

1606

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

AUG 30 1989
NATIONAL REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 433 Long Street not for publication
city, town Wilkeson vicinity
state Washington code WA county Pierce code 056 zip code 98371

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James E. Shan 8/10/89
Signature of certifying official Date
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 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:)

Alton Byer 9/28/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation woodwalls wood: weatherboard

roof wood: shinglesother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located in the small mining community of Wilkeson, in the western foothills of the Cascade Mountains, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church is a simple frame structure that combines the Gothic vernacular form of an American country church with the distinctive onion dome and interior iconography of a traditional Slavic Orthodox temple. The well preserved building features a gable roof, arched fenestration, and a belfry with ogee dome. Since its construction about 1900, the church has been among the most distinctive landmarks in the Pierce County community.

The one story church, which is sited in a residential neighborhood a few blocks from the business district, is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 19 feet across the front (west) facade and about 46 feet from front to rear. The structure rests on a post and pier foundation, with a wood skirt; the walls are sided with drop siding with plain corner and frieze boards; and the roof is covered in wood shingles. The steeply pitched roof has boxed eaves and cornice returns on the gable ends. The cornices of the gable ends are underscored by simple square dentil blocks.

The body of the church is punctuated on both sides by regularly spaced lancet windows, with plain architraves and sills. The wood frame windows are composed of multiple lights with colored glass, and the pointed arched head of each window is divided into two arches by tracery.

The front entry of the church is composed of a paneled double door with transom light, sheltered by a pedimented portico. The tympanum of the pediment is faced in drop siding and is supported by turned posts with decorative sawn brackets. A railing with square balusters frames the entry porch. The porch is approached by a flight of six wooden steps. To either side of the entry are lancet windows with multiple panes of colored glass in the style of the windows elsewhere on the building.

The most distinguishing feature of the exterior design is the belfry which surmounts the front gable end. The belfry is composed of a squat octagonal base, faced in drop siding and corner boards. An open lantern with plain posts and decorative sawn brackets supports the onion dome roof, which rises to a finial and is crowned by a Slavic three-bar cross. The rear of the church building features a shallow projecting apse, lighted by a wheel window which illuminates the interior sanctuary.

The interior of the church is composed of a vestibule, which provides a small amount of storage, and a rectangular temple (comparable to the nave in western architecture), which measures about 21 feet long. The chancel is divided from the temple by an altar rail. The altar itself is on a raised platform, and is separated from the laity by the iconostasis--a

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: EuropeanArchitecture

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

c. 1898-1920

Cultural Affiliation

Eastern European

Architect/Builder

Not known

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

Built at the turn of the century by a congregation of immigrant miners from Eastern Europe, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Wilkeson is historically significant as the oldest Orthodox church in Washington State and a well preserved reflection of traditional immigrant culture transported to the American frontier. The church is distinguished by a simple design that successfully blends the chaste lines of an American Gothic meetinghouse with the onion dome and interior iconography of the Slavic Orthodox faith. Since its construction, the church has served the Eastern European community throughout the region, and remains the strongest testament to that community's influence in the mining towns of eastern Pierce County.

Historic Background: Rich coal deposits in the canyon of the Carbon River near Mount Rainier were discovered as early as 1862, and noted by Samuel Wilkeson in 1869 during a geological survey conducted for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Anxious to have access to a convenient source of coal near its Tacoma railhead, the Northern Pacific constructed a line to the coal fields in 1876, and opened the first major mine three years later.

Initially, nearly all Wilkeson coal was used for locomotive fuel. But in the 1880s, the suitability of the coal for coke was discovered, and in 1885 the Tacoma Coal and Coke Company built the first coke ovens in Wilkeson. By the 1890s, the Wilkeson Coal and Coke Company operated over one hundred beehive ovens and the small town (platted in 1891) boomed. Hundreds of immigrants were recruited to work the mines and ovens, including many from Southern and Eastern Europe (particularly in the wake of anti-Chinese immigration policies).

The Wilkeson area remained an important center of coal and coke production through World War I (at which time it had the only coke ovens in the United States west of Utah), as well as the site of sandstone quarries and logging operations. By 1916, coke production reached its peak and an estimated 1,200 people lived in the town. The industry remained active in Wilkeson until 1936 when, feeling the impact of changes in the copper smelting process, the Wilkeson Coal and Coke Company ceased operations.

Immigrants to the Wilkeson area in the late 19th century included a group of miners from the Carpathian mountains of present-day eastern Czechoslovakia, who brought with them a faith in the Orthodox church. In the late 1890s, the group organized the Holy Trinity congregation and built the small frame temple in the residential district of Wilkeson. The exact date of the

 See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lambert Floren, Historic Western Churches (Seattle: Superior Publishing, 1969), pp. 85-86.
Esther Pearson, Early Churches of Washington State (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), pp. 76-77.
Constance Trasar, ed., Orthodox American, 1974-1976 (Syosset, New York: Orthodox Church, 1975), p. 36.
The Alaskan Russian Church Archives: Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America (Washington: Library of Congress, 1984).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A

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5	2	1	7	3	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is legally described as parcel no. 956500-038-0 and parcel no. 956500-042-0, City of Wilkeson.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leonard T. Garfield, from information submitted by Kelly McGrew
organization Office of Archaeology and Hist. Preservation date May, 1989
street & number 111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11 telephone (206) 753-4011
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

three-panelled wooden screen upon which are hung painted icons of Jesus and Mary, executed in the Carpathian-Ukrainian style and therefore more realistic than classical Byzantine iconography. Other religious icons adorn the church walls.

The walls and ceiling of the church are finished in flush tongue and groove boards, above a wainscoting of vertical boards and chair rail. Unlike the pointed ceilings of western Gothic style churches, the interior ceiling is flat, and the side walls are curved to meet the ceiling. The original lighting fixtures include a central brass chandelier lighted by candles, and two brass candelabrum in front of the icons--all believed to have been imported to the Wilkeson church from Czarist Russia. The temple is a relatively open space without pews, reflecting the Orthodox tradition of standing during services. The church remains well preserved on both the exterior and interior, and the only known alterations to the original design are the addition of electric lighting and electric baseboard heat. A nonhistoric restroom structure is located at the rear of the church, and does not contribute to the significance of the property.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

church's construction is uncertain. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America (Diocese of Alaska) include correspondence with the Wilkeson church as early as 1898, although Pierce County records date the church building at 1900. According to the oral testimony of early parishioners, the Slavic coal miners themselves raised money, contributed labor, and donated many of the original interior furnishings and religious icons.

The congregation originally numbered 42 persons and, although the church was without a permanent pastor, Father Dimitri Kamnev of the Seattle parish visited monthly to conduct Sunday liturgy. During the height of the coal district's prosperity, the congregation numbered nearly 400 members. Parishioners came from throughout the region and included Russians, Slavs, Greeks, and Arabs who worshipped together in the only Orthodox church in Pierce County.

By 1920, with the coal industry in decline, the church was closed. Later that decade, Andrew and Anna Michel moved from South Cle Elum, where another Orthodox church had been closed, and began to restore Holy Trinity to its original condition. A small but dedicated congregation returned, and in 1985 the parish was assigned its first permanent priest. Today, the church is the oldest continually used temple in the Diocese of the West and San Francisco, which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, California, Nevada, Arizona, Wyoming, and Colorado. The building retains excellent integrity on both the exterior and interior, and is a enduring testament to the lasting presence of the Orthodox community in the mining district of Pierce County.

The temple combines the simple gable roof and rectangular form of the vernacular gothic revival with the onion dome, interior plan, and iconography of the Eastern Orthodox faith. The result is a uniquely American version of traditional Eastern European religious architecture. It is believed to be one of the best preserved examples of vernacular ethnic architecture in the state.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Wilkeson, WA

