

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: Lenora Methodist Church

COUNTY: Fillmore *Canton m.c.*

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: Canton Township

LEGAL DESC.:

ADDRESS: Lenora Village

Lots 17-18-19, Block 3, Lenora Plat

MAR 15 1982

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent _____	Local _____	Primary <u>Religion</u>
Structure _____	Good <u>X</u>	State <u>X</u>	Secondary <u>Settlement</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:	Yes _____ No <u>X</u> Restricted _____	PRESENT USE:
VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD:	Yes <u>X</u> No _____	vacant
OCCUPIED:	Yes _____ No <u>X</u>	

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1856, 1865 ORIGINAL USE: Church

ORIGINAL OWNER: Lenora Methodist Church ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Board of Trustees; MN Annual Conf; ACREAGE: Less than one acre X
 United Methodist Church; Rm. 400; 122 W. Franklin Ave.; Mpls.,
 MN 55404. Attn.: Wilbur Grose, Exec. Secretary.

LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Fillmore County Historical Society, UTM REFERENCE:
 Box 193, Preston, MN 55965 Canton MN Quad.

FORM PREPARED BY: Robert M. Frame III, Ph.D. 15 / 590440 / 4824940

DATE: February 1981

DESCRIPTION:

The Lenora Methodist is located in the small rural village of Lenora. It is a simple vernacular stone structure with gable roof and three window openings in each of the two side facades. A recent wood frame entryway shelter covers the only doorway. Since the church no longer houses a congregation the windows remain shuttered. Simple furnishings remain inside the building. (see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lenora Methodist Church is significant for its association with one of the earliest pre-railroad townsites in Fillmore County. Construction was begun in 1856 using money from the sale of lots in the townsite of Lenora. The townsite was developed by Rev. John L. Dywer, first Methodist pastor in the area, who wished to build a new town with a Methodist Church at its center. The Panic of 1857 halted the church construction. In 1865 at the close of the Civil War, work was resumed and the present building completed. In the 1870s, county railroad construction bypassed Lenora and decline followed. Today the church is considered officially abandoned and it has been officially recognized as an historic site (of ten in Minnesota) by the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. (see continuation sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- "Lenora Methodist Church File," Commission on Archives & History, Minnesota Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, Minneapolis, MN.
- History of Fillmore County. 1882. P. 416.
- Griswold, Burr F. "History of Lenora Stone Church." Unpublished typescript; no date.

Lenora Methodist Church

Canton Township, MN
Fillmore CountyDESCRIPTION (supplement):

The Lenora Methodist Church exists today in its ca. 1865 appearance, retaining significant exterior and interior integrity. The building is rectangular in plan with a simple, low-pitched gable roof; the interior space comprises a single room. Windows are original four-over-four double hung wooden units with stone sills and wooden lintels. The only entry to the church is centrally positioned in one of the gable ends; it is set within a panelled recess and sheltered by a simple wooden vestibule. Photographic evidence indicates that the vestibule is of early vintage as it appears weathered and suffering from settling in a turn of the century photograph. The roof of the church was originally sheathed in wooden shingles, however both the church and the vestibule are now sheathed with asphalt composition shingles.

The interior walls and ceiling are clad with painted tongue-and-groove bead-molded boards. Window and door trim are simple and without embellishment; windows are set within deep reveals with chamfered jambs. Original pews remain in place with those of the side aisles securely fitted into the dado. A slightly raised dais (or platform) with spindle-work communion rail serves as the base for the pulpit and reed organ.

SIGNIFICANCE (supplement):

As is the case in many Minnesota counties, early townsites in Fillmore County were platted along river and trail transportation corridors, a pattern which was drastically altered when rail lines were later extended through the area and townsites appeared as station points. At least seven pre-railroad townsites were platted in Fillmore County during the mid-1850s. (The first rail line reached the county in 1866 and the first rail townsite was filed in 1868.) The townsite of Lenora was unusual among these 1850s developments in that, unlike the usual pattern of a commercial entrepreneur acting as proprietor, it was developed as a religious community by Methodist minister John Dyer. The congregation and community remained active through the 1880s, with the church building the central focus for the community. Unlike many early townsites which later gained rail access and grew into larger communities, Lenora was bypassed and today remains a somewhat isolated settlement. The strong relationship of the church to the founding of the town, as well as its undorned stone exterior and intact sparsely furnished interior, make the building a striking remainder from a somewhat unique example of the important first phase of Fillmore County's townsite development.

MnSHPO
Sept. 1982

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melvin Lynn
11/19/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
Lenora Methodist Church in Fillmore
County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 82001892

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Fillmore

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Lenora Methodist Episcopal Church

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: Co. Hwys. 23 and 24

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date