

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Nat Register of Historic Places  
by SHPO National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. John's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District  
other names/site number St. John's Lutheran Congregation (L.C.A)

2. Location

street & number 1207 Indigo Avenue [N/A] not for publication  
city or town Hampton [x] vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Franklin code 069 zip code 50441-7559

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 [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Steve King Signature of certifying official/Title Date 23 AUGUST 2015  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 10.13.15

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
2	0	sites
1	1	structures
1	0	objects
9	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious facility

Religion/Church School

Religion/church related residence

Funerary/Cemetery

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious facility

Religion/church school

Religion/church related residence

Funerary/Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> And 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Limestone

walls Synthetics/vinyl

roof Asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History  
Religion

**Period of Significance**

1888-1965

**Significant Dates**

1888  
1899  
1902

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
Jensen, Jens Larsen

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: St. John's Lutheran Cong.

St. John's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Iowa  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[115]	[4721130]	[4729620]	2	[115]	[4721130]	[4729370]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[115]	[472240]	[4729370]	4	[115]	[472240]	[4729620]
							<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen

organization History Pays! Historic Preservation Consulting Firm date August 20, 2015

street & number 4411 Ingersoll Avenue telephone 515-274-3625

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50312-2415

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name St. John's Danish Lutheran Church, c/o Mike Jorgensen

street & number 408 Polk Street telephone 641-430-1494

city or town Iowa Falls state Iowa zip code 50126

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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St. John's Danish Evangelical Church Historic District, vic. Hampton, Franklin County, Iowa

### 7. Narrative Description:

#### Materials, Continued:

Foundation	Concrete
Walls	Wood/weatherboard

The town of Coulter is located along the north central line of the southwest quarter of Franklin County. Today Interstate 35 passes just a few miles to the west of it and State Highway 3 does the same to the north. St. John's Church is two miles due east on the latter highway, and then 1.7 miles south on Indigo Avenue. The church is necessarily situated near the midpoint of the west half of the county. The county seat of Hampton is ten miles to the east, on Highway 3, and since it's founding, the church has used Hampton as its address and as a community reference point.



Figure 1: Church location, northwest Franklin County (Iowa Geographic Map Server 2015, annotated)

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St. John's is actually a district of buildings and other resources. As contributing components this nomination tallies five buildings, (the church proper, the hall, parsonage and two garages); one structure (the church ornamental gate and metal wire fence), and two sites (the cemetery and the associated agricultural land and north-end windbreak); and one object (the stepping stone used for carriage/wagon traffic, for a total of nine historic resources. As a non-contributing component this nomination includes a playground set, counted as a structure.



Figure 1a: aerial overview looking southeast with key resources labeled  
(framed image on site digitally copied)

The church complex consists of a 15-acre rectangular parcel that presents its longer dimension to and on the east side of Indigo Avenue. The church complex proper accounts for one third of the total acreage while the rest is cropped with the proceeds that have historically supported the church. The farmed portion is along the east edge and at the south end of the parcel (Figure #22). The pavement on that street ends abruptly at the south end of the complex, one measure of its importance to the county. The site makeup consists of a north-end windbreak; the church proper surrounded by a circular road and its associated cemetery, the church hall placed in close proximity to the road, and finally on the south end the parsonage and its garage. The lost custodian's residence occupied the northwest corner of the present cemetery and its associated garage still stands to the north of that site near the windbreak.

The Church (1888, 1899):

The church building has a "T" plan as a result of its enlargement from an original narrow and short rectangular plan. The overall plan now consists of the steeple and its base (Narthex), with concrete steps and balustrades to the west, and with a rail to the south; an adjacent added bathroom addition to the north; the main sanctuary; the added wings; a short chapel projection on the east end, and finally an added office at the southeast corner. A shed roof extension across the northeast rear wall (east) covers the cellar entrance and is similar to one on the east wall of the Hall. The original church had a crawlspace while the transept addition has a cellar where the heating plant is located.

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Figure 2: Ca.1953 aerial view looking north  
(75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

The presumed special features of the church proper are its "T" plan, its molded ceiling profile, and its steeple. While the church is now covered with a broader vinyl-clad pressed particleboard siding, the original siding remains in place beneath this covering.

The church interior has acoustical tiling on the ceiling. Stained glass windows infill the original openings but these are of relatively recent date (see alterations). The apse as noted is remarkably shallow. An original run of wainscot survives across the base of the south wall of the apse. The wooden altarpiece is of very early date as is the semi-circular altar. The raised pulpit is offset to the corner of the east transept as is common in Danish churches. No style is attributed. The overall footprint is that of a shallow cruciform shape.

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Figure 3: 1953 aerial view looking northeast  
(100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

The Parish Hall (1917):

The hall is the best-preserved early building within the complex. It has a rectangular plan and a raised basement and main floor. A centered north entry vestibule contains the stairs and a shed roof east extension covers a rear basement entrance. A shed roof basement projection on the south wall houses two added bathrooms and a wooden exterior stair provides a second egress to the upper hall. The basement exterior is stuccoed while the first floor has narrow clapboard covering with corner boards. The gable ends are wood shingled and there are end windows (covered). A frame belt course enframes the walls beneath the gable ends. There is a centered date plate on the west wall. The basement contains a large kitchen, utilities room and a large dining room and bathrooms have been added along the south wall in the center of the plan. Upstairs the main hall fills the entire floor level save for an original office area that is partitioned off in the southeast corner. The entirety of walls and ceiling are covered with a narrow horizontally laid wainscot that caps the perimeter wainscot (laid vertically) (this same material, with its upper reaches set diagonally, originally covered the church interior as well). No style is attributed. Hall forms are discussed in Section 8.



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Dimensions as given in the church minutes from the plans were overall 30 feet by 56 feet, with an 8-foot high cellar ceiling; the basement-meeting hall measured 30 feet by 16 feet; the entry vestibule to the east measured 10 feet by 12 feet. The contractor was likely Jens Larsen Jensen of Des Moines (St. John's Minutes, May 1, 1917).<sup>1</sup>

### The Parsonage (1950):

The parsonage plan includes a full concrete block basement, with an L-shaped living room and kitchen occupying the majority of the ground floor. The pastor's office occupies the east end of the plan and there is a half-bath between the kitchen (back of the plan) and office. There is a rear entrance into the kitchen. Upstairs there is a bedroom and full bathroom. Interior trim is blonde colored and consists of a plain five-inch high baseboard and simple three-inch door trim. The house interior was not available for interior inspection because it is rented. The type is that of a Cape Cod cottage with a broad two-sided shed roof front (). The rear dormer is narrower. The house is sided over its original clapboard with the same vinyl covered pressed particleboard material. The cottage fronts west. There is a concrete front stoop with metal rail in the front. It is classed stylistically as a Colonial Revival design.

### Custodian's Garage (1951):

This two-car garage fronts west and is located north of the loop road that encircles the cemetery, and to the southwest of the shelterbelt that covers the north end of the complex. There are twin fiberglass overhead doors on the west front and a single pedestrian entrance on the back of the south wall. The garage retains its original clapboard exterior and there are corner boards. The interior is open in plan.

### Parsonage Garage (1951):

The garage was not open for interior inspection but it is a simple open plan single-car garage and its plan (gable roofed) orients north and south. Its auto entrance is on the south end and there is a pedestrian entrance on the south end of its west wall. The overhead door is a replacement metal one. The garage retains its clapboard exterior.

### The Cemetery:

The cemetery is of particular interest because it surrounds the church and because its burial tradition followed the European custom of regular replacement (see significance). Reflecting that tradition there are very few older tombstones. Given the replacement of burials after 25 years, there are but a small number of early stones extant that have only Danish language inscriptions and symbolisms. The cemetery has now expanded to cover the former custodian's residence. It is categorized as a site.

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<sup>1</sup> Jensen (1866-1928) built a church for Grand View College and was a Des Moines contractor and the church minutes reference his hometown. He is buried in Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines.

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The Gate and metal fence:

An ornamental cast iron entrance gate and a front metal fence is located in front of the church and the gate is in line with the west entrance of the church. A row of flagpoles stands in front of the fence line.. No date is available for this structure but it appears in the 1953 aerial photo (Figure #3).

The Associated Agricultural Land and Windbreak:

Fifteen acres of flat to gently rolling open farmland represents the remnant of an originally larger 35-acre tract that was first owned by the congregation. Debt and hard times whittled away much of these holdings. These acres yielded proceeds that supported church operations and construction projects and played a direct role in the annual Harvest Festivals. It is categorized as a site. Parallel rows of evergreens, now well overgrown, form a protective windbreak across the north end of the property.

The ["Pioneer"] Stepping Stone:

This large elongated flat stone served as a mounting and dismounting step for those who arrived by carriage. It stands to the south of the church on the north side of the central road that continued on to the southeast to the barn (non-extant) and to the northeast around the cemetery. It is believed to be on or close to its original location but its present location dates from 1970. It is categorized as an object.

Alterations:

A notable aspect of this building complex is the continuous history of building construction and replacement. This long-term activity reflects the commitment and the resources of the congregation as well as the evolving uses made of the overall complex. There are references to other non-extant minor outbuildings including a pump house and a building that was east of the church (perhaps the same pump house?) as of 1951. The disposal of the church woodpile in early 1950 indicates that the heating plant had switched to either coal or fuel oil. The following chart summarizes the key building erections and alterations over time:

Year	Church	Hall	Custodian's House	Parsonage	Other
1883				First building	
			First House		
1888	Church finished			Addition	
1889					Horse barn
1892				Sep. barn	
1895					Sell land to pay debt
1897		First hall			
1899	Rear transepts				
1903			Replaced		
1908				Addition	

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Year	Church	Hall	Custodian's House	Parsonage	Other
1912					New main barn
1917		Present hall			
1950				Present parsonage	Barn shortened
Pre-1953		Bathrooms added in basement			Cemetery fence
1952-53	New support beam under east end of plan (accounts for c/b west wall)		North end addition (1953-53)		
1953	Christ statue replaces painted image in altarpiece, baptismal font, new pews				
1954	New hardwood floor				
1955	New pews and baptismal font <sup>2</sup>				
1958	Seven smaller stained glass windows, office or sacristy added				
1961					Fir shelter belt planted
1962	Two large transept stain glass windows	Kitchen remodel			
1963					Barn removed
Pre-1978	Sided, loss of wainscot interior			Sided	
Ca.2003	Front bathroom addition	Exterior stairs, west side			

<sup>2</sup> The original font went to the Grand View College archives (St. John's Minutes, January 2, 1956).

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The major church alterations were its main addition (1899), the replacement of its very unusual wainscot interior (survives in hall), the front bathroom addition and its residing. The main hall addition is its added bathroom; otherwise it is very well preserved. The parsonage is likely altered internally and it has been resided but does retain its original siding underneath the covering.

One notable alteration is the landscaping appearance of the present complex. As historical aerial views indicate, the complex landscaping was meticulously cared for when the congregation was both larger and younger. This mostly relates to the shelterbelt portion of the complex of course.

Integrity Evaluation:

The district retains a very good level of historical integrity. The survival of the key district buildings (church and hall) comprise the core of this integrity finding but the overall site with drives, cemetery, replacement parsonage and garages, along with the north windbreak combine to represent a rare example of a Danish rural church complex. The buildings as they stand all date to pre-1965, the National Register of Historic Places significance cut-off point. The building grouping represents an unusual and still surviving range of religious buildings. Of all of the church alterations the front bathroom addition is the most regrettable, given its prominent location and design. Otherwise the minor additions are mostly hidden. The residing is simply a covering over the original clapboard so is both reversible and in need of removal given its present condition. The steeple was historically horizontally sided and it retains that patterning. The Hall with its pristinely preserved interior is at present the key building of interest in the complex due to its rarity of type and its association with the communal aspects of the congregation. The parsonage is sufficiently well preserved and marks the onset of all-English language services so it is functionally linked to the congregation's history.

Integrity of location is not only completely intact but rather it is critical to understanding the congregation's history. Obviously this church body serviced a very broad geographical range in securing its membership and it is instructive that a rural setting where sufficient land was available for the various congregational needs was to be had. Consequently the location is overtly rural and is not town based.

Integrity of design is retained in the arrangement of the larger complex with its multiple sub-units. The church is critically centered within the cemetery. The custodian's residence was segregated to the north end of the parcel while the parson lived at the south end. The centrally important hall was in the middle of the parcel. Interior roadways segregate these sub-sections and fences, gate and flagpoles provide a design focus to the church frontage. On a building-specific level each building sufficiently retains its basic design and the church retains excellent interior integrity while the hall remains best of show, inside and out. Particularly important character defining components in the church are its broadly molded ceiling profiles and its complex steeple and narthex.

Integrity of setting is vested in the character of the complex. The building layout and the segregation of functions already described are "readable" from the public right-of-way and the various buildings and landscape components underscore the feel of the whole.

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Integrity of materials is retained despite their being in several cases covered with replacement siding. Interior changes to the church all pre-date 1965 and reflect a belated availability of resources and opportunity to modernize and memorialize the church. The Hall as noted is pristine in its integrity.

Integrity of workmanship survives intact in the hall but largely remains in the church structure and its interior. Workmanship also survives in a good number of early Danish language tombstones.

Integrity of feeling is largely derived from the extent and complexity of the overall complex. The well maintained and still actively used array of buildings and the large cemetery, combine to educate the cold reader that this is no simple rural church site, but rather the venue for a broad rural/urban church community that has a long and distinctive history that explains how it came to be.

Integrity of association best lies in the simple test that deceased congregational members could readily find and recognize their former congregation.

Future Plans:

The church congregation recently established a trust with a substantial endowment that would provide perpetual care and upkeep of the property. As is the case with most properties of this type, the church has been re-sided and expanded over time, while the parish hall has not been substantially altered. The decision was recently made to repaint and repair the hall rather than to re-side it. It is hoped that the church will have its more recent cladding removed and that rehabilitation will better blend it is several additions.

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## Additional Significance Dates:

1902  
1917  
1950

## 8. Statement of Significance:

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is one of a small number of all-Danish rural congregations that were established in Iowa. Its core significance is based upon it's the Criterion A contexts of Social History and Religion. While all comparable Danish congregations sought to conserve religious and cultural ties with their Danish heritage, this congregation struggled successfully to conserve and retain a much more comprehensive Danish identity. This commitment was best summarized as an effort to preserve not just the Evangelical Lutheran faith but also rather the "Danish Church" itself and another, certainly unusual measure of this was the retention of traditional one-generation long European burial practices. This tradition resulted in an ever-changing array of memorial stones over time and the survival of just a handful of original stones. As is true of all similar Danish congregations, this one was directly involved in the theological conflict between "happy and holy Danes" that took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The group of church buildings attests to the continued growth of the congregation (church expansion), the provision of pastor's and staff housing, the early construction of a separate hall and its replacement with a larger one, these representing the social purposes of the congregation that transcended the use of the church building itself. The replacement parsonage (1951) marks the arrival of English-only services and the complex as a whole attests to the persistence, growth and survival of a congregation that eclipsed its nearby rivals. The period of significance is 1888-1965. The starting date is the original church construction and the ending date is the 50-year National Register cut-off date. Key dates are 1888 (church construction), 1899 (the church enlargement), 1902 the final affiliation with the Danish Synod (i.e. the Grundtvigians), 1899 (church building expansion), 1917 (present hall built) and 1951 (present parsonage built).

While no archaeological investigation has been undertaken in relation to this nomination, the potential for historical archaeology certainly resides in the district. The European burial practice left superimposed burials in situ. The removed head and other stones were discarded (one stone, that of an infant, is in the church basement) and likely were buried in the church refuse piles. While there is no possibility of these burials being either disturbed or studied, these burials are a physical documentation of this lost tradition. The on-site dump/burn sites hold some potential for documenting lost buildings on the property, primarily through any surviving metal artifacts. As a whole the district has a good potential for various general testing in open areas as well as the east side disposal areas. The former barn location remains open ground and is worth attention. An archaeological investigation would nicely foot with the extensive parish records and extant buildings and has the potential to generate both parish and a broader public interest.

Historical information relative to the church building only was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office in early 1979, but no Iowa Site Inventory Form was prepared. The only documentation was the 1978 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication (see bibliography). Needless to say the review determined that the church lacked historical integrity relative to architectural significance and that absent broader historical associations, the National Register guidelines excluded a congregational-based National Register listing. Since that time, significance perspectives have evolved relative to religious properties and non-historic siding, and this submission fully documents and evaluates the

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entire church complex and not simply the church building alone (Letter, Martha H. Bowers to Nielsine M. Nielsen, April 16, 1979, Iowa Historic Preservation Office Inventory File).

The claim that this church congregation initially followed a European burial tradition is based on the following facts and observations. First, grave markers visible in historic photographs are no longer present and one stone, that of an infant, is in storage in the church cellar basement. Church minutes describe a switch over time to a "perpetual care" cemetery program and a cemetery expansion made in the late 1950s further hints that for the first time, additional space was needed for new burials.

This nomination applies to Criteria Considerations A and D, property that is owned by a religious institution and a cemetery, respectively. The National Register of Historic Places significance criteria require that these classes of historic properties must possess a significance justification that had a greater impact than that of a congregational history or that this is a historic cemetery. The significance claims in this nomination establish an argument that this surviving church district best interprets the ideal physical layout of a Grundtvigian "United Church" (church and its associated hall) and that this congregation played a central role in the contentious theological strife that typified the early Danish church in America. The cemetery, while included as a part of the district, particularly reflects the Grundtvigian ethos of conserving the Danish heritage by continuing the continental practice of short-term burial.

At this point in the study of the district, there is a high probability that this is the only extant example of the combination church and parish hall in a rural setting in Iowa. This rarity is said to extend even to the national level but needless to say the resources to conduct a conclusive survey even at the state level are not forthcoming. A broad online search of known other Iowa examples failed to document any other comparable district equivalents however. For this purposes of this listing, the rarity of this building combination is restricted to a local level significance claim. This nomination claims that this surviving combination of church and hall interprets a central tenet of Grundtvigian theology, that being the importance of Danish historical and cultural education but of education in general. Historical archaeologist Leah Rogers conducted (1991) the most comprehensive survey and study of Danish Iowa congregations in the most populous Danish ethnic area in the state. Titled "The Ethnic Historic Settlement of Shelby & Audubon Counties, 1860-1941." Of 13 Danish congregations, United or comparable congregations to St. John's accounted for nine of these, allowing for a helpful contextual comparison along several lines. Rogers found no consistent church architectural form and associated parsonages simply followed local and contemporary residential designs. Several combination church and parsonage examples were documented. With regard to Danish schools, Rogers identified three levels, each being successively less intensive. The permanent institution was the Folk School, roughly equivalent to a high school and gone from the scene by the time of the Great Depression. Next was Summer School, and the last the public school. The Danish community in Rogers' study was so predominant that it was able to use the rural schools for their school/hall purposes in lieu of building their own. The hall at St. John's served as a combination summer school, church hall and Sunday school, with the enrolled summer program being the focal point of the yearlong program. Classes included the Danish language, cultural and historical training, gymnastics, religious study and songs and the like. The sole summer school example documented was only used for that purpose and was a simple single-story rectangular plan. The Folk Schools tended to have complex cross-gable plans with centered towers (Rogers, pp. 1-2, 40-51).

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### Traditional "European" Burial Tradition:

This fact is a key claim relative to the district's significance and the integrity of the cemetery. The fact that burial plots were not sold until ca. 1941-42 when perpetual care plots were first sold and the cemetery was first platted. Oral history documents claims by descendants that family burials are known to be on the ground but are unmarked and cannot be located. A comparison of historical photos showing early tombstones cannot be duplicated with regard to those stone benchmarks because the stones are no longer present. The presumption is that the earliest graves were made using light coffins and that burials were simply superimposed. One child's tombstone remains in the church basement and it is presumed that other stones were simply disposed of on the grounds, and were apparently buried. One photographic comparison is that of figures 12 and 20c both of which depict the area west of the church building. The earlier figure 20c shows at least one stone column that is not visible in the later image. The current photographs taken in proximity of the church proper show that relatively few early stone markers remain in place in the cemetery.

### Parish History:

The origins of most congregations are complex at best and the point of interest here necessarily proceeds from the earliest surviving building (the church core, 1888), but in this case origins speak to both long term success as rival bodies collapse, and they also establish the broader communal context for this congregation. Given that there weren't a large number of Danish churches in Iowa, those that there were had to share resources and communications over considerable distances. Depending on synodic affiliations, links with Danish seminaries and Folk Schools could be variously located in Minnesota, Iowa or Nebraska. As a good example an early 1887 local mission meeting of pastors numbered representatives from Elk Horn, Cedar Falls, and Alden [Minnesota]. The predominant point of origin for the church members in Denmark is not known but the lack of any references to German language speakers hints that the emigrants did not come from Schleswig which had been in German hands since 1864 (St. John's Minutes, March 3, 1887).

One has to have Danes (meaning Danish-born immigrants) to form a church. As of 1870 Franklin County boasted but two of these. A decade later that number was 130, by 1885 there were 277 Danes. No figures for 1890, 1900 or 1910 have been found but the 1895 headcount was 420, that for 1905 was 476, for 1915, 515 and for 1920, 457. This growing population, combined with first and second generation Danish-Americans, provided sufficient potential membership for St. John's and nearby Danish churches (Iversen, p. 3).

St. John's founding date was in June 1879, the same year that the church baptismal registry begins (confirmation records start in 1885). Forty acres of land were purchased (the present site) in July 1883. The large parcel hints that in some manner the land would support the church financially. The church, termed the "East Church" was meeting in a former country schoolhouse and by that same year it was able to make available accommodations for a minister. Two years later, a Sunday school was in operation. It is interesting that a home for the pastor came first, accompanied by member commitments to provide feed for the pastor's animals. It wasn't until October 20, 1887 that it was formally determined that the funds were available to build a church the next year. A determination to place the church in the center of the cemetery grounds indicates that this was an important decision to make. The church was formally dedicated on March 25, 1889 so it might have been finished earlier that same year (St. John's Minutes, October 20, 1887; page 4, *ibid.*, 1905-57).



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Figure 4: Pre-1899 congregational photo showing the original church in the background, view east (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

A custodian in residence was needed with the construction of the church and the first custodian built his own house on leased land towards the north end of the property. When he departed in 1903 he took his house (Figure 14) with him to nearby Coulter.<sup>3</sup> The pastor's barn was built in 1889 and the area between the church and parsonage was grassed and planted with trees. In 1891 the cemetery was given a better solid board fence and a "little house" was built east of the church presumably to temporarily house the deceased when burials could not be made (St. John's Minutes, February 18, 1889; October 23, 1889; March 20, 1891; June 18, 1891).

In mid-1894 the Danish Synod suffered the loss of the "North Synod" and the congregation entered into a lengthy unaffiliated time period that only ended in 1898 when they rejoined the United Synod. In January 1895 25 of the 40 acre parcel was sold at \$32 an acre to pay off lingering congregational debts. These were the years of a national financial panic and it is possible that hard times had reduced member abilities to contribute towards the debt which was about \$200 (St. John's Minutes, April 7, July 6, 1894; January 5, 1895).

In late 1896 a building committee was named to plan and build a Danish school. The first hall measured 20 feet by 32 feet with a vestibule entrance. While some meetings were held in this new building it was primarily a seasonal Danish language school. A new barn was authorized in late 1898 and in early 1899 a building committee was formed to enlarge the church, it being deemed to be too small. By mid-March the addition was planned for 28 feet by 44 feet. The church, still with a painted interior, gained its first heating plant (St. John's Minutes, December 26, 1896; August 21, 1897; December 31, 1898; February 24, March 10, August 5, 1899).

<sup>3</sup> The original custodian's cottage is presumed to be non-extant. Its removal from the site necessarily stripped it of any historical associations. A Google Earth survey of nearby Coulter identified half a dozen story-and-a-half cottage plans resemble the original custodian's residence. None was a close match and all have been enlarged and otherwise altered. The removal of the cottage from the parish site necessarily compromised any historical associations with it.

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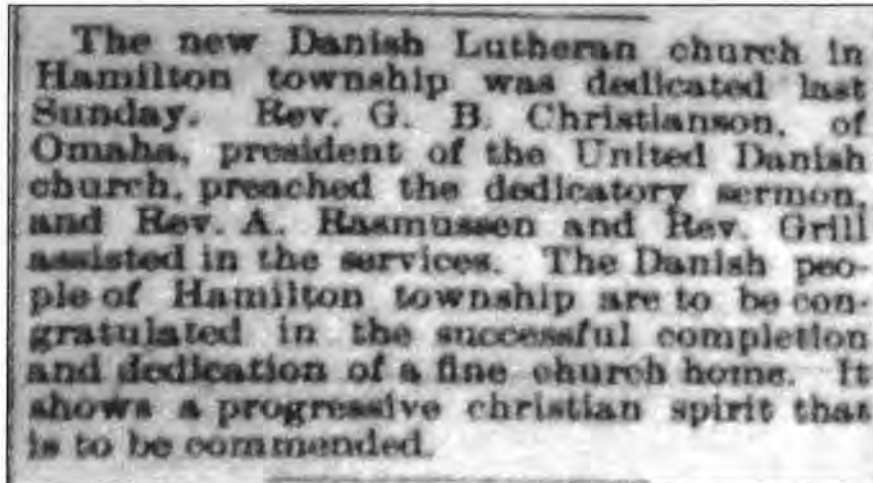


Figure 5: A "new" church (*Hampton Globe*, September 15, 1899)

The enlarged and remodeled church was termed "new" from the perspective of nearby Hampton but it was simply improved (*Hampton Globe*, September 15, 1899).



Figure 6: Pre-1899 photo showing language school, first hall and original church, view northeast (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

The church debt was \$685 by late 1901 and there are many earlier references to unpaid ministers and the like. A multitude of serious issues, leaving the synod, splitting the congregation, obtaining a new minister and paying off the debt, all came to a head at the January 1902 annual meeting. A list of 33 members, dated February 13, 1902 renounced their congregational membership and sought reimbursement for \$1,224 in contributions and sought to sell their barn stall allotments. These formed the Nazareth Church in Coulter and their collective bill for reimbursement was quickly paid. The departure emboldened the remaining members to disaffiliate with the United Danish Church and synod. They joined the Danish Synod of which Grandview Seminary was the area institutional representative (St. John's Minutes, December 28, 1901; January 11, February 12, 26, May 1, 1902).

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Figure 76: Interior view of enlarged church showing paneled/wainscot interior cladding, view southeast (note existing altarpiece, altar rail and pulpit) (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)



Figure 8: Original parsonage, view south  
(100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

In 1903 the congregation became increasingly Grundtvigian, adopting observance of Fastelavns Sunday and starting to use the term “forsamlingshus” with respect to the schoolhouse, this term meaning “community hall.” An enumeration of visiting pastors during these early years shows that the majority were pietists (United Synod) and almost exclusively so during the latter 1890s. This pattern necessarily reversed with the new synod affiliation in 1902. The St. John’s congregation maintained a mission presence in Latimer but by 1905 that body, and the members of St. Peter’s (likely mostly Grundtvigian in orientation), an early area rural church to the southwest of Coulter, who lost their hall to fire in 1899, had joined St. John’s. An annual event, common to all Danish congregations was the harvest festival. While the details of this event are lacking, these events increasingly provided vital funding to the congregation. Church minutes do provide the net proceeds for 1952 (\$1,968) and 1953 (\$1,852). The 1957 event

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combined the festival with the annual harvest of the church's farmland (St. John's Minutes, December 27, 1952; December 30, 1953; July 1, 1957).

As the church approached its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1953, former pastor Niels Møller, who had presided over the congregation from 1909-14, was asked to pen some recollections about his former church. His comments underscore the importance of preserving the Danish cultural and national identity, these values being represented by the "Danish Church." Pastor Møller wrote (emphasis added in italics):

As one of the previous and well the oldest of the now living who have served as pastor for St. John's congregation, I would like to bring my greeting and thanks for the years I worked as pastor there, namely from Oct. 1909 to April 1914. First, I will try to outline the congregation's history in abbreviated form from the first beginning and to the years 1909-1914.....Hampton is first mentioned .... in 1878.... where it is stated that Pastor A.S. Nielsen of Cedar Falls together with A.P.W. Bekker was on a mission trip to Hampton, Franklin Co., and it was decided that Bekker should remain there for some time to serve the people there with the Word....Up to this time [1888] there was no church, and at the mission meeting in 1887, people assembled part of the time in a forest, partly in a school, and partly in the pastor's home. But now it was decided to build a church and the work began before frost set in...In 1894, the Inner Mission portion of the old synod (the Inner Mission portion had left in 1892), now had become part of the "United Church", but the remaining portion, i.e., the Grundtvigian became known as the "Danish Church", but the congregation in Hampton voted to stay out of either from 1894-1902. There were obviously people in the congregation who felt kinship with the Grundtvigians, for there were annual gifts to the seminary in Des Moines...*This accounting can stand as a good example among many others of how St. Johns' congregation has worked year after year in the old days, worked to preserve the Danish language as long as possible, and Danish Christianity, so it could be a good inheritance for the coming generations.*

My thanks to St. John's Congregation for the years that I was pastor, first to those who were the oldest at that time, and whose graves I saw when I had been pastor for two years. They had nearly all experienced the difficulties of the times both to create a home and a good life for the family and to create a spiritual home, a congregational life of the same sort as they knew in Denmark, where nearly all were Lutheran, this question was nearly never a burning one. Therefore many immigrants were easily taken in by the other reformed churches. Likewise many others did not understand the differences within our Danish church in the home country and therefore had difficulty choosing between the Grundtvigian and the Inner Mission directions. St. John's congregation also had such difficulties, and chose in the years 1894-1902 to stay out of either synod. When I became the pastor they had long since made their choice. Perhaps there were not many very clear about where the Grundtvigian direction meant, but all were agreed that they wanted to hear the Grundtvigian message proclaimed in their church, and if they wondered about the authority of the church at home, so they quickly became responsible as a Christian people, that should the life of the congregation thrive, that they had to contribute and work, whether it was in the Mother's tongue or not. And that the children had to be taught, and if the services were in Danish, then the children must learn it as well. Also they supported the synod's objectives, the folk school, college, and seminary, work to establish new congregations or for overseas missions. – My greeting and thanks again are consequently to those

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strong, responsible experienced people. To honor be their memory. But that goes also to those who live yet in the congregation and who I met during my visit in the summer of 1950 and also the younger generations who are following in their forebears' footsteps. May St. John's Congregation live on in grace in the far future to God's honor and to the Congregation's blessing and salvation. Niels Møller, Aalborg, Denmark (Letter, Niels Møller to Petrea Nielsen, November 11, 1952).

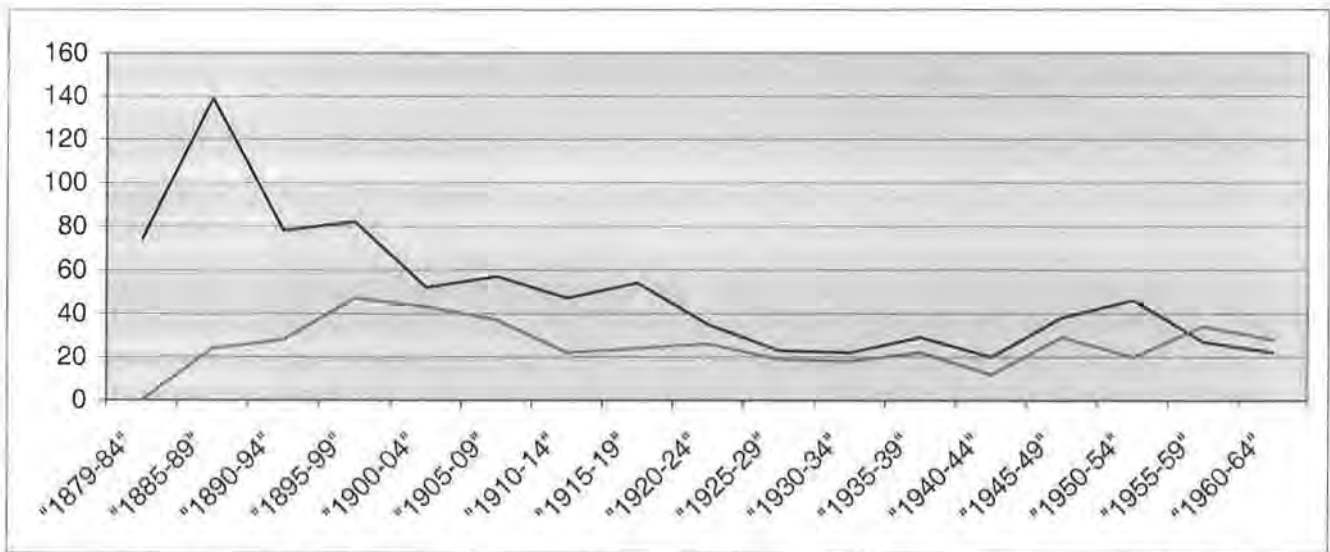


Chart 1: St. John's baptisms (upper line) and confirmations (lower line), 1879-1964  
(Jacobsen, Excel, data from 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

Chart #1 compares total baptisms and confirmations in the church over its history. The pattern of figures mirrors broader Iowa history in that there is depopulation following 1900 as Iowans continued west as opportunities developed as well as losses to the congregation caused by the departure of anti-Grundtvigians. In subsequent years the numbers mirror national trends, particularly reduced births during the Depression and World War II years and the increase in births postwar. The robust numbers in general nicely summarize a substantial congregational history that survived through the present time.

A sampling of annual synod reports sets the context for the district that included St. John's. As part of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. John's was part of the Fourth (Iowa) District. As of 1911 this included 16 churches of which St. John's was the second oldest after the Fredsville church. It was also the second largest district church (again after Fredsville) with 40 contributing and 200 confirmed members. The church property and buildings were valued at \$5,100 with a debt of \$250. Vacation school lasted 40 days with 18 children. Sunday School, also covering 40 days, enrolled 20 children with 3 teachers. By 1920 the district remained unchanged in number or congregations. The church property was worth \$11,700 with a debt of \$2,240. By this time the church was fifth in size with 58 contributing and 124 confirmed members. Vacation school lasted 38 days with just 17 participants. Sunday School was conducted on just 25 days with 39 students and 3 teachers. By 1940 the district congregational count was just 11. St. John's was dwarfed by five of the other churches, was about equal with a two others and was considerably stronger than the other three. Contributing members were 80, voting members 121. Danish Sunday

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School had 2 teachers and 14 students, while the English one had a single teacher and just 9 attendees. Vacation school was only in Danish with 26 children. The Danish Ladies' Aid numbered 39 and no English counterpart was enumerated. Conversely the English Young People's (Y.P.S.) Society was the only one listed with 13 members. The church was valued at \$3,800, the parsonage \$2,250, with other buildings valued at \$4,925. Five churches had higher real estate values than St. John's but three of those were large urban edifices. There was no debt. Of the 11 district churches, two lacked a parsonage and six lacked halls. The minister's salary was the fifth highest and most interesting, St. John's led all of the other district churches in terms of total disbursements (salaries, missions, other activities, \$1,677). Following World War II (1945) the district composition remained unchanged. Seven district churches exceeded St. John's contributing members count (73) and six had more voting members (122 at St. John's). There were two language-defined vacation schools, the English one with 18 youths was several times larger than the Danish one (7 youths). The English Ladies' Aid had 24 members, the Danish one 39 members. There was still no Danish Y.P.S. and the English one had 18 members. Church property was valued at \$14,900. Besides the Cedar Falls and Des Moines urban-based churches, only Newell's church property was worth more. Church debts were \$400. Total disbursements had nearly doubled since 1940 to \$2,697 but those of the rest of the district had similarly increased so that St. John's expenditures were exceeded by six others and tied by one other church (Den Danske Evangelical Lutheran Kirke's 35te Aarsmøde, 1912, pp. 26-27; ibid, 1920, pp. 44-45; ibid., 1940, 168-69; Report of the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1945, p. 177).

By 1959 the Fourth District consisted of 12 churches, one church having failed and a new mission having been added. St. John's membership was surpassed by seven of these churches. The voting membership was 166, contributing membership being 106. There was no Danish Ladies' Aid Society. The Sunday school with 32 teachers and 235 students was the district's largest. Vacation school with 180 students and 25 teachers was also the largest. The church was worth \$20,000, Parish House, \$14,000, and the parsonage was worth \$7,000, with land and other assets valued at \$7,500. Debt was \$913. As of 1964 St. John's was a part of the Lutheran Church in America and the Northeastern District of the Iowa Synod of the L.C.A. consisted of 27 congregations. Five of these had rural route addresses like St. John's. The church's active confirmed membership was 224, and 14 district churches exceeded that figure. Sunday School involved 8 teachers and 77 students. Vacation school involved 4 teachers and 34 students. Total expenditures (\$13,622) exceeded those of seven district churches. Real estate (\$73,900) exceeded just six churches. Twenty of the district churches had no halls although most of the urban churches had facilities within their larger buildings (Report of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, p. 174; The Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, 1965, pp. 127-129).

The church minutes indicate that the church hosted at least four Iowa district annual meetings (April 26, 1907; October 25-26, 1914, September 23-25, 1932 and September 27-29, 1940). The Appendix includes two very large panoramic photos of large assemblages that took place at the church complex. While the comparative statistics show that St. John's was a middle-sized congregation, these meetings show that the church and particularly its hall had the capacity to meet this size of an audience. Figure 15 shows the whole available membership as of 1953 and the group consists of 40 male adults, 49 female adults and just 30 children and infants. Figure 14 depicts the Ladies Aide and Sunday school from the same time. The school picture includes many more children than does Figure 15. Figure 4 also depicts an undated (ca.1900) grouping of the congregation (St. John's Minutes, *Dannevirke*, September 7, 1932).

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The church retains 15 acres of its original half-quarter-quarter section of land. Nine or ten acres to the east and south have been farmed throughout the church's history, variously supplementing the minister's salary, the caretaker's salary or generally supporting the operating expenses of the church. Automobile parking is first addressed in the church minutes in early 1915. Women gained the right to vote in April 1916. The new parish hall, first discussed in 1908, neared actualization with the appointment of a building committee at the end of 1916. The estimated cost was \$1,750, with \$250 to be realized by selling off the old building (St. John's Minutes, December 29, 1906; March 26, 1915; April 5, December 30, 1916; March 27, 1917).



Figure 9: Horse barn (non-extant), and church woodpile (foreground) view northeast  
(100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

The old building didn't sell so several members purchased it to move things along. Members were enjoined to not park near the construction site on the July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities and the building was finally finished in late 1917 despite the international situation. Gymnastics is first mentioned the following spring. The Young People's Society organized in late 1902 and was called "Dannebrog." This organization presumably subsumed the gymnastics program in its activities. When it was deemed too costly to obtain electricity from Coulter, an electric plant was installed along with a hall basement furnace. This electrical power plant provided parsonage and barn lighting along with exterior lights. In late 1919 the wished for electrical line was realized and the old generator was sold. The church gained a south door in 1918 and in 1923, the county road to the church and the internal roadways were graveled (St. John's Minutes, August 12, December 29, 1917; December 28, 1918; December 27, 1919; December 29, 1923; 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet).

War-related congregation activities included the organization of a Red Cross unit in late July 1917. Support for the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers and Sailors was discussed in early 1918. A service flag was dedicated at the end of May. The governor's prohibition of the use of foreign languages brought the Nazareth and St. John's churches together as they sought a solution to the "language problem." Relief was finally achieved by adding English language services to those conducted in Danish. Summer Danish language classes were suspended however for the summer of 1918 (St. John's Minutes, August 12, September 30, 1917; April 2, May 30, June 28, July 7, December 28, 1918).

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Figure 10: Gym class, 1924, view north (the church is visible in the right background)  
(100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

In 1928 a celebration of the church's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was observed on June 16-17. An architect was secured to redesign the church entrance, adding a south door but this work was deferred, the south door only being added in late 1935. The deferral was likely due to the national depression. The impact of the hard economic times is discussed in the church minutes. In late 1932 the holding of a summer class in English was discussed and in mid-1934 it was decided to begin to hold one service each month in English and English-language hymnals were secured (St. John's Minutes, April 1, December 29, 1928; October 20, 1929; December 26, 1931; December 31, 1932; April 10, 1934; October 11, 1935).

It would appear that the parsonage finally gained an indoor bathroom in late 1936 and a water heater in 1940. The church's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary was observed on June 26, 1938. The change in cemetery practices seems to date to 1941-42. The cost for a "perpetual lot" was cut in half to \$50 in late 1941, church bylaws were first printed in English and the first record of cemetery plots was prepared (St. John's Minutes, October 5, 1936; April 3, 1938; July 21, 1940; December 27, 1941; December 26, 1942; January 8, July 3, 1944).

There are no World War II related references to be found in the minutes apart from a collection for American Denmark Relief, Inc. in late 1944. A veteran's homecoming was held on April 14, 1946. Beginning in early 1945 all special services were to be held in English. Doing the same for congregational meetings was discussed but the matter was deferred. Beginning with October 10, 1945, those minutes finally were written in English as well. Hall restrooms were first discussed in mid-1946 and perpetual markers were to be purchased for those graves. Exterior lights were erected, and particularly provided light to the west front of the church (St. John's Minutes, October 2, 1944; April 9, October 10, 1945; April 1, July 1, December 28, 1946; April 7, 1947).



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Figure 11: Confirmation class, October 17, 1948 (this image documents the retention of the paneled interior as of this date, also the altarpiece and altar rail), view west (100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

The question of a new parsonage was first discussed in late 1949. When the cost of repairs came to \$5,000, a new building was planned. The minutes offer few details as to design source or contractor and "final reports" on the new parsonage were dealt with at the end of 1951. The church basement stairway was rebuilt at this time. By this time it was the church caretaker rather than the minister who shared in the proceeds from the farmed acres (St. John's Minutes, November 7, December 31, 1949; December 30, 1950; December 29, 1951).



Figure 12: 1951 church and cemetery photo, view northeast  
(the large tree south of the church was removed during the winter of 1951-52)  
(75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

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While many churches experienced dedicatory remodelings beginning in the pre-World War I years, St. John's did not do so until the early 1950s. Some improvements like a new organ, a new hardwood floor (church, 1954 and stained glass windows (1958, 1961) were funded collectively and consequently bear no dedicatory or other inscriptions. The Youth Society donated a miniature Bertel Thorvaldsen sculpture of Christ that replaced the painted image in the church altarpiece.<sup>4</sup> The statue was dedicated December 24, 1953. The cemetery was enlarged in 1957 and trees that were apparently in the way of the enlargement were taken down. The church sacristy was added in 1958 as were seven stain glass side windows (St. John's Minutes, December 27, 1952; April 6; June 1, December 30, 1953; July 2, 1954; January 5, December 28, 1957; April 7, 1958; July \_\_, 1960; January 15, April 3, 1961; ).

Gymnastics were losing some if not all of their importance by this time and the horizontal bars were taken out of the church hall in early 1954. For over ten years, 1938-1958+, the congregation had two language-based Ladies' Aid Societies, one that spoke English, the other Danish. The English language group had its onset as the Sunshine Club formed in 1938, but was renamed the English Ladies Aid in early 1944 (St. John's Minutes, December 30, 1953; October 6, 1958; (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet).



Figures 13, 14: new parsonage, view southeast, 1953 (left) and Custodian's house, view north (right) (100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

As early as January 1961, in conjunction with a northward extension of the cemetery, it was proposed to plant honeysuckle or evergreens along the north edge of the church property, certainly as a windbreak. The final decision to plant a row of each plant type was reached in April (St. John's Minutes, January 15, April 3, 1961).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) was a noted Danish sculptor who achieved international fame who has the only-non Italian sculpture in the Vatican (The Tomb of Pope Pius VII) and who carved the Lion Monument (1819) in Lucerne, Switzerland that honored the Swiss Guards who perished in the French Revolution. His statue of the resurrected Christ was promoted by an American textbook writer (1896) as the most perfect of that genre and copies of the statue accordingly adorned Mormon, Danish Lutheran and other American churches. The original was carved for the Frue Kirke in Copenhagen ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertel\\_Thorvaldsen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertel_Thorvaldsen)).

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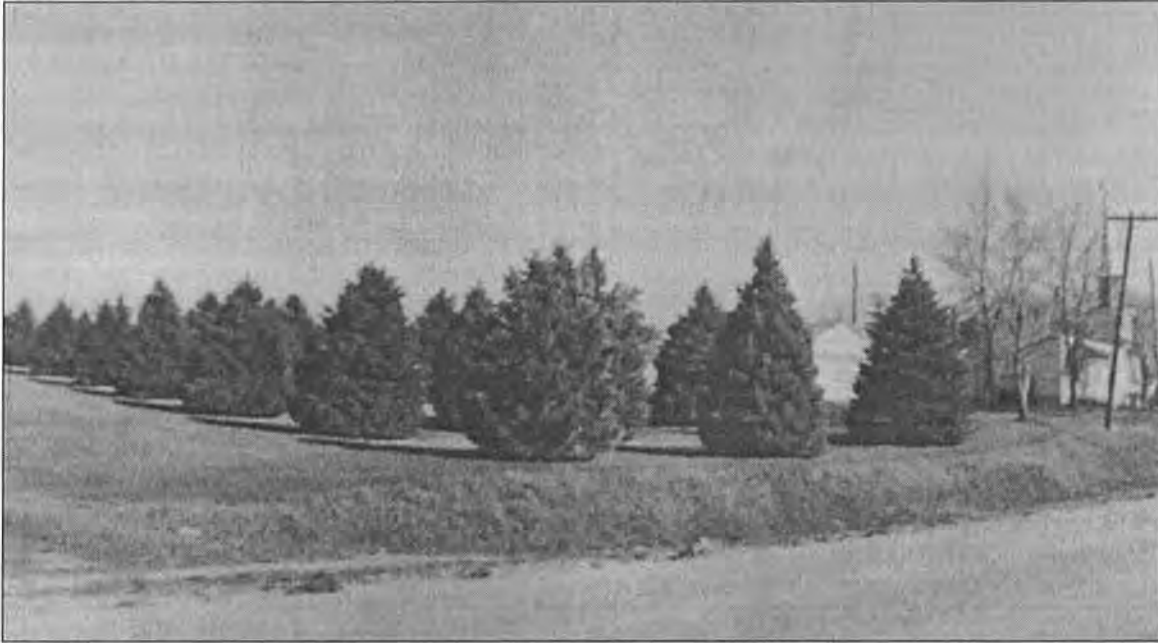


Figure 15: 1953 windbreak of Fir trees, view southeast with custodian's garage, house and the church visible left of center (100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)



Figure 16: Ladies Aid in the church hall, 1953 (note wainscot, white curtains cover two windows) (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

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Figure 17: Congregational group photo, view northeast, 1953  
(75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet)

St. John's had the interest and resources to prepare and print anniversary booklets for its 75<sup>th</sup> (1953) and 100<sup>th</sup> (1978) anniversaries, the dates being based on a June 1878 founding date.

The American Danish Lutheran Synods:

The Danish state church, the Danish Lutheran Church was first buffeted by German pietism beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The Pietists, later termed the "inner church" emphasized personal faith over doctrine and theology. Over time it embraced social and educational reforms. Nicolai Frederick Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) in contrast is credited with redefining and revitalizing Danish culture and nationalism with his movement that emphasized the educated and empowered involvement of all citizens in society. Grundtvig merged nationalism, ancient legends and Christian theology to democratize Denmark. As national calamities beset the country (the loss of the Danish fleet in 1807, the loss of Norway in 1814 and finally the loss of Schleswig and Holstein to Germany/Prussia in 1864), Grundtvig's influence pointed the way towards developing both a collective response to these events and the means by which a new national character could restore stability, the national economy, and a living and functional national identity. On the congregational level, Grundtvig in his later years, valued a congregational model that allowed for a near practical independence with regard to matters of the faith. One of Grundtvig's core concepts, that of life-long learning, was vested in the Folk School or school for life. Thus many of the adhering congregations to his principles operated these schools and when able, erected halls that housed a broad range of cultural and physical activities, all having a Danish twist. Grundtvigians also favored Danish-trained pastors over American ones (<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N. F. S. Grundtvig; Iversen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._F._S._Grundtvig;_Iversen)).

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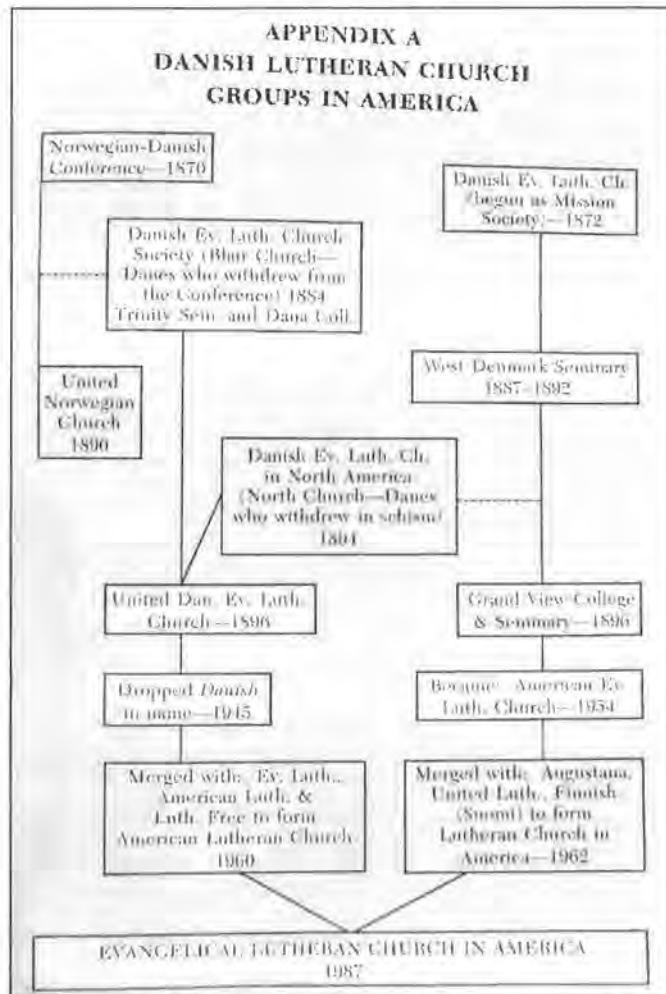


Figure 18: Diagram of the evolution and final merger of the two main synods (Thorvald Hansen)

The developing synods in America did continuous battle pitting pietists or holy adherents against the “happy” ones. The latter deemed life on earth to be a heavenly blessing meant to be celebrated, appreciated and enjoyed. The pietists deemed the earthly existence to be one of suffering and atonement, all being preparatory to a heavenly redemption. This is not to say that one or the other developing synod was solidly in one or the other theological camp at any point in time. Two broader synodic movements had contextual relevance to St. John’s history. Initially there weren’t enough Danes in the American Midwest to constitute independent churches so it was natural to cooperate with the better established and more numerous Norwegian Evangelical Lutherans (as the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church or Augustana Synod). One Danish group separated itself in 1872 as the Kirkelig Missions forening and in 1878 formally became the Danish Evangelical Church in America, with headquarters at Neenah, Wisconsin. Renamed the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in 1945, it was long termed as simply the “Danish Church” or Danish Synod. It was renamed the American Evangelical Church in 1953-54 with headquarters in Des Moines, with Grandview College and Seminary as its core educational institution. In 1962 it combined with a number of other synods to form the Lutheran Church in America. St. John’s was affiliated with this

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Section number 8 Page 30

St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

synod beginning in 1902 (<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N. F. S. Grundtvig; Iversen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._F._S._Grundtvig;Iversen)).

What was termed the Blair Church, organized at Blair, Nebraska in 1884, also separated from the Norwegians, and Dana College (so called as of 1903) served as their educational bedrock. The North Synod split from the Danish Synod and after just two years it united with the Blair Church. In 1896 this synod, termed the "United Church", became the Danish Evangelical Church in North America, and was also termed the "North Church" or "North Synod." By 1945 it was called the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and in 1960 became the American Lutheran Church by means of other mergings. The important fact is that this synod increasingly lost its Danish sense of identity, dropping that title and merging with German and Norwegian synods as time passed. It was this synod that challenged the internal stability of St. John's and had dominance in its ministers' loyalties during the latter part of the 1800s. The major rift between the two movements occurred in 1894 when a large number of more conservative congregations moved from the Danish to the United church, although some, like St. John's remained neutral for a good number of years. The Nazareth Church which split from St. John's in 1902, affiliated with this synod (<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N. F. S. Grundtvig; Iversen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._F._S._Grundtvig;Iversen)).

### Comparable Iowa Danish Church Complexes:

A quick online survey of other Iowa Danish congregations readily yields several dozen contemporary examples. Some of these are town churches based in urban locations while many are country based. It is not known how many of the rural Danish churches approximated St. John's in terms of the numerous buildings that comprised a church complex. The only very comparable example and one that is non-extant, was the Fredsville congregation (Grundy County) which had a near identical church (including the wainscot interior) dating to 1885, a parsonage (1889) and a hall (1903). Like St. John's this church was centered within its cemetery. Unfortunately all of these buildings were replaced between 1961 and 1968 (<http://www.fredsvillelutheran.org/who-we-are/ourhistory/1871-1900>).



Figure 19: Comparable interior view, Fredsville, Iowa church  
(here the altar area was raised and largely separated from the congregation) (non-extant)  
(<http://www.fredsvillelutheran.org/who-we-are/ourhistory/1871-1900>)

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St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa



Figure 20: Fredsville church and hall (both buildings are non-extant)  
(<http://www.fredsvilhelutheran.org/who-we-are/ourhistory/1871-1900>)



Figure 21: Fredsville parsonage (non-extant)  
(<http://www.fredsvilhelutheran.org/who-we-are/ourhistory/1871-1900>)

### Appendix:

Figures 22-23 depict attendees at two major events, likely district conferences or the like that were held at the parish hall and church. A Newell banner in Figure 221 is from Buena Vista County. Figure 23 might represent a burial event given the prominence of the fenced in and apparently recent burial that appears in the right foreground of the image. The fenced grave is an excellent example of a now-lost cemetery feature.

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Figure 22: Panoramic photo of the congregation, ca.1914 (left portion)  
(view southeast) (Church archives)



Figure 22b: Panoramic photo of the congregation, ca.1914 (middle portion)



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St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa



Figure 220c: Panoramic photo of the congregation, ca.1914 (right portion)



Figure 23: Panoramic photo of the congregation, ca.1925 (left portion) (Church archives)



Figure 23b: Panoramic photo of the congregation, ca.1925 (right portions)  
(view north, the original parsonage is visible at the far left)

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 34

St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

9. Major Bibliographic References:

Census of Iowa For The Year 1885. Des Moines: Geo. E. Roberts, State Printer, 1885

Census of Iowa For The Year 1895. Des Moines: Geo. E. Roberts, State Printer, 1896

Den Danske Evangelical Lutheran Kirke's 35te Aarsmøde, Des Moines, June 4-9, 1912. Cedar Falls: Dannevirke's Trykkeri, 1912

Den Danske Evangelical Lutheran Kirke's 44<sup>th</sup> Aarsmøde, Dwight, Iowa, June 18-12, 1921. Cedar Falls: Dannevirke's Trykkeri, 1921

Den Danske Evangelical Lutheran Kirke's 66rd Aarsmøde, Kimballton, Iowa, June 18-23, 1940. Elk Horn: Elk Horn Kimballton Review, 1940

Hampton *Chronicle*, August 27, 2003

Hansen, Thorvald. Church Divided. Des Moines: Grand View College, 1992

The Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, Minutes of the Fourth Annual Convention, May 24-26, 1965, Des Moines, 1966

Iversen, Jim. "Early History of St. John's Lutheran Church Franklin County, Iowa." Iowa Falls: Typed MS, 2013

*100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: St. John's Lutheran Congregation (L.C.A): Hampton, Iowa 1878-1978.* Hampton: n.p., 1978

Report of the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, June 5-10, 1945. Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1945

Report of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, August 1959. Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1959

Rogers, Leah. "The Ethnic Historic Settlement of Shelby & Audubon Counties, 1860-1941." Center Point, Iowa: A Multiple Property Documentation Report, 1991

St. John's Church Records: (all transcribed by Jim Iversen, credited as "St. John's Minutes")

Congregational Book, 1887-1905

Congregational Book, 1905-1962

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation: Hampton, Iowa 1878-1953.* Hampton: n.p., 1953

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National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section number**   9   **Page**   35    
St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

### Bibliographic References Continued:

#### Online Sources:

Fredsville Church: <http://www.fredsvilleglutheran.org/who-we-are/ourhistory/1871-1> (accessed December 31, 2013)

Cyclopedia: <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?> (accessed December 31, 2013)

Wikipedia: N. F. S. Grundtvig: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N.\\_F.\\_S.\\_Grundtvig](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._F._S._Grundtvig) (accessed December 31, 2013)

Wikipedia: Bertel Thorvaldsen: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertel\\_Thorvaldsen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertel_Thorvaldsen) (accessed January 2, 2014)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

10. Geographical Data:

Verbal Boundary Description:

The west 15 acres of the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 4, Range 21 West, Range 91 North.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated parcel includes all of the land area and associated buildings and structures that have been historically associated with this church complex since its establishment. The open farm acres have been historically and functionally related to the financing of and improvement of the congregation since its establishment. The loss of other land (excluded) interprets the impact of hard economic times on the early congregation.

Map:

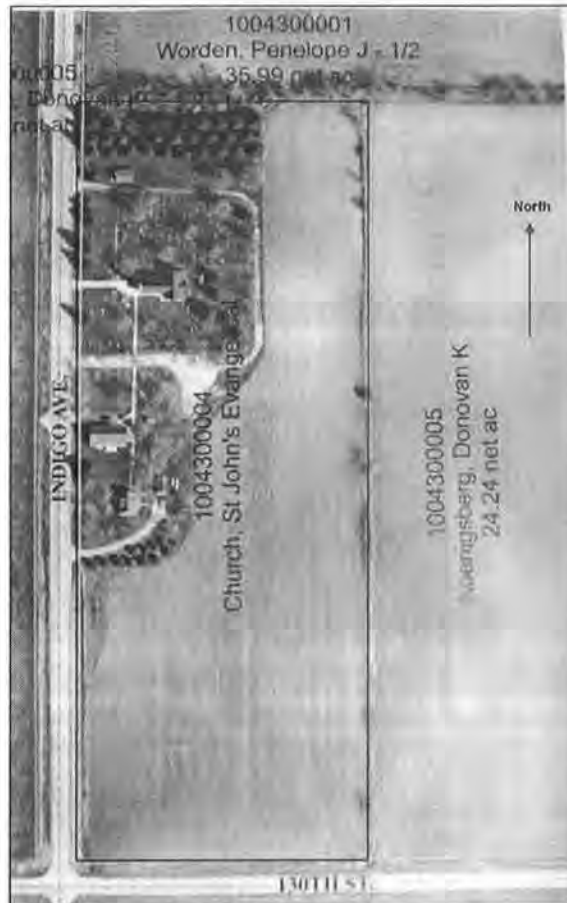


Figure 24: Current assessor's parcel map, the black rectangle marks the district boundaries (Franklin County Assessor's Office, Hampton, Iowa)

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs \_\_\_\_\_ Page 37  
St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

Photographs:

Name of Photographer: James E. Jacobsen  
Date of Photographs: April 14, 2014  
Location of Original Negatives: Property owner

Description of views:

<u>Photo</u>	<u>Orientation</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	southwest	North end windbreak
2.	southeast	North end windbreak and paved road
3.	southeast	North end windbreak, fence, west tree line
4.	southeast	Fence, church, gate, hall at far right
5.	southeast	West tree line, caretaker's garage, north gated entrance to church and cemetery
6.	northwest	Caretaker's garage, drive to left
7.	north	Cemetery and front of church viewed from south drive, garage in background
8.	southeast	Fence, gate, parsonage garage, hall at right
9.	east	church viewed through gate from road
10.	northeast	church viewed from road and entrance to south drive (stepping stone just visible inside cemetery fence at far right)
11.	southeast	hall and parsonage
12.	south	Playground, parsonage garage, hall
13.	northwest	hall, south and east walls
14.	northeast	church and hall, stepping stone is rectangular stone left of hall
15.	northeast	hall and parsonage, garage from parsonage driveway
16.	southwest	parsonage and garage
17.	northwest	parsonage and garage, hall visible to left of garage, church at far right
18.	southwest	parsonage and garage, hall, on drive loop to east of the church, cemetery
19.	north	church (stepping stone to left of gate), south drive, cemetery
20.	northwest	church and cemetery from south drive
21.	southwest	church and cemetery from east loop drive
22.	south	church and cemetery from north drive
23.	southeast	church, hall and cemetery from north drive (from near custodian's garage)
24.	east	church interior, looking towards the altar
25.	west	church interior, looking from the altar (reverse of #24)
26.	southeast	church interior, looking towards south window, pulpit to far left
27.	northeast	church interior, looking towards north window
28.	northeast	church interior, altar, pulpit to far right
29.	southwest	church interior, altar and pulpit
30.	southwest	hall interior, view along second floor south wall, original church window at left
31.	southwest	hall interior, view towards second floor southwest corner
32.	northwest	hall interior, view towards second floor northwest corner

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number      Photographs      Page 38  
St. John's Danish Evangelical Church, vic. Coulter, Franklin County, Iowa

Photo	Orientation	Description
33.	southeast	hall interior, view towards second floor southeast corner
34.	southwest	hall interior, view towards second floor southwest corner
35.	southwest	hall interior, kitchen view, first floor
36.	northeast	hall interior, first floor
37.	southwest	hall interior, first floor

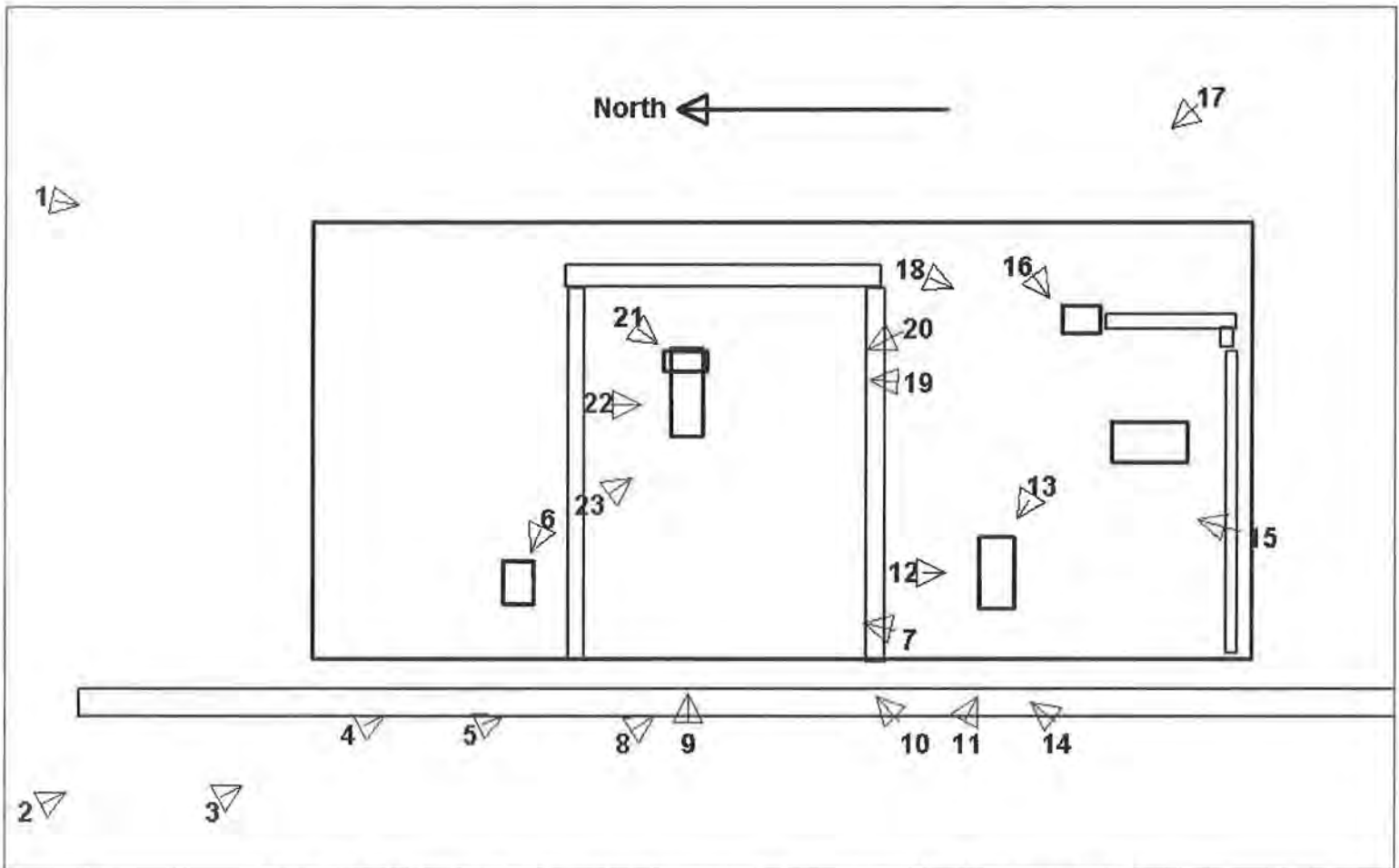
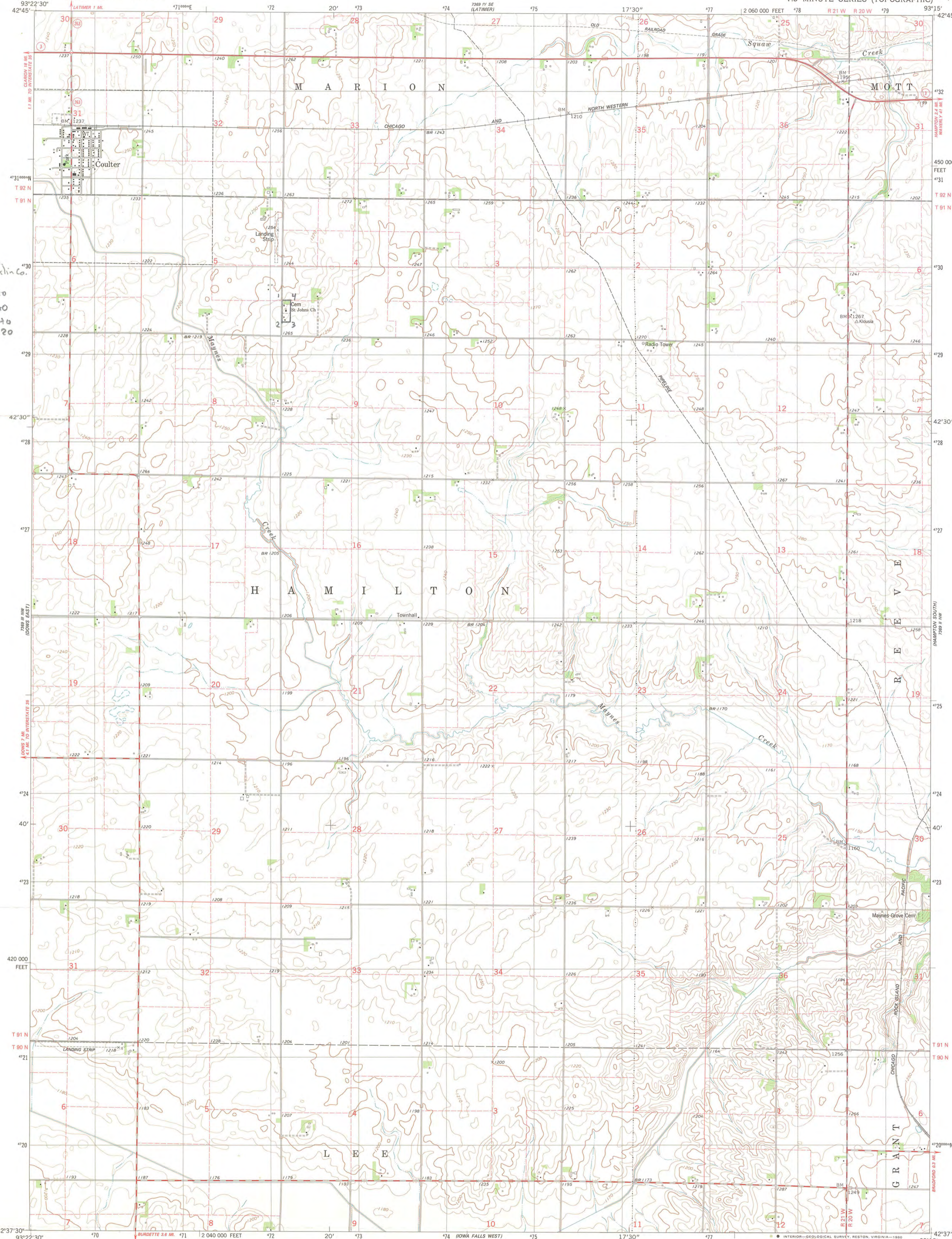


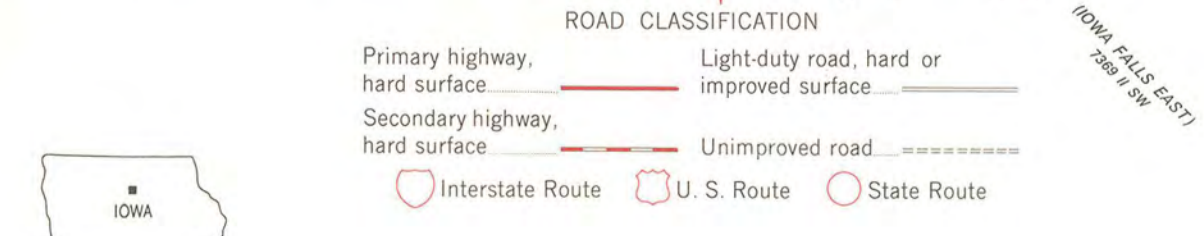
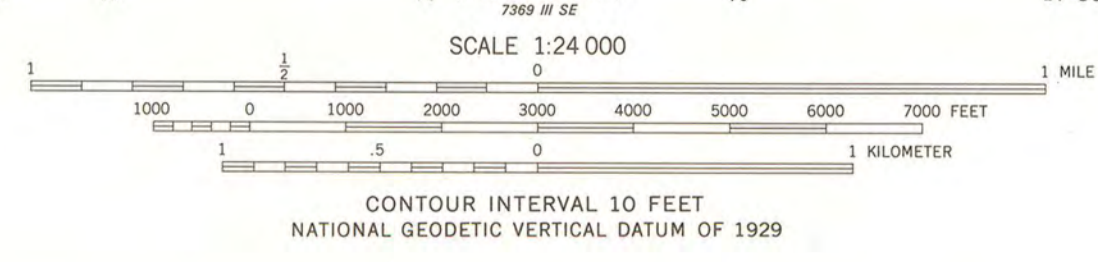
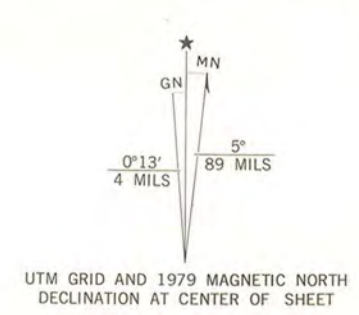
Figure 25: Exterior photo vantage map (not drawn to scale, Jacobsen, 2014)



St John's Danish  
Evangelical Church  
vic Coulter, Franklin Co.

1 472,130 4729,620  
2 472,130 4729,370  
3 472,240 4729,370  
4 472,240 4729,620

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1973. Field checked 1974. Map edited 1979  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate  
system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15  
1927 North American datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 5 meters north and  
18 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



COULTER, IOWA  
N4237.5—W9315.7.5



















































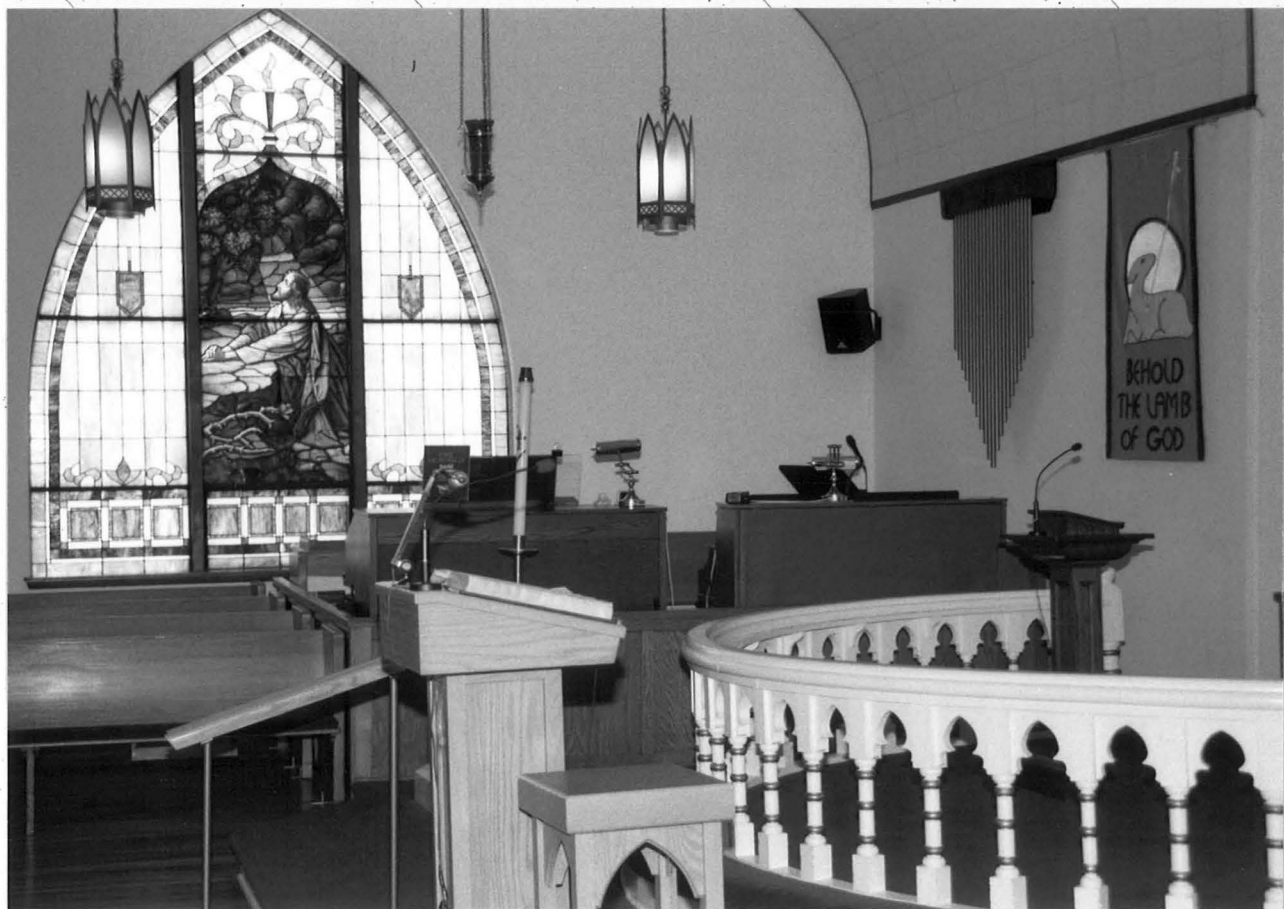




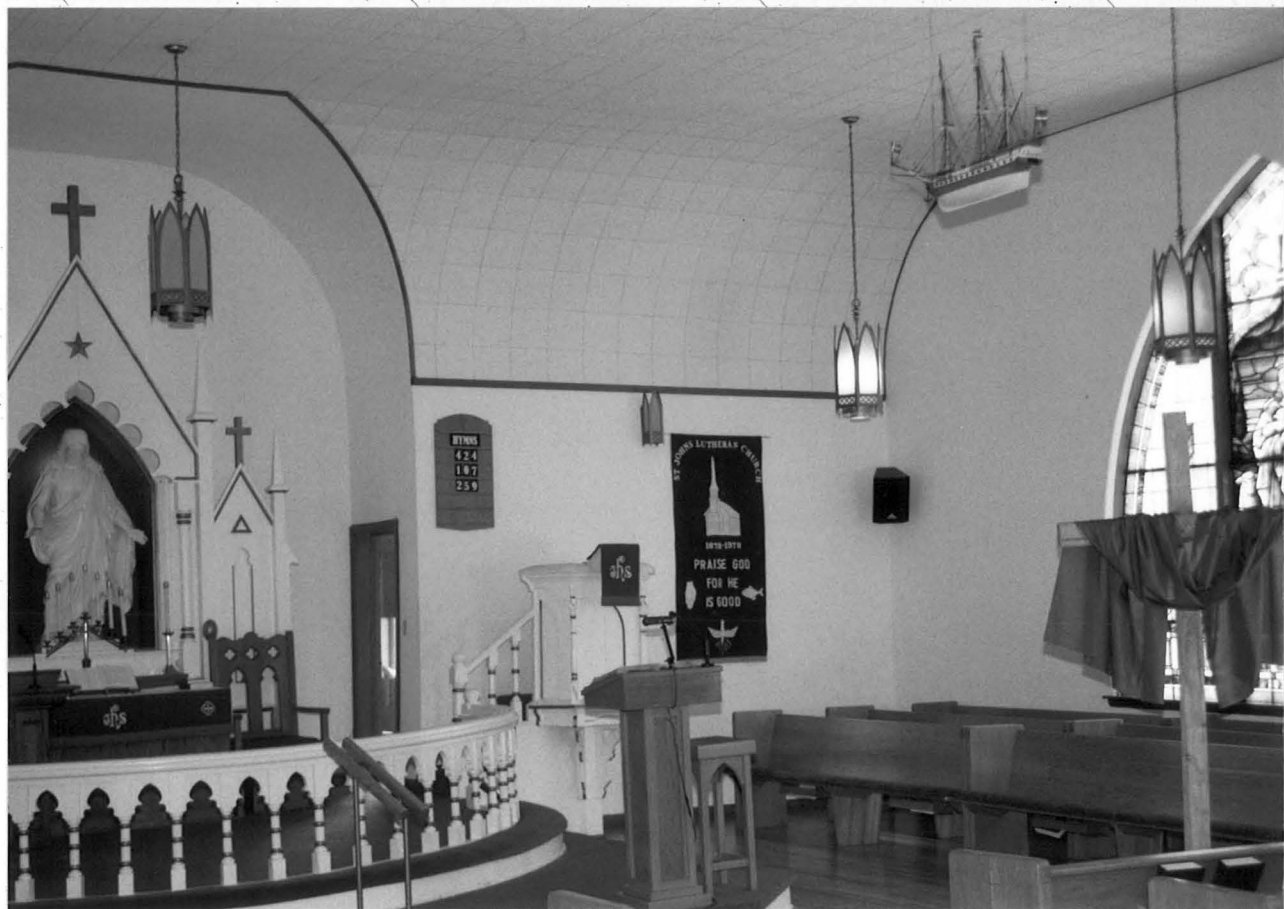


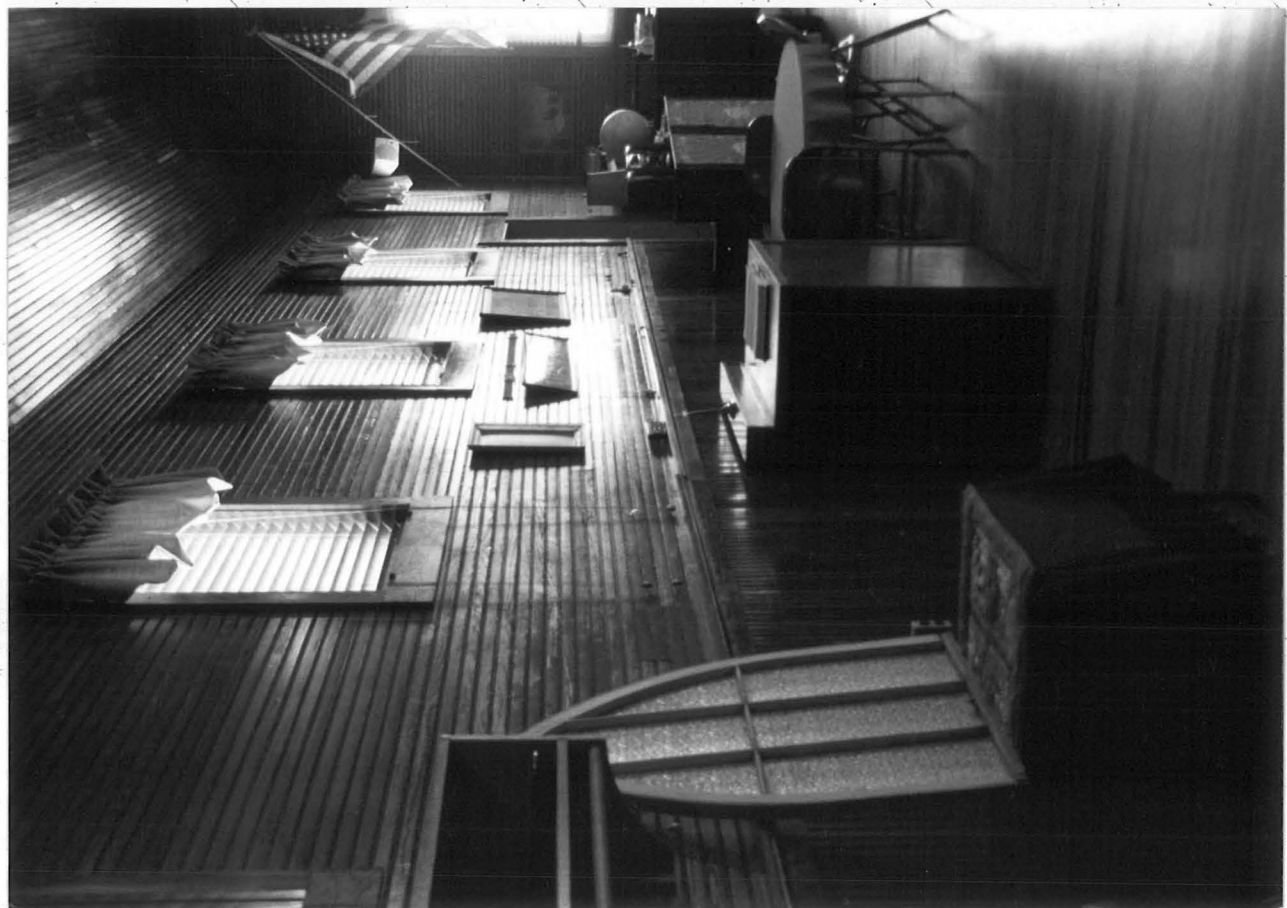




























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: St. John's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 8/28/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/17/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/02/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/13/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000726

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: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    10-13-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

DAVID P. FOSTER, DIRECTOR  
DANIEL W. WALKER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

CHARLES BRANNEN, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 28 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

August 25, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmarks  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005


Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Fort Dodge Junior High School, 416 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Fort Dodge, Webster County
- Fort Dodge Senior High School, 1015 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Fort Dodge, Webster County
- Miller, Alex and Ola (Viola) Babcock, House, 429 S. Marion Ave., Washington, Washington County
- Washington Junior High School and Jefferson Grade School, 751 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, Clinton, Clinton County
- Grant Vocational High School, 346 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Linn County
- Bloomfield Public Library, 107 N. Columbia, Bloomfield, Davis County
- Gobble & Heer/Spurgeons Building, 51 East Broadway, Fairfield, Jefferson County
- St. Joseph Hospital Historic District, 312 E. Alta Vista Ave. & 317 Vanness Ave., Ottumwa, Wapello County
- St. John's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District, 1207 Indigo Ave., Hampton, Franklin County
- Old Main Street Historic District Boundary Increase and Amendment, Main Street between West 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Seminary Hill residential Historic District, Clarke Drive, North Main, Madison streets, and Madison Park, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Upper Iowa Street Historic District, Iowa Street between West 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Washington Residential Historic District, 1100's – 1900's blocks, White, Jackson and Washington streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Foster Hill  
National Register