

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **SEP 30 1985**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name Herpetology

historic The Architecture of Finnish Settlement in South Dakota

and/or common Thematic Resources

2. Location

street & number See individual site sheets NA not for publication

city, town _____ vicinity of _____

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See individual site sheets

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See individual site sheets

street & number _____

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Finnish Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Summer - Fall 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state SD

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Finns who migrated to South Dakota in the 1878-1930 era settled in six areas in the state. The first two communities were founded in the farming areas of Poinsett in Hamlin County and Sayo in Brown County. Within two years, Finns were moving to Lead to find employment in the mining industry. A major resettlement occurred in western South Dakota as these single miners and domestic workers married and moved to ranches and farms in rural Lawrence, Butte and Harding Counties. In Lawrence County settlement centered on the Roubaix, Dumont and Custer Peak communities. In Butte County, Newell, and Snoma were the hubs of the Finnish community, while in Harding County Cave Hills and Buffalo were Finnish areas. This resettlement was more gradual and took place between the mid 1880s and the mid 1920s.

The Architecture of Finnish Settlement in South Dakota nomination consists of ten sites, all of which were built during the years of settlement, 1878 to 1920. The sites include five farms, two ranches, one hall, one store and a cemetery. One Finnish site already listed on the National Register is the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of Sayo Township. The town of Lead, which had a substantial Finnish population is listed on the Register. Therefore the district encompasses the many homes, boarding houses and the few remaining businesses associated with this group. The one surviving, early church, the First Lutheran Church in Lead is individually eligible and described in the individual site descriptions.

During these years of settlement, these ethnic pioneers built in two traditions- American vernacular and Finnish folk. The majority of the buildings were derived from the popular or vernacular tradition. While all houses, most barns and farm outbuildings as well as commercial structures are indistinguishable from architecture built by other South Dakota settlers, several of these buildings have unique immigrant ethnic connotations. These structures are the halls and churches built by the Finns, and are similar in appearance to churches and halls built by other immigrant groups.

Fifty-nine sites were recorded in the Finnish thematic survey. Several areas in western South Dakota remain to be surveyed and will add approximately 10 to 15 sites to the inventory. The survey was conducted between June and October of 1984 by State Historical Preservation Center staff member Carolyn Torma, who is the Historical Survey Coordinator. During several weeks of field work, she was assisted by staff members, Melanie Betz, Architectural Historian and Elisa Novick, Historical Surveyor.

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As a thematic survey, the criteria for the selection of sites was somewhat different than the criteria employed for geographical surveys. For example, the area of settlement was not determined by a political boundary, rather the areas of settlement were located and historic land ownership maps consulted. An outline of institutional Finnish immigrant history was derived from local histories. At this point all Finnish institutions such as churches, halls and cemeteries were recorded. Finnish-owned businesses from the settlement years were then recorded with special attention payed to cooperatives. Due to the high turnover in ownership, original or early farms were difficult to locate. Therefore, detailed interviews with older residents in the community led to the following selection of criteria for farmsteads. First, the site was originally owned or owned for a significant period of time by a Finn. Secondly, a major portion of the buildings were built by the Finnish owner. Finally, the presence of sauna helped to determine which farms to record.

Another concern was the recording method. All vernacular structures were recorded to geographical survey standards (see Field Guide to Historic Sites in South Dakota). Measured drawings were used to record all folk buildings.

In preparing this nomination the National Register criteria was applied to each site. Sites were selected which represented the occupations of the settlers, and which illuminated Finnish institutional history. Well-preserved and early examples of folk architecture traditions were also included.

Each farmstead site contains multiple buildings. Therefore, following the direction of reviewer, Beth Grovesner, each building is designated as contributing or non-contributing. As the period of significance of the nomination is 1878 to 1930 those buildings known to have built after 1930 were designated as non-contributing. In addition, buildings which represent a different and inferior method of construction were also labeled as non-contributing.

The following is a description of the general features of Finnish ethnic folk architecture. Each site description contains more detailed information on the individual buildings. The first and most prevelant of the Finnish structures is the sauna. Only one sauna exhibits traditional building methods and form; the rest have only traditional plans. Of the sixteen saunas surveyed, thirteen were built of stud frame. One was constructed of railroad ties, one was built of log and remains of a third indicated that it was built of earth and stone.

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All the saunas are one story in height, rectangular in shape and are divided on the interior into two rooms. They are small buildings, easily mistaken for summer kitchens, and measure between 13'5" and 14'5" on the axial wall, 8'2" and 12'8" on the gable wall.

Most of the saunas rest on an unmortared stone foundation or unmortared stone piers. Some, however, rest on wood sills placed directly on the ground. An interesting feature in the roof is the purlin, which is a very unusual item in most South Dakota vernacular structures. Occasionally a false purlin is employed which consists of a 5" piece of wood, which does not extend the full length of the roof.

On the interior the sauna is divided into two rooms—bathing and changing. The bathing room has a kiuas (stove) located adjacent to the interior door and benches built along the opposite, end wall. The room, when in use, contains water barrels or pans. A small glass pane window lights the bathing room from the changing room. The second room is the unheated changing room. Benches line the exterior walls, while clothes hooks are placed on the interior wall. A hole in the lower portion of the partition wall allows the kiuas to be fed with wood from the change room. While the entrance to the bath room is always in the partition wall, which is parallel to the gable-end wall, the door from the change room to the exterior can be in either the gable-end or axial wall. Each room most often has its own, exterior window. There are two types of sauna—the savusauna (smoke) or smokeless sauna.

Log barns constitute another form of traditional Finnish building. Unlike saunas, both the building method and the form are Finnish. The barns are of two types: one is the hay barn which has broad spaces between the logs to allow air to circulate and dry the hay; the other is the animal barn which has flush logs. This latter type of building has logs fitted in the Scandinavian tradition. The bottom log is hewn and the top surface is cut in a convex shape. This shape is then inscribed on the bottom surface of the log which is to rest upon it. The upper log is then cut in a concave shape on the bottom surface. Little or no mortar is used between the logs. Other details include the stone piers, unhewn log sleepers, double vertical notch and dovetail notch corners, and the use of embedded joists and summers.

The log house at the Buskala Ranch is the third type of Finnish building. Geographer, Matti Kaups has undertaken the most extensive and thorough studies of Finnish ethnic folk architecture. He has identified the Buskala house as a double-pile, two-story house. This house is discussed

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at more length under the individual site descriptions. The form type, according to Kaups, originated in Sweden and spread eastwest to the west coast of Finland. Like the barns, this building is Finnish in both form and construction method.

A final Finnish element which was introduced into South Dakota was the courtyard plan. The enclosed courtyard is a feature of the rural landscape of many European countries. For several hundred years, a distinctive form plan was used in western Finland. This was a double enclosed courtyard consisting of a domestic yard and an animal yard. As settlement moved northward and eastward, the farmyard plan form began to loosen until a more open plan became common. Eastern Finland developed its own farm plan which included individual buildings grouped around a large multi-purpose structure.

Finns in northern Michigan and Wisconsin used a type of courtyard arrangement on their farmsteads. Described by Heimonen, Alanen & Tishler, these farmyards consist of a plan which has buildings aligned along three sides of a rectangle. Many of the buildings almost touch creating a solid wall; others simply form the edge of the "court".

In South Dakota, this courtyard is even less formal. Buildings face into the court and are not aligned on axis. Indeed, the axis plan is characteristic of most eastern South Dakota farm plans. Landscape historians, Alanen & Tishler, caution that the cultural connection between Finland and America in regard to the farmstead arrangement is not clear. In contrast, the connection between Finnish-American and Finnish log building is far more explicit.

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There are two Finnish sites listed on the National Register:

The Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of Savo Township, Brown County
registered 5-31-84

Old Finnish Lutheran Church was listed as part of the Lead Historic
District, Lawrence County (this site is being classified as contributing)
registered 12-31-74

Number of Contributing structures in this nomination: 78

Number of Non-Contributing structures in this nomination: 18

Two owners objected to their properties being listed in the National Register
and therefore we are requesting a determination of eligibility for these
sites:

The Henry and Maria Matson Farm, Hamlin County #41

The Abram and Anna West Farm, Brown County #8.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Finnish Ethnic

Specific dates 1878-1930 **Builder/Architect** See site sheet history

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Architecture of Finnish Settlement is significant because it reveals the history of the Finns who settled in South Dakota in the 1878-1930 era. These immigrants brought with them a building tradition which included Scandinavian log construction methods, traditional Finnish forms and a unique type of outbuilding. Yet not everything these immigrants chose to build was Finnish; in many instances the Finns built American vernacular buildings side by side with Old World structures. Among the contributions these immigrants made to the landscape of the Plains were their saunas, (steam baths), co-operative businesses, ethnic halls, and churches.

The numerical significance of the Finns to South Dakota's total population is rather slight. In 1910 at their peak, the foreign-born Finns numbered 1381. They never exceeded .5% of the state population. Within the larger context of Finnish migration, in which 361,000 Finns immigrated to the United States, the South Dakota Finns equaled .5% of that population as well. The Finns, nonetheless, are part of an important movement of immigrants to the Great Plains during the early years of settlement when the basic architectural and cultural landscape was established.

Between 1878 and 1910 the Finnish population grew steadily. After that date, fewer immigrants came to the Dakotas and the foreign-born population declined. By 1930, it is estimated that Finnish-Americans numbered approximately 3000. Census figures place the number of Finns at 66 in 1880, although family bibliographies reveal a population of 463 adults plus children. Census records for the following decades are: 1175 in 1900; 1381 in 1910; 1085 in 1920; and 825 in 1930. In two counties Finns in 1930 amounted to 1.5% of the foreign-born population.

The first Finnish settlement was at Poinsett in Hamlin and Brookings Counties, which was founded by a Norwegian-Finn, named Torsten Estensen. He was an Apostolic Lutheran and through his vigorous promotion of the Poinsett area he drew other Finns from both the mining regions of Michigan and new immigrants from Finland. Today, this areas maintains strong Apostolic Lutheran traditions.

During the years that Poinsett existed it was the center of Finnish life. However, as the community declined, Lake Norden founded in 1907 became the focus; this town was never exclusively Finnish and always represented a mixture of groups.

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The Finns in east central South Dakota came primarily from Oulu Province or far northern Finland. This was the area in which the Apostolic movement had its beginnings and greatest popularity in Finland.

Four years after Estensen founded Poinsett, the community of Savo in Brown County was opened to settlement. This migration dating from 1882 was the result of the railroad. Kustaa Bergstadius, the Finnish immigrant land agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad named the area for his home province of Savo. His job was to advertise the land in newspapers, letters and promotional literature. Many of the Finns, he persuaded to resettle, came from Michigan and Massachusetts.

The distinctive character of the Savo community is due to the number of Finnish institutions and businesses which have survived. For example, Savo Hall is the only remaining Finnish hall in the state. Much of the membership in the co-operative ventures, bands, temperance groups and theatre troops was comprised of people who belonged to the Finnish Evangelical or Suomi Synod Church. The number and vitality of Finnish immigrant institutions may have been due to the prominence of the Evangelical Church. Certainly, the Apostolic Church had been strong and active in Savo, however their membership has been effected by outmigration to North Dakota and other Finnish communities.

Brown County Finns represent more of a mixture of Oulu and Vaasa province immigrants. Vaasa in the west central area of Finland, was the area of greatest migration to America in the 1860-1920 era. Also Brown County immigration patterns reveal a greater geographical dispersion in Finland than among the other South Dakota migrants.

Lead and its surrounding mining towns had a rather different history than did the rural, East River communities. First, the population consisted primarily of single people and secondly, these Finns were highly mobile. For example, a comparison of the 1902 and 1908-9 city directories show 226 Finnish names and only three appear in both. Mining and domestic work were regarded as short-term occupations.

The first Finn in Lead was Matt Oinas, a bartender. Although he does not appear in the 1880 census, another historic source recounts that he came in 1878 and began writing articles in the Uusi Kotimaa (New Homeland) newspaper. He encouraged workers to come and make their fortunes. By 1901 the Finnish population in Lead, alone, was 950; the Lawrence County

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Finnish population was recorded to be approximately 1380 which is considerably more than the census indicated.

Perhaps due to the rapid change-over in population in Lead, Finnish institutions, including churches, had much more difficulty becoming established. Contributing to the less than stable quality of the community was the practice of men working in the mines in winter and returning to their farms and ranches in summer. Less of the material culture of the Finns has survived, as well, although much of this is due to the subsidence on the east of town, in the early part of the 20th century. A neighboring community of Lead, Terraville, which had a Finnish population of 250 in 1901, was completely razed in 1982-3 for new mining.

The rural West River resettlement began almost immediately. Roubaix was one of the first communities to be settled in the 1880s. By 1901 the population was 60 and the community supported both an Evangelical and an Apostolic Church. This mixed lumbering and ranching area was distinguished by its riverine settlement.

In rural Butte County settlement centered around the communities of Snoma after 1887 and Newell, beginning around 1900. Further to the north in Harding County, the final migration brought Finns to Buffalo, Cave Hills and Karinen in the 1905-1925 era. These communities had Apostolic, National, Evangelical, and Independent congregations. Although other types of institutions existed, such as halls and co-ops, they were quite short-lived.

West River immigrants largely came from Oulu and Vaasa provinces, however, a majority came from Oulu. While the resettlement resulted in many small Finnish clusters these communities were more numerous, widely scattered and far less populated than the East River Finnish settlements.

The architecture of these immigrants reveals an interestingly complex pattern. In East River South Dakota, Finns adopted American practices apparently from the first. The one exception was the sauna which retained its traditional Finnish form and use. In West River South Dakota, in cities and unwooded areas, Finns adopted American architecture. Yet, years after immigration, when they began to build on their own wooded land, Finns returned to traditional Finnish building practices. It should be noted that frame building methods were gaining popularity

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at the time the Finns immigrated. Therefore, one cannot assume that the Finns were unacquainted with a non-log construction technology.

Folk building practices survived the First World War era, but the frequency of their use diminished. By the 1930s, the only folk building still being built was the sauna. However, with indoor plumbing and electricity, saunas fell from favor and no saunas are known to have been built by South Dakota Finns between 1940 and c. 1965. More recently, they have experienced a revival in both the indoor basement variety and the detached building type.

The Finnish Architecture of Settlement nomination represents the history of an ethnic group and its blending with the larger culture. The Finns brought with them to America an architecture which was unique; some of that tradition continued to be used, while the American architecture was simultaneously adapted.

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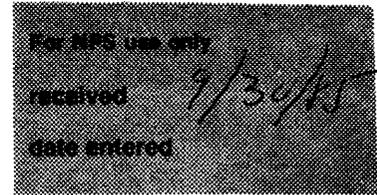
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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Architecture of Finnish Settlement Thematic Resources

State Brown, Butte, Hamlin, Lawrence, Counties, SOUTH DAKOTA *Cover sheet 11/13/85*

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | West, Abram and Anna, Farm | Substantive Review
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION | Keeper | <i>Beth Grosvenor</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 2. | Hendrickson, Hendrick and Waldur, Farm | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 3. | Matson, Henry and Marie, Farm | Substantive Review
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION | Not Determined Eligible
Keeper | <i>Beth Grosvenor</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 4. | Tuohino, Jacob and Amelia, Farm | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 5. | Geranen, Paul and Fredrika, Farm | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 6. | Old Finnish Lutheran Church | Entered in the National Register | Keeper | <i>Beth Grosvenor</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 7. | Buskala, Henry, Ranch | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 8. | Snoma Finnish Cemetery | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 9. | Hill, John, Ranch-Keltomaki | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |
| 10. | Savo Hall-Finnish National Society Hall | Entered in the National Register | <i>for</i> Keeper | <i>Arlene Byers</i> | <u>11/13/85</u> |
| | | | Attest | | |

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received 9/30/85
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Architecture of Finnish Settlement Thematic Resources
State South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Martilla-Pettingel &
Gorder General Merchandise
Store

Entered in ~~1983~~
National Register *for*

Keeper

William Byrd 11/13/85

Attest

12.

Keeper

Attest

13.

Keeper

Attest

14.

Keeper

Attest

15.

Keeper

Attest

16.

Keeper

Attest

17.

Keeper

Attest

18.

Keeper

Attest

19.

Keeper

Attest

20.

Keeper

Attest