages above the narthex roof. In the belltower's current configuration, the early-period Gothic Revival trim motif has been replaced at the middle stage with horizontal metal lap siding matching the substitute cladding material added over the historic wood clapboards on the body of the church. (The congregation is seeking expert advice from the State Historic Preservation Office on the appropriateness of restoring the surface trim pattern to match the documented historic photos of this feature.) Window trim and shallow eave projections on the steeple have been carefully formed to match the historic profile. The congregation is mindful of best preservation practices that discourage use of exterior siding material, and have thoughtfully attempted to balance the limited resources available to them for long term maintenance of the building exterior by using extra care to not disturb historic trim, profiles, proportions, and the integrity of feeling on the exterior.

The original brass bell in the steeple was enclosed ca.1947 in the configuration seen today, with louvered openings on three sides. An artistically crafted and culturally powerful replica of the Icelandic flag constructed of stained glass in a roundel window was installed in 2010, facing the street. The roof of the church and roofing material on the steeple are recent asphalt replacement shingles, substituted in place of the earliest cedar shingles that had been repaired and replaced several times prior to 1947. The steeple roof is eight-sided, with diminutive gabled pediments at the base of the four primary sides, and terminates in an ornamental flashing topped by the preserved original Christian cross.

The south (side) elevation facing the church cemetery is organized by three Gothic-arched, stained glass lancet windows in the main body of the sanctuary/nave. An additional Gothic-arched window is placed within the altar area rear extension, added prior to 1930. (The windows in the altar extension, facing both north and south, appear to reflect the original Gothic muntin/mullion configuration.) Eaves and gable ends of the roof project slightly, with a continuous steel gutter as part of the waterworks. The 12:12 roof is clad with dark gray or black asphalt shingles, and the exposed basement foundation wall incorporates four small windows placed below the stained glass ornamental windows.

The west (rear) elevation is strictly utilitarian in its architectural treatment, with a single entrance door into the interior stairwell landing that provides access to the basement level. The eave line for the back altar area and service addition has a slightly lower eave line, which allows the gable to be inset below the main sanctuary roof at a more diminutive and deferential scale. The exterior of the entire west elevation is clad with metal siding and a downspout runs diagonally along the surface to a rainleader near the northwest corner. There is no fenestration on the west elevation except for a small window opening in the replacement service door.

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The north (side) elevation, facing a shallow drainage swale, mirrors exactly all features described for the south elevation. A brick chimney extends 12-feet above the roofline, in place of the somewhat decorative chimney that appears at the west end of the original sanctuary in the earliest photos. *[see Additional Documentation; Fig. 5.]*

The church interior is entered from the front through an enclosed narthex/ vestibule that contains the bellrope and staircase to the choir loft (and to the church basement). The sanctuary nave is separated from the narthex by a pair of doors. Entering the main sanctuary space below the choir, walls and ceilings are finished with ornamental plasterwork and trim, with a coved ceiling along the side walls. The choir is articulated by a curving balustrade, and a small bookcase library at the back contains reference volumes and an Icelandic language glossary. Displayed in the sanctuary, a framed memorial tapestry given by the local American Legion post commemorates 161 silver star veterans from the North Dakota Icelandic-American community injured in World War II combat and nine members of the small, tightknit community who gave their lives as gold star war veterans.

Opalescent and colored glass lancet windows in the nave and sacristy are crafted in simple geometric patterns believed to have been purchased by the Ladies' Aid association in about 1920, at the same time the milk-glass pendant lighting fixtures were installed in the sanctuary. The interior is appointed with liturgical furniture and replacement church pews dating from mid-twentieth century. A restored and rehabilitated pendant chandelier with glass oil-lamp shades is an original historic feature of the church interior, depicted in early photo documentation of the interior preserved under glass in the church basement. Items of original liturgical furniture (the pulpit, lecturn, and baptismal) that were subsequently replaced with modern furniture, are displayed the church basement with other historically important artifacts.

The seamed and beaded sidewall finish in the sanctuary is an interesting and well-maintained, soft cellulosic acoustical wall panel material with an unusual beaded surface texture, probably dating from the 1947-1948 rehabilitation, at which time soft cellulosic acoustic products would have been relatively innovative for that time. A continuous horizontal cornice trim band sets off the seamed textural profile of the pressed metal ceiling cove above. Several plaques and framed historical pieces are displayed in the sanctuary as testament to the strong Icelandic-American cultural bond. Stained glass lancet window motifs in the narthex are simple geometric patterns in colored and opalescent glass.

The interior configuration expresses engagement and participation of the congregation as a fundamental tenant of Reformation liturgy. The chancel/ altar area and painted altarpiece,

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millwork prayer railing (or altar rail) are contained within the inset center area of the sanctuary extension, on the west. A three-panel, fixed-wing altarpiece *reredos* (screen) or *retable*, ornamented by high Gothic pinnacles and pediments painted white with gold leaf trim contains the altar painting. Below it appears the exaltation in Icelandic dialect, "Heilacur, Heilacur, Heilacur" (Holy, Holy, Holy). The iconographic painting is of the resurrected Christ appearing before Mary Magdalene.

The multi-purpose space on the lower level is treated as straightforward, utilitarian open space (for Sunday school and gathering area) with pine board wall finish. A framed photographic portrait of Pastor Thorláksson in the church basement reflects the young age at which this founder of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod died of tuberculosis, after having dedicated his brief life to establishing the Icelandic-American community and Vikur Church. The finished basement is well served by a convenient and modern kitchen that efficiently accommodates local events like "August the Deuce" commemoration and luncheon receptions following funerals. Several pieces of original liturgical furniture are now displayed in the church basement, along with glass-fronted storage cabinetry preserving congregational artifacts. Utility, restroom, and service spaces are at the east end, below the narthex. A display of a series of three framed paintings interprets the historic stages of the church (and its relationship to the surrounding setting) in a somewhat romanticized but documentary way. [*Images of these three paintings appear in the "Additional Documentation" section.*]

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Religion; Establishment of (Protestant) Icelandic Synod
- Architecture; Vernacular rendition of Late Gothic Revival
- Ethnic Heritage; Commemorative monument/ marker
- Settlement; Social History of Icelandic-Americans
- Social History; Promoting culture and lifeways of Icelandic-American community
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

- 1879-1882 (Pastor Thorláksson's influence on Icelandic-American settlement)
- 1884-1948 (Construction of church and establishment of Icelandic Lutheran Synod)
- _____

Significant Dates

- 12 March 1882 Pastor Rev. Páll Thorláksson's death
- 24 June 1887 Dedication date for Vikur Church
- 1947 Relocation of the building to site adjacent to cemetery

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

- Páll Thorláksson (b. 13 November 1843 – d. 12 March 1882)
- _____
- _____

Cultural Affiliation

- Icelandic-American
- _____
- _____

Architect/Builder

- Unknown vernacular builder; members of local congregation
- _____
- _____

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph *(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)*

Vikur Lutheran Church property in Mountain, North Dakota, is historically significant in several respects. It has statewide significance under National Register Criterion "A," for the patterns of events associated with settlement and the social history of Icelandic-Americans prior to North Dakota statehood, and as an embodiment of distinct cultural heritage regionally. Several marker/monuments on the property call attention to the historical connections of Icelandic-Americans to this property. It remains important for promoting cultural identity and sustaining lifeways of a distinct immigrant community that is not broadly represented in other regions of the United States. The Vikur property has national significance under Criterion "B" because of the property's direct associations with Pastor Páll Thorláksson and his role in establishing both Icelandic-American settlement in Pembina County (from 1879 to 1882). Soon after his death, Thorláksson's initiative led to the establishment of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod (on January 25, 1885), with seven churches in Pembina County forming the core of that religious innovation and advocacy. Historically, the Vikur property was a gift in 1881 from Pastor Thorláksson, just prior to his death, and his burial is commemorated with a marker in the cemetery. Thirdly, the property has local significance under Criterion "C" for its architecture and construction, as a vernacular rendition of Late Gothic Revival architecture on the territorial frontier. The property took shape from 1884 to 1887 and continuing through a series of minor architectural changes from 1887 to 1948 that remained consistent with the original architectural vision.

Narrative Statement of Significance *(Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)*

Vikur Lutheran Church is recognized as the first and oldest Icelandic church in the United States, and Mountain is reportedly one of only two communities in the U.S. with a cemetery situated at the town's center. (Boston is the other.) Though Vikur Church is located within the village of Mountain, together with its adjacent cemetery it conveys more the feeling of a country church, built on land given in 1881 by the congregation's original pastor, (Séra) Páll Thorláksson (b. 13 November 1843 – d. 12 March 1882).¹ Thorláksson was critically important to the establishment of Icelandic-American settlement culture in northeastern North Dakota and formation of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod. Taken together as a single eligible site, the church and cemetery occupy a parcel of land that was the original pioneer home of Pastor Thorláksson, and bequeathed to the community by him for the purpose of creating a church and cemetery

¹ The surname customarily appears in print as Þorláksson with Icelandic characters, but the spelling is Anglicized throughout this nomination for consistency. The honorific "Séra", designates "Pastor".

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immediately after his early death from tuberculosis, six months prior to his fortieth birthday. Together with Icelandic-American communities in Pembina County, this single property is the best embodiment of Thorláksson's intense efforts to help situate Icelandic immigrants in a viable agricultural enclave in North America.

Motivated largely by a series of natural disasters in their beloved homeland, immigrants from Iceland began relocating in the early 1870s to North America, settling initially in Cedarburg, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with other core settlements on Washington Island in Door County, WI and in Shawano County, WI. In 1873, young Páll Thorláksson was among the first to arrive, by way of Quebec. From their base in Milwaukee, the Icelanders began exploring the possibility of establishing a unified settlement somewhere in the upper Midwest where they could avoid excessive heat to which they were unaccustomed. In July of 1875 two groups of Icelandic immigrants relocated to new settlements; one group settling at Minneota in Lincoln and Lyon counties of Minnesota, the other group at Gimli, Manitoba (near Winnipeg), which they referred to as "New Iceland". The Gimli area settlement was joined by several hundred other Icelanders who came directly from Iceland. Conditions at New Iceland were catastrophic. The Gimli colony was plagued by grasshoppers, smallpox, tuberculosis, and extremely cold, wet weather from 1876 to 1880 that effectively kept them from raising a sustainable agricultural crop.²

Páll Thorláksson studied for the Lutheran ministry at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and was first called to ministry of the Icelandic Lutheran Congregation in Shawano County, Wisconsin. Thorláksson was well-read and well-educated, both at the national academy in Iceland and at the seminary in St. Louis. During his brief time at Washington Island, Wisconsin, Thorláksson was asked to attest to his capabilities as a potential guide and interpreter for immigrants. "Mr. Thorlaksson complied with this request, by giving his attest in English, Danish, German, French, Latin, and Greek, just for the fun of it and to the great pleasure of the interpreter." [Holand; 1917. p. 292.] Pastor Thorláksson felt a personal obligation to the disparate Icelandic settlements and in 1877 he joined the group at Gimli. A majority of his Wisconsin congregation followed him there. Finding the living conditions impossible, and, based on advice received along the way, Thorláksson broached the contentious suggestion of moving south across the border to Dakota Territory. In late spring of 1878 the Icelanders established their community in western Pembina County. In 1879 they were joined by other Icelanders relocating from Wisconsin, and they established a core settlement at the present site of Mountain which they

² The account of establishing Icelandic communities in North America is adapted from the article by Rev. David R. Asplin in the Icelandic Centennial Publication Committee's *A History of Icelandic Communities (1978)*; pp.3-7. Many of the twentieth-century interviews and letters from which this information is derived (compiled in the fascinating volume *Pembina County Pioneer Daughters Biographies* (Freeman, 2007), read much the same as an ancient Norse saga in terms of the declarative form, cadence, and rhythms of the narrative, even in translation.

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named "vik" (meaning "inlet"), referring in their native language to an inlet or sheltered clearing with a forest belt of trees on three sides. The current name "Mountain" is a loose translation of the original description of a high and prominently visible landform. Other Icelanders formed settlement enclaves nearby at Gardar, Hallson, and Akra.

The fledgling Icelandic-American community was impoverished, with sinking morale, but Pastor Thorláksson (consistently referred to in the historical record by the familiar "Séra Páll") worked vigorously and tirelessly to obtain necessary financial support, equipment, seed, and even livestock necessary to develop farming operations. Much of the support was arranged through generous Norwegian Lutheran individuals in Wisconsin and southern Minnesota and guaranteed by the good name and personal assurances of young Pastor Páll. During the winter of 1879-1880 Pastor Thorláksson, in failing health, traveled to Northfield, MN for medical aid, and while staying there with a Norwegian-American immigrant, Thorláksson arranged for the loan of 100 barrels of flour and 40 head of cattle to be shipped by rail to Pembina County. Believing that the most essential need for the struggling agricultural community of Icelandic immigrants was cattle to work the unbroken fields, while in Northfield Pastor Páll borrowed a horse and spent two months going from house to house to collect 85 cattle, 65 sheep, and a sum of money to be loaned to the Icelanders, all guaranteed by his good name. In a relatively short time of about three years, that investment was repaid.

During the First Great Dakota Boom (1871-late 1880s), the Homestead Act (1862) and related federal legislation provided a way for settlers to obtain land. For those without ready cash, the new Homestead Act afforded the chance to begin farming in the American West "cash free" by living on and improving the land for five years. Alternatively, after just two years, the settler could buy the land for \$1.25 an acre. About 25 percent of Dakota Territory settlement land was acquired this way. Alternative means of gaining land also attracted immigrants to the settlement frontier. Under the Timber Culture Act (1873), a homesteader could claim an additional 160 acres by raising a crop and planting ten acres of trees. Under terms of that law people could still purchase 160 acres of federal public land for \$1.25 an acre (\$200). Compared to the cost of buying private land (mostly owned by railroads) at \$2.50 an acre, these federal enactments offered a bargain for cash-poor settlers.

The new Icelandic settlement was located in the centre of Pembina County, which stretched from the west bank of the Red River in the east to the western side of the Pembina Mountains. When Icelanders first began to pour into this region, three laws affecting the claiming of land were in effect: Preemption, Tree Claim, and Homestead. The same settler could choose one or all three. A settler selecting to claim land by the first and last regulations was required to live on his land for at least three years. Anyone claiming land by the Tree Claim Act was required to plant 6000 trees during the three years and, if the trees survived, the land belonged to the settler's [sic].

[Thor, Jonas. *Icelanders in North America: The First Settlers*; 2002. p. 166-172]

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Of the three available options, based on Páll Thorláksson's short life in Pembina County, it appears that he must have made a cash purchase of his homestead land after living on it for just two years and just prior to transferring it prior to his death, with special designation of the one-acre parcel given to Vikur Church and cemetery. The town of Mountain essentially grew up around Vikur Church and cemetery at its core.

The first Icelandic festival in Dakota Territory, was held at the nearby farm of Jon Jonsson, on July 5, 1880. Many settlers traveled from Gardar in the south and the Tongue River in the north. Pastor Thorláksson gave a speech and discussed the encouraging prospects of the new settlement. This was followed by entertainment of various kinds, such as sporting events and games in which young and old participated. The Icelandic women provided pancakes and coffee. A year later, a July 4th celebration was staged at Gardar. [Thor, 2002; p. 173]

In November 1880, Thorláksson was called to minister to a new congregation at Gardar, and a week later was called as pastor of the Vikur congregation. The Vikur religious community initially met at Pastor Thorláksson's home, and as his health continued to fail, he made a gift of part of his homestead claim to the Vikur congregation for the purpose of establishing a church and cemetery. Tuberculosis overwhelmed the youthful and much-respected pastor, and he died on March 12, 1882. By the time of his death, he had established a strong foundation for a core settlement unified by religious faith and ethnic community.

At Thorláksson's encouragement, the Vikur congregation called Pastor Páll's cousin, Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen, to continue realizing his dream for a religiously unified Icelandic-American community in the Pembina Hills.³ Mindful of Thorláksson's vision, Pastor Thorgrimsen knew that his countrymen would not feel they had put down permanent roots in their new community until they had built a church. On March 10, 1884, planning to construct the new church was initiated and twelve families mortgaged their farms to secure \$1200 to build Vikur Church. By the summer of 1884, this first Icelandic Lutheran Church in the United States had been completed. At the beginning, the 48-foot by 28-foot church had no altar, no pews, and no belltower. Those amenities of interior furnishing were soon added, along with a church organ, by fundraising efforts of the Vikur Ladies' Aid (which formed in 1883 as *Kvennfjelað Vikur Safnadur*). The Ladies' Aid (now chartered as the League of Christian Women) has continued to play a vigorous part in maintaining and modernizing the church over time, and their effective fundraising activities have served to preserve and maintain the church and cemetery.

³ The surname of Thorgrimsen is cited here as it appears in George Houser's respected treatise, *Pioneer Icelandic Pastor: The Life of the Reverend Páll Thorláksson* (1990). In other published sources it sometimes appears with "son" at the end, and given Iceland's proud independence from Denmark, readers of Nordic descent will quickly appreciate the subtle significance between an "e" and an "o" in the two spellings.

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In 1885, Pastor Thorgrimsen led the various Icelandic-American religious communities from seven churches surrounding Vikur to form the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod, as an extension of Thorláksson's commitment to local ethnic identity and autonomy. These historical events, with impacts realized as statewide and national levels of significance, are embodied in the church and cemetery built on the land lovingly given by Pastor Páll Thorláksson, who essentially gave his brief adult life to establishing Icelandic-American culture and the Icelandic Lutheran faith in far northeastern Dakota Territory.

On June 24, 1887, Vikur Church was dedicated by Rev. Jon Bjarnason, president of the Icelandic Synod. The interior and exterior of the church have been refurbished at various times, but the church remains today essentially as it was built. Photographs of Vikur Church at various times reflect a number of notable changes in its architectural fabric, but inasmuch as these occurred during the period of historic significance, they should be regarded as completing the original architectural vision as resources permitted. An exterior view dating from 1905 shows one configuration of the belltower with roundel windows in place. Another documentary photograph from 1947 shows the church soon after World War II, when a number of substantial improvements were made in the course of relocating the church in relationship to the cemetery. At that time, the small extension was added to the west to make more room for the altar and a sacristy, the steeple / belltower was given its present day configuration, and a modern propane heating system was installed. The church was placed over a more structurally appropriate cast-concrete basement, which was finished for a meeting room, kitchen, and as a place to display heritage and religious objects from the church's first 60-years.

The altarpiece painting at Vikur Church dates from about 1905. It is organized within a three-panel, fixed-wing altarpiece *reredos* (screen) or *retable*, ornamented by high Gothic pinnacles and pediments painted white with gold leaf trim containing the altar painting. Below it appears the exaltation in Icelandic dialect, "Heilacur, Heilacur, Heilacur" (Holy, Holy, Holy). The iconographic painting is of the resurrected Christ appearing before Mary Magdalene. The women disciples were first to visit Christ's tomb, so paintings often show the 'Noli me tangere' scene with Mary Magdalene and the holy women at the sepulcher. Confirmed by the artist's signature (at lower left), the altarpiece painting is the work of Carl Ludwig Boeckmann (b. 1867-d. 1923), an important Norwegian-American immigrant painter who worked extensively throughout Minnesota and North Dakota as a muralist and painter of religious themes. Another of Boeckmann's known religious paintings is the altarpiece in a Lutheran Church at Rothsay, MN, and one of his most important secular commissions was a painting of the Eighth Minnesota infantry attack at Killdeer Mountain in North Dakota, which hangs at the Minnesota state capitol in St. Paul.

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Connections between Norwegian-American immigrant communities in Minnesota and the Icelandic-American community of faith in Pembina County are particularly significant, and Boeckmann's painting is a good example of these close ties between like-minded immigrant groups. Altar art of this kind was common in Lutheran churches built between the late-1800s and early-1900s. Boeckmann is known to have waived his customary commission fee of \$150 for several altarpiece paintings in the spirit of a gift of faith and kinship. Scandinavian and German pioneers commissioned artists to paint works reflecting Jesus as savior and comforter.⁴ Thematic religious art was often thought of as encouragement to immigrants who were far from their homelands, and the cultural ties between Norwegian-Americans and Icelandic-Americans were particularly close.

In 1940, Mountain was incorporated as a city, and soon after the church was renovated, in 1949 this progressive community dedicated the Borg Memorial Home; one of the first modern elderly residential communities in the state. In 2010, a new community center was dedicated just to the northwest of Vikur Church. The one-acre parcel of land given by Pastor Thorláksson for Vikur Church and cemetery stands prominently at the center of the community. Since 1993, ownership and maintenance of the church has been delegated to an incorporated non-profit agency, the Vikur Lutheran Society, Inc., whose mission includes "commemorating and celebrating Icelandic cultural heritage." After 1993, new entrance doors, narrow profile metal siding, and the present asphalt shingle roof were installed.

The Vikur Church property (including the related cemetery and one-acre parcel that was Thorláksson's final gift to the Icelandic immigrant community), relate historical events to activities, associations, and physical characteristics of the now-incorporated village of Mountain, making the property significant. Mountain has long functioned as a productive, progressive, and proudly tightly-knit community unified by a shared cultural heritage. Mountain was established, contemporaneously with Vikur Church, as part of a broader settlement initiative represented in the context of neighboring Icelandic-American communities. In its rocky and wooded location on the edge of the topographically powerful Pembina Hills, the village of Mountain initially functioned as a somewhat isolated colony, supported by loans from other Scandinavian immigrant communities in Wisconsin and Iowa, enabled by the immigrants' spiritual leaders. The town's relationship to American building culture changed only slightly with later connection of Mountain to a local short-run railroad spur, tied indirectly to the national railway network.

⁴ Several known iconographic altar paintings by Boeckmann were based on a resurrection-themed altarpiece in Molde, Norway, by Axel Ender, as were similar altar paintings by Boeckmann's Minnesotan contemporary, August Klagstad. These two regionally important Norwegian-American painters enthusiastically served congregations with Norwegian and Icelandic heritage.

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As the first church built in Dakota Territory by the Icelandic-American community, Vikur Church bears a significant relationship to other historic resources in the vicinity. Architecturally it has a corresponding relationship to other Icelandic-American churches in northeastern North Dakota, as embodiments of a core culture group. Vikur Church was built first (1884), followed by Hallson Church (1897), Fjalla Church (1887), Gardar Church (1888), Vidalin Church (1888), and Svold Church (Peters, 1893). Eyeford Church (Thingvalla, 1892) was destroyed by fire in 2003, representing an enormous loss of community and cultural heritage. Each of these Icelandic churches is differentiated by variations on the basic vernacular treatment of the Gothic Revival theme. As a vernacular building, Vikur reflects prior experiences of its founding pastor and his immigrant "flock." Tasteful embellishments added over time, largely through the auspices of a vigorous and committed Ladies' Aid, affirm the important contributions of Icelandic-American women to place-making and celebration of community. Substantial contributions enabled by congregation women continue through the Ladies' Aid association and in promotion of cultural events by local organizations like the Pioneer Daughters group.

There is good photographic evidence on the historic record, documenting changes to the detailed fabric of the church over its 70-year period of significance (suggested as 1879-1948), including some helpful documentation of the site context. Significance of the property began with Thorláksson's homestead settlement land claim, with the church and cemetery boundary representing the most important remnant of that larger claim in terms of its impact on unifying the ethnic community. The remnant physical property closely reflects the longer period of architectural and historic cultural significance beyond Pastor Thorláksson's life. In addition to weekly religious services, dozens of social gatherings and community events at the church (like "Fourth of July" and "August the Deuce" celebrations) have served to unify the Icelandic-American community.

Relocating the church a short distance in 1947 was necessary in order to stabilize it over a more permanent foundation system, without disturbing the graves of the community's earliest immigrant founders. Considered as an historic landscape, the relationship of church to cemetery is relatively unchanged, still embodying and appropriately interpreting the pre-1900 tradition of churchyard cemeteries. Vikur Church cemetery is essentially "frozen in time" with later burials assigned to a separate cemetery about half a mile to the southwest. The unchanged relationship of Vikur Church to the street and the village of Mountain is equally important. Feeling of the property and the associative relationship of the church to cemetery, street, village, and original historic property remain virtually unaltered over time, even with slight repositioning of the church in relationship to the cemetery. Historic photo

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documentation reflects that the work of moving the church was accomplished by the initiative of Icelandic-American farmers from the Vikur community who hand-excavated the full basement, formed and cast the concrete on-site, and physically moved the church using only man-power, while commemorating the original location of the altar with an impressive monument stone.⁵

Vikur Church exemplifies the manner by which a frontier Protestant church was established and built in Dakota Territory, five years prior to statehood (North Dakota became a state on November 2, 1889). Based on available resources and the local level of carpentry skill, the well-proportioned building is a pared down application of Late Gothic Revival style in its detailing. Initial architectural design judgments of Thorláksson and Thorgrimsen were likely influenced by their seminary education and their travels throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota. In the initial stage of construction, locally harvested materials were used to the extent possible. The experience and skill of local carpenters are reflected in the basic design. With the extension of railway services to the frontier, mass produced building materials (milled lumber, leaded glass, liturgical furniture and lighting fixtures) soon became available. Iconographic artwork was added in about 1905 by a regionally notable Norwegian-American painter (Boeckmann) who probably came to be known to the Icelandic-American congregants through the experiences and Minnesota connections of the two founding pastors.

Before his untimely death from tuberculosis, Pastor Thorláksson contributed significantly to local and regional history. Vikur Church and the cemetery on Thorláksson's homestead represent the culture hearth from which enduring and sustainable Icelandic communities emanated. Quoting Houser (1990);

[Thorlaksson] was a man of resolute spiritual conviction and extraordinary compassion, and he worked tirelessly for the well-being of Icelanders who migrated to the United States and Canada during the late 1800s. He founded the Icelandic settlement at Mountain, North Dakota, where a monument has been erected in tribute to his religious and community leadership.

Events that unfolded from the Thorláksson homestead and Vikur Church site reflect broad patterns of American history and embody the significance of Icelandic settlement (and continuation of distinct Icelandic culture). Continuation of local heritage and commemoration of cultural events like "August the Deuce." (August 2 is the annual celebration day commemorating Norwegian colonization of Iceland in 874 and the 1874 date when the King of Denmark granted limited home rule autonomy to the Icelanders, closely coinciding with the mass outmigration and colonization of North American Icelandic

⁵ Perhaps reminiscent of Archimedes claim that with a long enough lever he could move the earth, resourceful farmers can move any structure. Relocating useful structures on the settlement frontier was commonplace and pragmatic.

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communities.) A community celebration of Independence Day was held at Mountain on July 5, 1880. At a July 1929 Pioneer celebration, Judge W.J. Kneeshaw remarked that, "Many Icelanders from this settlement have been honored by election to the legislature or other office, to county or township offices, and they have filled with honor such positions." Rosemarie Myrdal, who joined the Icelandic community of Mountain by marriage, served with distinction as Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota. Other internationally important persons like the arctic explorer Vilhjalmer Steffanson and poet Kristjan (K.N.) Julius emerged as products of the Icelandic communities. Many others have entered religious and educational fields over the community's 130-year history.

Building on an exceptionally high literacy rate and appreciation for libraries among early Icelandic immigrants, local cultural heritage has been enriched by a tradition of sharing information about genealogy and cultural heritage through internet web pages, books, a wonderful interpretive center, and engagement with cultural heritage associations in Iceland that keep distinct local culture alive and vital. Cultural discovery bus tours to Vikur Church are regularly organized by international scholars such as George Freeman and Jonas Thor. The guestbook in the church narthex affirms that nearly a thousand visitors from Iceland and from remote Icelandic communities throughout North America have visited Vikur Church within just the past five years as a structured cultural tourism experience of ethnic rediscovery.

Discussion of Criteria Considerations:

Ordinarily, places used for religious purposes, cemeteries (and graves of historical figures), and relocated properties require special justification in terms of National Register eligibility criteria. Three Criteria Considerations apply to the Vikur Church property.

Criteria Consideration A allows for eligibility if the religious property derives its primary significance from architectural and artistic distinction or historical importance. Vikur Church is used for religious purposes; but it is owned and managed by a publicly incorporated cultural organization. The property derives its primary significance from historical importance relating to a distinct ethnic enclave and as the earliest feature of a set of seven Icelandic-American churches built by members of this ethnically distinct settlement group. For Icelandic-Americans, there is no more appropriate embodiment of distinct local culture and ethnic tradition than these Icelandic churches that represent a strong attraction for Icelandic visitors internationally.

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Under Criteria Consideration B, the church building (which is primarily important for its architectural value and direct associations with a historic person) has been moved a short distance from its original location within the adjacent church cemetery, without changing its setting or associative site relationships. Architecturally, the church retains its direct associative connection with the churchyard cemetery (and an important direct relationship to the village main street). Furthermore, the thoughtfully planned relocation of the building in 1947 occurred within the period of historical significance, based on the well-reasoned judgment of Icelandic-American members of the Vikur community of faith. The surrounding property and adjacency of church and cemetery are directly associated with the persons who founded the Icelandic Lutheran Synod (it was part of Páll Thorláksson's original homestead claim).

Under Criteria Consideration D, the cemetery relates directly to the church and derives its primary significance from graves of persons with transcendent importance to this ethnic enclave. The cemetery's importance resides in its cultural associations with the Icelandic Lutheran Synod and with the gift of the property for this purpose. Grave markers and monuments on the property commemorate, and are directly associated with, regionally important persons and historically formative events of Icelandic-American settlement heritage. The intimate churchyard cemetery directly adjacent to the church (containing only the earliest burial places and commemorative monuments for the community's first-generation founders) is a distinctive landscape configuration that has largely disappeared in the U.S. since 1900.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Several active internet blogs attest to the ongoing exchange of research interest pertaining to Icelandic-American cultural settlement. Among them, please see postings by Sunna Pam Furstenau under Icelandic Heritage Advocate and
<http://steph9993.tripod.com/id154.html>

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: North East North Dakota Heritage Association; Pioneer Heritage Center at Icelandic State Park

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 32PB52

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.47-acres (0.595-hectares)

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Zone: 14 | Easting: 583 410 | Northing: 5 392 900 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

[See aerial photo overlay (Fig. 2) outlining boundaries of the nominated property and resource features.]

Two remnant parcels totaling 1.47-acres (0.595-hectares) contained within the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 16 in Thingvalla Township (Twp. 160 North, Range 56 West) of Pembina County, North Dakota; subsequently platted within the boundaries of the City of Mountain, North Dakota, and described by metes and bounds as follows:

Original 1.084-acre (0.439-hectares) remnant parcel (designated in deed as "more or less one-acre in area"), from the Páll Thorláksson homestead claim:

Beginning at a starting point 871.0-feet south and 735.0-feet west of the corner intersection of Township sections 9, 10, 15, and 16; continue southward 236.0-feet, thence west 200.0-feet, thence north 236.0-feet, thence east along the school property south boundary 200.0-feet to point of origination, and

An additional 0.386-acre (0.156-hectares) replatted parcel within S.J. Sigfusson's Addition to the City of Mountain:

Continuing north 120.0-feet, thence west 140.0-feet, and south 120.0-feet, thence east 140.0-feet to include Lots 3 and 4 of Block 5 and the vacated alley south of Lot 4; all of which parcel was assigned to Vikur Lutheran Church by Silvia Johnson, free of any encumbrances.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The parcel boundary contains all areas and extant features historically associated with the church and cemetery, according to an 1881 gift of deed by Pastor Páll Thorláksson, on record with the Pembina County Register of Deeds; plus the platted land parcel from the original homestead returned by gift of deed to the church holdings from Silvia Johnson in 1947.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steve C. Martens; Architect (consultant) steve.martens@ndsu.edu
organization: for the Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission
street & number: P.O. Box 742
city or town: Fargo state: ND zip code: 58107-0742
e-mail Katherine A. Lunde, HPC coordinator klunde@nd.gov
telephone: 701/361-3943
date: June 24, 2013

Preparation of this National Register nomination has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, a division of the United States Department of the Interior, and administered by the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of the Interior or the State Historical Society of North Dakota, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of Interior or State Historical Society of North Dakota.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

name/title: Willie Halldorson, President (Wayne Bernhoft, Registered Agent)
organization: Vikur Lutheran Society, Inc.
street & number: 12963 87th Street NE; PO Box 204
city or town: Mountain state: ND zip code: 58262-0204
e-mail bernhoft@polarcomm.com
telephone: 701/993-8282

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
 2. Pembina County, North Dakota
 3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
 4. Photo date: August 13, 2012
 5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0548 BW.tif
 6. Subject description; East (front) and north (side) exterior elevation. Photographer facing southwest
 7. **Photo number 1 of 9**
-
1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
 2. Pembina County, North Dakota
 3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
 4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
 5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0624 BW.tif
 6. Subject description; South (side) and east (front) exterior elevations from churchyard cemetery. Photographer facing northwest
 7. **Photo number 2 of 9**
-
1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
 2. Pembina County, North Dakota
 3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
 4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
 5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0633 BW.tif
 6. Subject description; West (rear) and south (side) exterior elevations. Photographer facing east-northeast
 7. **Photo number 3 of 9**
-
1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
 2. Pembina County, North Dakota
 3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
 4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
 5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0630 BW.tif
 6. Subject description; Interior of sanctuary / nave facing choir loft. Photographer facing east
 7. **Photo number 4 of 9**

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1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
2. Pembina County, North Dakota
3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0631 color.tif
6. Subject description; Interior view of sanctuary / nave toward sacristy / altar area. Photographer facing west
7. **Photo number 5 of 9**

1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
2. Pembina County, North Dakota
3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_03717 color.tif
6. Subject description; Interior of church basement, added 1947. Photographer facing west
7. **Photo number 6 of 9**

1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
2. Pembina County, North Dakota
3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0625 color.tif
6. Subject description; Exterior winter view from churchyard cemetery. Photographer facing north
7. **Photo number 7 of 9**

1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
2. Pembina County, North Dakota
3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
4. Photo date: November 12, 2012
5. State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_3742 color.tif
6. Subject description; Detail of burial marker for Pastor Pall Thorlaksson within cemetery boundaries. Photographer facing west
7. **Photo number 8 of 9**

1. **Vikur Church at Mountain**
2. Pembina County, North Dakota
3. Photographer: Steve C. Martens
4. Photo date: August 13, 2012
5. Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of North Dakota, (digital TIFF image accompanying nomination) ND_PB_VikurChurch_0547 color.tif
6. Subject description; Commemorative historical marker within cemetery boundaries. Photographer facing west
7. **Photo number 9 of 9**

Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain

Name of Property

Pembina County, ND

County and State

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Vikur Lutheran Church, Mountain

Name of Property

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County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Vikur Lutheran Church
Pembina County, North Dakota

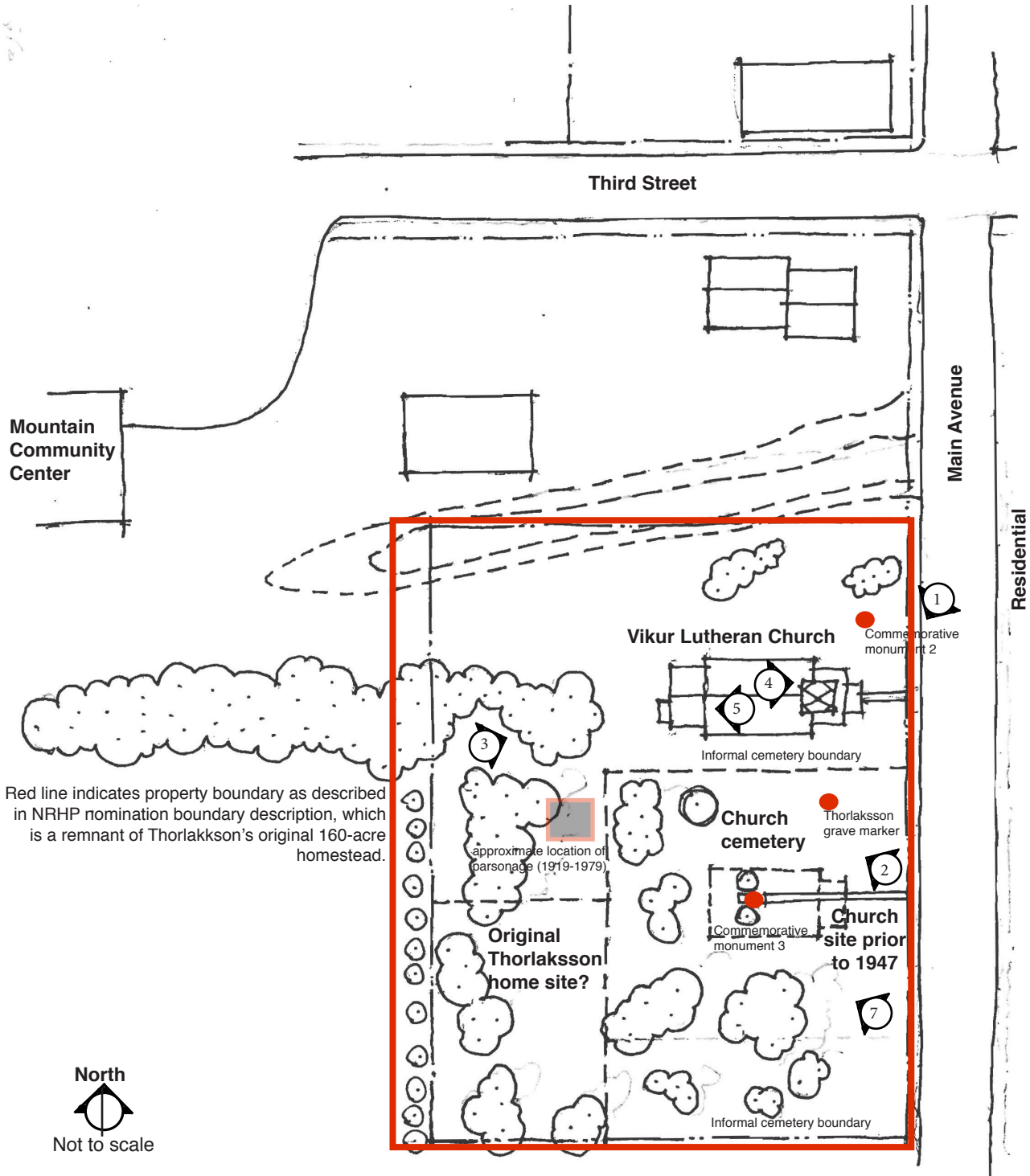


Fig. 1: Sketch Map of Vikur Lutheran Church and cemetery property; with reference photo standpoints indicated

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Fig. 2: Aerial photo of Vikur Lutheran Church and cemetery in Mountain, ND.
Adapted from *GoogleEarth* image; June, 2012.

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Pembina County, North Dakota

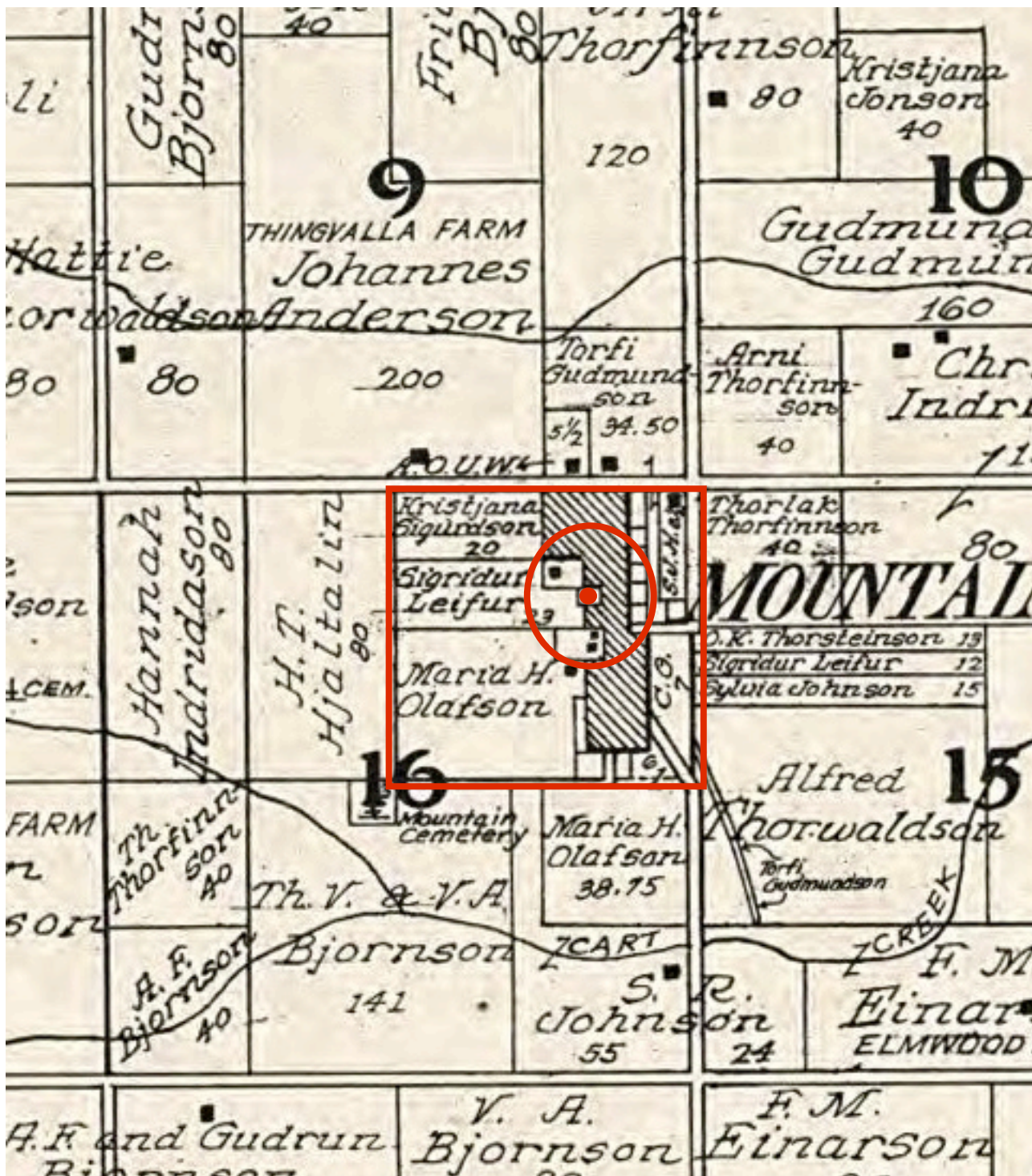


Fig. 3: excerpt, historical plat of Thingvalla Township, 1928. [160-acre Thorlaksson homestead indicated by rectangular red boundary] Geo. A. Ogle/Brock & Company Atlas of Pembina County, ND

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Vikur Lutheran Church, Mountain

Name of Property

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Vikur Lutheran Church, Mountain
Pembina County, North Dakota

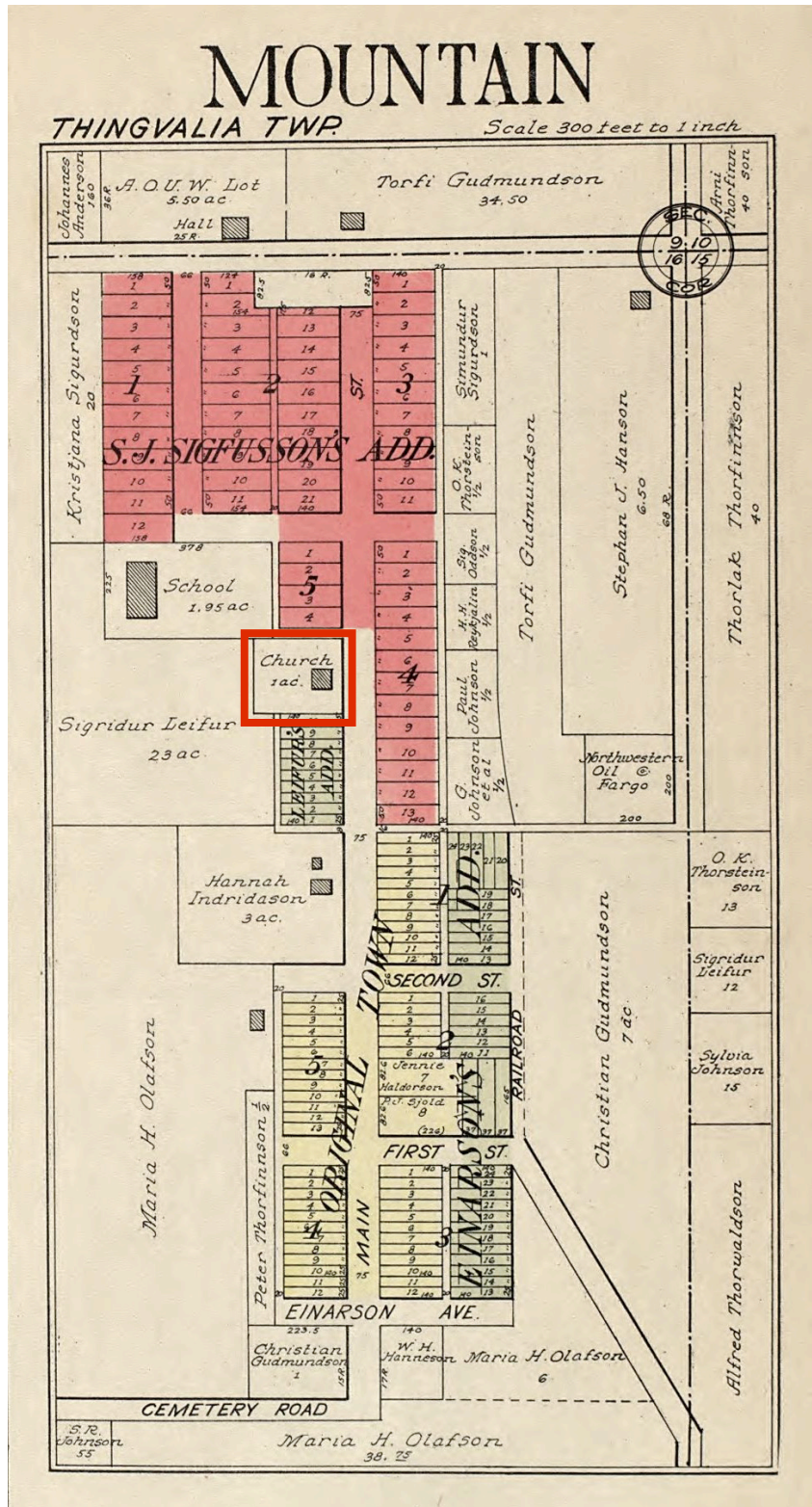


Fig. 4: Historical plat of Mountain, ND, 1928

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<small>Name of Property</small>
Pembina County, North Dakota
<small>County and State</small>
<small>Name of multiple listing (if applicable)</small>

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Pembina County, North Dakota

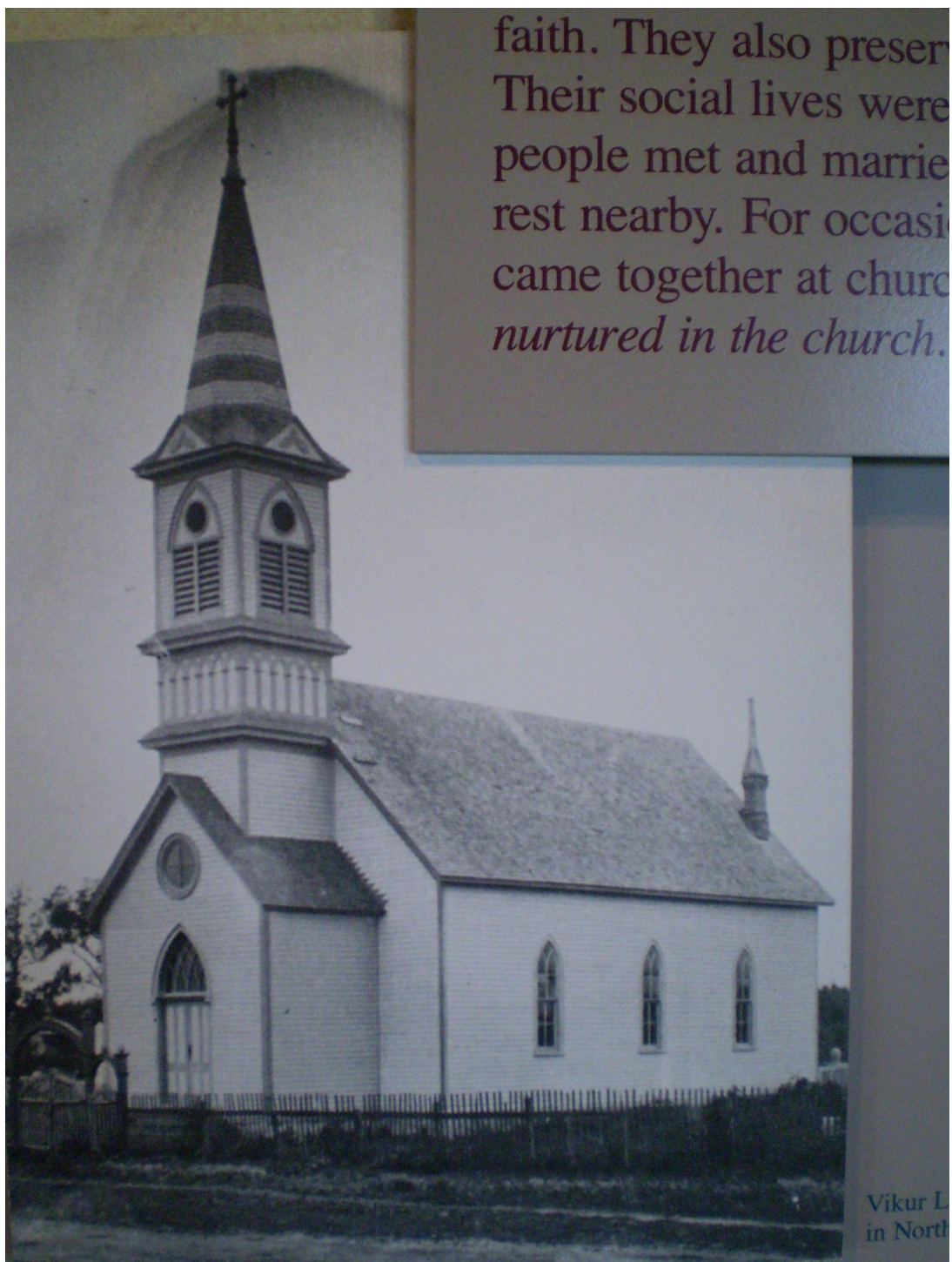


Fig. 5: Historic photo of Vikur Lutheran, ca. 1890. from the collections of Pioneer Heritage Center at Icelandic State Park. Note perimeter fence and formal entry gateway at front of church.

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Pembina County Historical Society

Fig. 6: Historic photo of Mountain mainstreet with Vikur Lutheran Church, ca. 1900



Vikur Lutheran Church
(Photo courtesy of Esther Jonasson)

Fig. 7: Historic photo of Vikur Lutheran Church, ca. 1915

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The Icelandic Church at Mountain — North Dakota

Fig. 8: Historic photo of Vikur Lutheran Church, ca. 1948

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Vikur Lutheran Church, Mountain
Name of Property
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County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



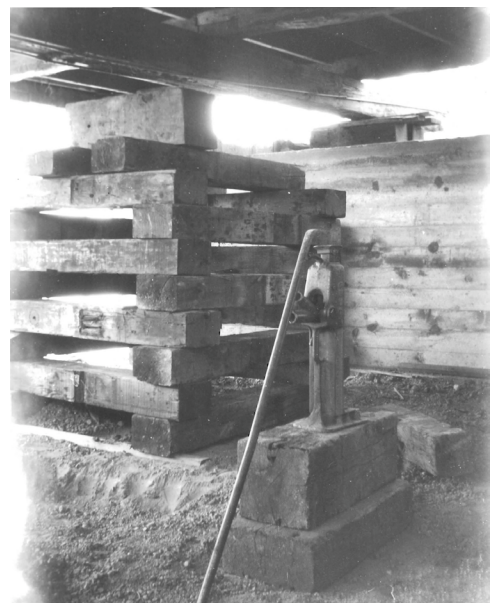
a. Hand excavating the basement and foundations



b. Forming the new footings, with concrete mixer



c. Placing concrete mix within board form foundation walls; church is in background



d. Temporary cribbing and hydraulic jack lifting the old church

Figs. 9a to 9d: Historic photos of Vikur Lutheran Church during relocation process, 1947.

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a. 1884 Vikur Church log structure



b. 1905 Vikur Church on original site, with parsonage at rear



c. 1948 Vikur Church interpreted in its current configuration

Figs. 10a to 10c: Three retrospective paintings showing artist J.S. Benedickson's interpretation of Vikur Lutheran Church, 1888, 1905, 1948.

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Fig. 11: Historic photo of Vikur Lutheran interior, with original pews and liturgical furniture procured by Ladies' Aid, ca. 1905.

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Fig. 12: Altarpiece reredos and altar painting with Norwegian-American painter Carl Ludvig Boeckmann signature, ca. 1905.

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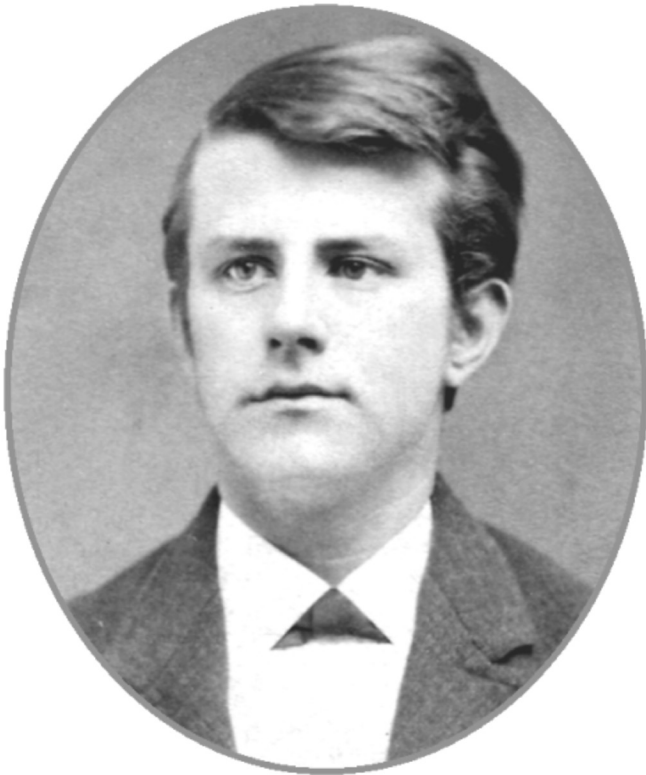


Fig. 13: Portrait of Páll Thorláksson; about age 30 at time of immigration and attendance at St. Louis Lutheran Seminary (ca. 1873-1875).

Reproduced in George Houser's, *Pioneer Icelandic Pastor: the Life of the Rev. Paul Thorlaksson*.



Fig. 14: Portrait of (Séra) Páll Thorláksson (1843-1882) at about the time the Vikur/Mountain Icelandic settlement was established (ca. 1879-1880), shortly before his death.

[The framed portrait is displayed in the Vikur Church basement.]

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Vikur Lutheran Church, Mountain

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Pembina County, North Dakota

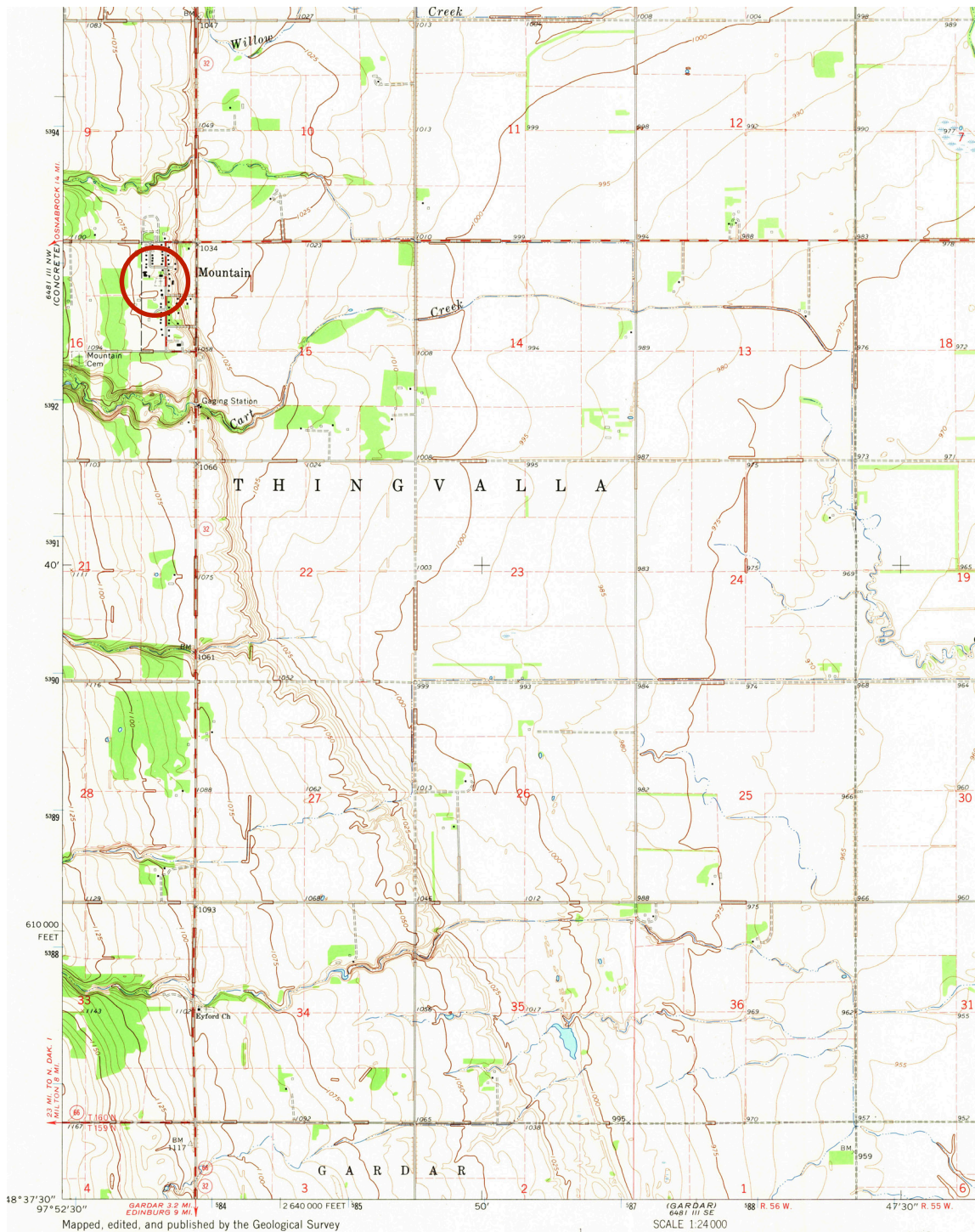


Fig. 15: USGS Topographic Map excerpt (reference)
Mountain, N. Dak. quadrangle



NOTE: Archival printed photos will accompany complete draft nomination submittal on June 17, 2013.

Vikur Church at Mountain
Pembina County, North Dakota
Photo number 1 of 9



Vikur Church at Mountain
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Vikur Church at Mountain
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Vikur Church at Mountain
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Vikur Church at Mountain
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Vikur Church at Mountain
Pembina County, North Dakota
Photo number 6 of 9



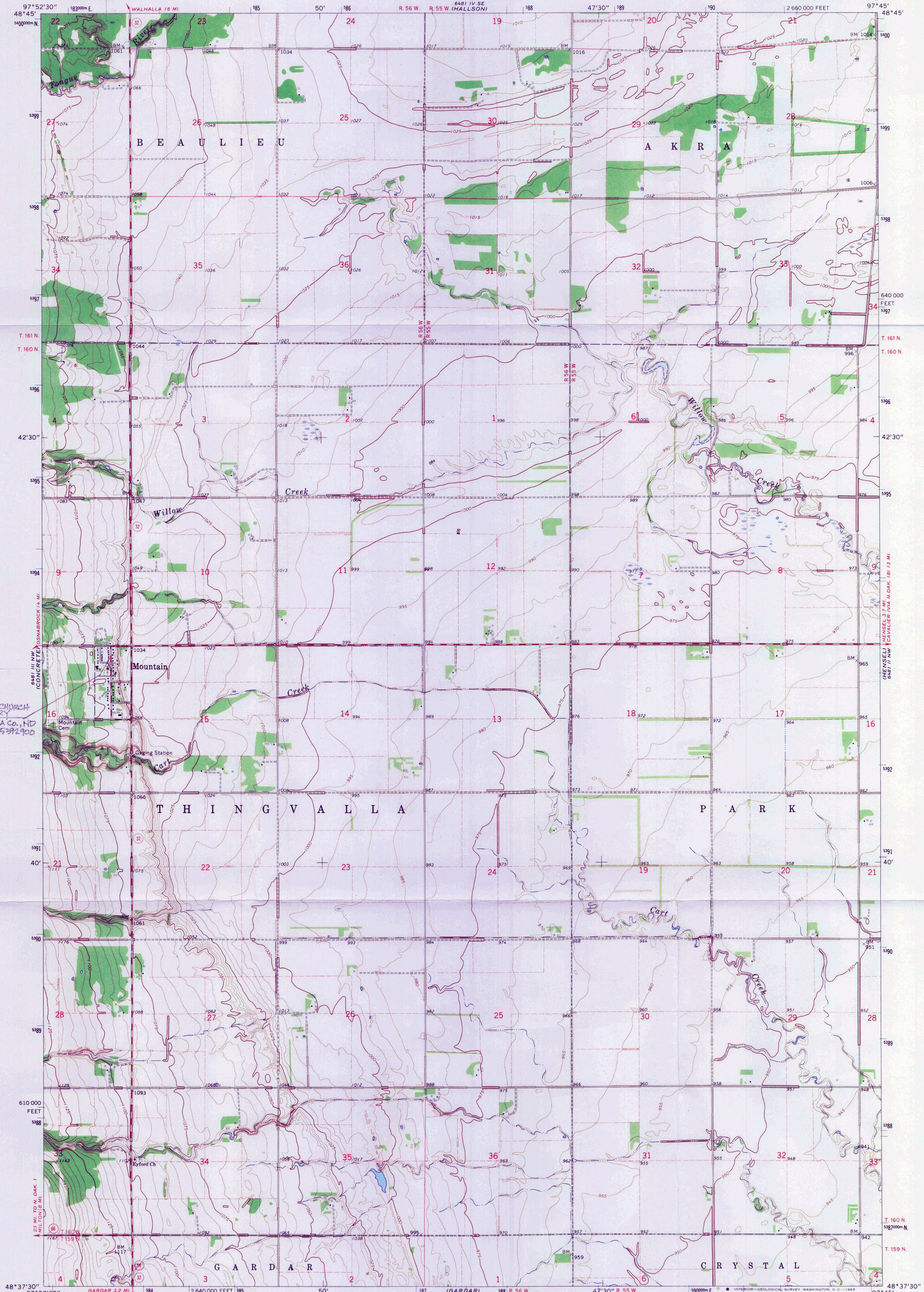
Vikur Church at Mountain
Pembina County, North Dakota
Photo number 7 of 9



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Pembina County, North Dakota
Photo number 8 of 9



Vikur Church at Mountain
Pembina County, North Dakota
Photo number 9 of 9



NRHP VIKOR CHURCH
AND CEMETERY
MOUNTAIN, PEMBINA CO., ND
UTM= 14 E 583 410 N 5392900

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963 and planetable surveys 1964
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on North Dakota coordinate system, north zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

SCALE 1:24 000
1 MILE
7000 FEET
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
1 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty — Light-duty
Unimproved dirt — State Route

U.S.G.S. Historical File Topographic Division
NORTH DAKOTA
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

MOUNTAIN, N. DAK.
N4837.5—W9745.75
1964
AMS 6481 III NE—SERIES V871

NOV 2 1965
2160

U.S.G.S.
FILE COPY
TOPOGRAPHIC DIVISION



VICKR CHURCH
125th Anniversary
1880-2005















PALL THORLAKSON

FÆBOUR

15. NOV. 1843

FÆSTVIGSUR IN

FÆRNABÍ ISLENNA

FÆNDIÐ MÓRÁK

1878

MÓR 12. MÁRZ 1878

THORLAKSON

LARGEST ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES
PEMBINA HALLSON 1852
MOUNTAIN AND GARDAR 1879

ERECTED BY
PEMBINA COUNTY FIDELITY SOCIETY CHAPTER 1948
ON SITE OF 1852
ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT CHURCH IN AMERICA 1854

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NORTH DAKOTA, Pembina

DATE RECEIVED: 9/21/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/07/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000862

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Nomination proposes national significance under Criterion B for association with the congregation's pastor. However, he died several years before the church was built.

RECOM./CRITERIA A, C

REVIEWER [Signature]

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 11/7/13

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR (Y)/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



To: Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
From: Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr./ Lorna Meidinger
Date: 16 September 2013
Subject: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 16th day of September 2013, for the nomination of the Vikur Lutheran Church at Mountain to the National Register of Historic Places.

- 1 National Register of Historic Places nomination form on archival paper
 - Multiple Property Nomination form on archival paper
 - 9 Photographs
 - 1 USGS map(s)/Location map
 - Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
 - Pieces of correspondence
 - 1 Other: Photo cd
-

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections ____ do ____ do not constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: