

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 26 1976
DATE ENTERED	05 2 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *nr* Elbe Evangelical Lutheran Church

AND/OR COMMON
Elbe Lutheran Church

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

WA 5

CITY, TOWN

Elbe

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd - Donald Bonker

STATE

Washington

__ VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY

Pierce

CODE

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME The American Lutheran Church

STREET & NUMBER
422 South 5th Street

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Pierce County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
930 Tacoma Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Tacoma

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1974

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

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 type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Elbe Lutheran Church is located along Route Seven near the banks of the Nisqually River thirteen miles east of the Longmire entrance to Mt. Rainier National Park.

Elbe is a small mountain logging community about 1300 feet above sea level in the foothills of the Cascade range. The church is situated near the center of town standing more or less by itself except for a neighboring tarpaper shack. Railroad tracks of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific separate these two buildings from a commercial strip across the Mountain Highway.

The Church is a small rectangular plan building measuring 18 feet by 24 feet with a projecting 40 foot tower entrance and belfry centered in front and a polygonal bay or apse at the chancel end. Next to the bay at the back of the church - which provides additional space for the altar - there is a vestry added on one side, somewhat shorter than the adjoining bay and with a hipped roof section of its own attached just below that of the bay.

The Church has a post on stone foundation on a sloping site that drops off toward the rear. At the front, the entrance is at ground level; in back the posts are exposed without waterskiing.

Five inch shiplap siding is enframed by corner boards, a baseboard with drip moulding and a fascia or frieze at the eaves line. Cedar shingles are confined to the roof surfaces.

The overhang of the gable roof is interrupted by the tower which has a steep pyramidal spire abruptly flared to a low pitch at the eaves level just above a louvered belfry. At the apex of the spire is a hand-forged iron cross split at the ends and curled back in the manner of a moline cross. On the lower part of the tower, supported by decorative brackets over the doorway, a small shallow-pitched hipped porch roof shelters the stoop.

Centered above the entrance is a leaded oeil-de-boeuf window in the pattern of a quatrefoil arranged around a circle. The remaining fenestration consists of four pointed-arched double-hung windows illuminating the nave - three over two lights - with the muntins of the upper sash dividing into two pointed arch panes.

The interior is surfaced on the walls and ceiling with "V" jointed board paneling, painted white, and wainscotting, stained dark brown. The altar and pulpit were built by the carpenters and installed when the church was completed.

The church is unaltered with the exceptions of a minimum of surface conduit wiring for light fixtures and the removal of an original wood fired heater. The old reed organ is still in place and the color relationships are the same - including a discrete amount of exterior black trim around the doors and windows.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Elbe was built in 1906 in a remote western Washington logging and sawmilling village populated largely by first and second generation German immigrants. It was Elbe's first church, the town having been founded 25 years earlier by Henry Lutkens and his wife Christina who homesteaded in the area and platted the townsite in 1881. At the time it took nearly a week for the 70 mile round trip by wagon to Tacoma, the nearest city of any size.

Before emmigrating from Germany to the United States, Lutkens was employed as a professional forester by a state forest agency, and in addition to his other responsibilities, he operated a brickyard and a dairy in the Elbe River lowlands near Hamburg. There he and his wife raised a family of seven children. They left for America after three of the children preceded them on their own - their only son and two of six daughters. The sisters had married Kansans and their brother Charles traveled with them to Kansas and eventually to Eatonville, Washington near the present site of Elbe. There the Lutkens family was eventually reunited.

Elbe's first Lutheran services were held in 1893. Pastor Louis H. Schuh of the "I" Street Trinity Lutheran Church, Tacoma, was invited to conduct services in private homes, which he did subsequently once a month. Pastor Schuh was followed in 1897 by Pastor J.F. Oertel whose regular congregations were in the Puyallup and the Orting area. In 1906 Reverend Karl Killian succeeded Pastor Oertel. He lived in the Lutheran parsonage at Puyallup, although he too held afternoon services for congregations in other towns within about a fifteen mile radius. These smaller parishes Pastor Killian reached travelling by bicycle. When making the 40 mile trip to Elbe he went by train departing from Tacoma with his bicycle in the baggage car. Clergymen could board the train at half fare.

Karl Killian attended preparatory school in Hermannsburg, Germany, before being awarded a scholarship to a Lutheran seminary in Minnseota. He arrived in New York at the age of 19 on Christmas eve, 1888. His total personal assets were then two dollars. After completing his education, Puyallup was Reverend Killian's first western ministry.

It was also in 1906 that the little Elbe church was built. The town had progressed considerably since 1893. Logs and finished lumber were in great demand. New sawmills had been built in the area; the Tacoma and Eastern Railroad had reached the nearby town of Alder and it was soon to be extended through Elbe where a depot would be located near the Lutkens' home.

Henry Lutkens donated a building site and lumber and Pastor Killian drew plans for the new church. The townspeople donated labor for construction of the 18 by 24 foot building including the pulpit, pews and other appointments. The iron cross that was placed on top of the steeple was forged by Levi Engel, the town blacksmith.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Krebs, Ervin E., Little White Church of Elbe - "Life and Worship in a Pioneer Community"
1893-1974, unpublished.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	0	5	6	1	5	2	5	5	1	7	9	1	0	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING			

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING			

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING			

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob E. Thomas, based on information supplied by Ervin E. Krebs, Pastor.

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission - Office of Archaeology & Hist. Pres.

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

DATE

TELEPHONE

(206) 753 4117

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Arthur M. Sholik

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

5/18/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

10/8/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

10/7/76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

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Services were spoken in German since the town's population and many of the parishioners were from immigrant families usually more fluent in German than English. The religious denomination was identified on the church with the inscription "Lutherische Kirche" above the front entrance. Within the church there was arranged an aisle dividing the pews into two rows; men and women were seated separately as was customary in Germany. It is said that native Germans living in the Randle area would travel as far as 35 miles to attend services at the Elbe church.

Henry Lutkens served as church Vorsteher (deacon) for the remainder of his life. He and his wife would traditionally invite the small congregation to their home for dinner following Sunday services.

The Reverend Karl Killian continued as pastor for more than 25 years. His bicycle was eventually replaced by a Model T Ford - which lacked sufficient power to climb Muck Creek Hill. Children would sometimes ride along to help push when the old car stalled.

Long recognized for its delightful architectural qualities and an unusually small size (it was once featured in Ripley's "Believe It or Not" as America's smallest church), the Elbe Lutheran Church is perhaps more significant as a physical representative of ethnic settlement patterns, and the associated cultural and religious practices in northwest mountain logging communities at the turn of the century.