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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Rocky Valley Lutheran Church

other name/site number: Dooley Lutheran Church 24SH785

2. Location

street & number: Ueland Street at County Road

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Dooley

state: Montana code: MT county: Sheridan code: 091 zip code: 59254

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maurelle Sheff MT SHPO 9-9-93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action

entered in the National Register
 see continuation sheet

Debra Byer

10/27/93

 determined eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet

 removed from the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property: Building	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u> 1 </u>	___ building(s)
	___	___ sites
	<u> 1 </u>	___ structures
	___	___ objects
Name of related multiple property listing: Archaeological and Historic Resources of Sheridan County, Montana	<u> 2 </u>	___ TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Religion: religious structure	Current Functions: Vacant/not in use
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7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: gable front	Materials: foundation: concrete walls: weatherboard roof: wood shingle
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Narrative Description

The Rocky Valley Lutheran Church is located in the townsite of Dooley, in northcentral Sheridan County, Montana. The community of Dooley, once home to perhaps 200 people, is now virtually abandoned; the church is the only major building remaining from the historic period.

Two other small historic structures also survive at the townsite, and historic sidewalks and foundations are evident. The historic street grid is also visible. A non-historic farm complex occupies the southern reaches of the old town. The tracks of the Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad (the "Soo Line"), constructed in 1913, mark the northern edge of the townsite. The surrounding landscape consists of largely treeless, rolling terrain, which is used nearly exclusively for the cultivation of wheat.

The church itself is located on two town lots near the northeastern edge of the townsite. The building faces west. It is a rectangular structure, measuring approximately 28' by 40', with an end-gable roof. The church is wood-framed, with clapboard siding and a concrete foundation. The roof is surfaced with wood shingles. The primary façade is marked by a square, central vestibule/bell tower with an octagonal spire. The church's primary entry is on the west wall of the steeple; it consisted of double entry doors (now missing) beneath a pair of two-light transoms. There is a round window opening centered above the entry doors, and three Gothic window openings in the lantern of the steeple. Both the north and south walls of the main building mass contain four evenly-spaced Gothic window openings. All fenestration is wood-framed, and major windows appear to have been double-hung. No window glass survives. An exterior chimney (now gone) once existed against the east wall.

The church's interior consists of a single large room. The space has a wooden floor, and plaster-on-lath walls and ceiling. The ceiling is arched. Although large areas of interior plaster have fallen, some minor detail remains visible, including wood moldings and baseboards, and painted stenciling at the top of the walls. A pair of swinging, 5-panel doors connect the entry vestibule with the main church room.

The building displays good integrity, although it shows evidence of decades of abandonment. Exterior surfaces are weathered and largely without paint, and many of the roof shingles are gone. The entry stoop is also missing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: C	Areas of Significance: Architecture
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A	Period(s) of Significance: 1915
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: 1915
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/Builder: Contractor: J.J. Vossen

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Rocky Valley Lutheran Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C. Although the building is a religious property, it qualifies for listing under Criteria Consideration Exception A since it is an excellent example of rural church design in northeastern Montana. The building's size, configuration, and type and level of architectural detailing are all locally typical of the building form, and the church exists in 1992 with virtually no non-historic structural alterations. Small rural churches similar to this were ubiquitous features on the historic Sheridan County landscape; one or more such buildings existed in nearly every platted townsite in the county, and many others were scattered across the rural landscape.

Historical Information

The townsite of Dooley, Montana was one of a series of small communities platted by the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad (the "Soo Line") as it constructed a branch line into northeastern Montana in 1913. The Dooley townsite was located in northcentral Sheridan County, in a region of nearly treeless, rolling prairie. The region seemed well-suited to dryland wheat farming, and in 1913 it was in the midst of a period of intensive homestead settlement. Town lots in Dooley were sold beginning on July 30, 1913, and the community reportedly grew quickly. Many of the region's first settlers were Norwegian Lutherans, and by early that September plans were already underway for the establishment of a Lutheran church in Dooley. On September 5, 1913, the *Plentywood Herald* noted:

On Tuesday evening of this week Rev. S.J. Fretheim conducted the first service at the town of Dooley on the Soo. He has for about two and a half years conducted regular services in that district, both in English and Norwegian, and about two years ago organized the congregation known as the "Rocky Valley Congregation." The first meeting at Dooley was destined to be of importance, because the congregation ... did unanimously decide that Dooley should from now on be the permanent home of the congregation.

The congregation's early meetings were held in the second floor of the Epler-Decker Block in Dooley. The weekly services were held alternately in English and Norwegian.

The Rocky Valley congregation had begun making plans for a permanent church building by 1914. That July 31, the *Herald* noted that Fretheim "was in the Dooley country yesterday, soliciting funds for a new Lutheran church at that place." (Fretheim was an itinerant minister who established churches and preached in several area communities.) Sufficient funds were available for construction by 1915, and that May the *Dooley Sun* reported that a contract for the church's construction had been let. The project was awarded to J.J. Vossen, who agreed to construct the church for a labor cost of \$437.75. Vossen was a farmer who lived east of town. The church was erected that summer on two lots donated by the townsite company. The building was completed in time for a cornerstone laying ceremony on August 24, 1915.

The church continued in operation until approximately 1945. By that time, the population of the Dooley region had dropped significantly, and the numbers continued to decline. After 1945, the few remaining members of the Rocky Valley congregation attended services in Plentywood. The church building was deeded to the Plentywood Lutheran Church in 1959, by three people identified as "the sole survivors and members of the Rocky Valley Lutheran Church of Dooley, Montana." The church has apparently been abandoned and unused since at least that time. Today, it is the only major historic building remaining in the Dooley townsite.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Dooley School and Reunion Committee. Dooley Days: Dooley, Montana, 1913-1987. (n.p.: the committee, 1987).

The Dooley Sun (newspaper), May 28, 1915.

The Plentywood Herald (newspaper), September 5, 1913; July 31, 1914.

Townsite plats and deed records on file at the Sheridan County Clerk & Recorder's office, Plentywood, Montana.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other – Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: **Zone** **Easting** **Northing**
 A 13 544850 5414250

Legal Location: Section 16, 36N, 56E

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lots 10 and 11, Block 2, Original Townsite of Dooley, Sheridan County, Montana. The nominated property is located in the NW¼ of Section 16, T36N, R56E, M.P.M.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes only the townsite lots on which the nominated property stands. These are the lots originally deeded to the builders of the church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mark Hufstetler, Historian
organization: Renewable Technologies, Inc. date: September 1, 1992
street & number: 511 Metals Bank Building telephone: 406/782-0494
city or town: Butte state: MT zip code: 59701

Property Owner

name/title: Florence M. Marsh c/o Valentine Marsh
street & number: RR 2, Box 10
city or town: Plentywood state: MT zip code: 59254

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation/Photos

Rocky Valley Lutheran Church

Page 1

Index to Photographs

Photographer: Mark Hufstetler

Date: August 1991

<u>Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Direction Facing</u>
1	West and north sides	Southeast
2	North elevation	South
3	West elevation	East
4	South and east sides	Northwest
5	Interior view showing the west wall of the primary room	Northwest