

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 31 1983

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem

and or common

2. Location

street & number S of Norway not for publication

city, town Norway vic. vicinity of South of Norway

state Iowa code 019 county Iowa code 095

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem

street & number c/o Sylvia Schulte

city, town Norway vicinity of state Iowa 52318

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Iowa County Courthouse

city, town Marengo, state Iowa 52301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title n/a has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem is a relatively undistinguished example of the vernacular frame church type of building. The building is not uniquely "Swedenborgian" in its design or arrangement except for the fact that it is oriented with its entrance to the east.

The small frame church (40' by 28'), rectangular on plan, has a gable roof and a projecting square based bell tower (10' by 10') centered on its east end. The building is oriented to the East and has a double door entrance at the tower base. The exterior is clapboarded. A bullseye window with rounded hood is above the entrance. The bell tower itself is recessed in its dimensions, and is capped by a concave hip roof. On each side, a pair of rounded arch windows with horizontal louvers are separated by mullions. The entrance, and all ground level windows have broad curved arches. A two light transom is above the entrance. Four narrow double hung (4/4 light) windows are distributed symmetrically on each side of the church, and two very narrow (2/2 lights) windows flank the front bell tower on the first floor. Of special note are the two pointed arch windows (4 fixed lights) which are paired above the eavesline on the rear wall and which light the attic area. The walls of the church are nine inches thick and strongly imply the presence of a heavy timber frame.

Changes to the building are few in number. The cornerstone was removed during the centennial ceremonies in September 1980. The bullseye window has been filled in, and the single and double louvered shutters were removed sometime after 1919. Cement steps with metal handrail replaced wooden stairs. A new roof was put on the church in August 1981. The church was last painted in 1974.

In terms of landscaping, the church was originally bordered by timber to the north and west. This timber was removed during the 1940's and 1950's. Norway maple trees were planted to the south and east in the 1890's and 1900's and survive. Austrian pine trees were added in 1946.

Inside the church are found a small vestibule with an inner set of doors, and a high vaulted ceiling is above the interior. On the west wall an interior brick chimney is centered between the two attic windows and is between the exterior wall and a slightly recessed semi-elliptical sanctuary area. Inscribed on the border of this archway are the words "Ich Und de Vater sind Eins" (I and the Father are one). A tabernacle with curtains dates to the church construction. A wood burning circulating stove heats the building. Closets flank the sanctuary and one of these provides ladder and trap door access to the attic. The interior walls are painted light green as is the woodwork.

The church is located four miles south of Norway, in Lenox Township. The Amana Colonies (National Historic Landmark) are just a few miles to the south. The church is in the extreme southeastern corner of Section 6, and a cemetery which is associated with the church (not included in this nomination) is diagonally to the southeast. A small frame side gabled outhouse (5' by 10'), constructed in the 1930's by Henry Brockschinks, stands to the west side of the church and is included in the nomination. Lenox Township is the

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1880-1900 **Builder/Architect** Wagner

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem is the only Swedenborgian church in the State of Iowa, and represents the early settlement of Iowa County by a briefly communistic community of that faith. This religious community served until the turn of the century as the focal point of Swedenborgian missionary activities within this and adjoining states. The community is one of many early Iowa settlements which owed their original founding to the ferment of communistic experiments. The church lastly calls attention to the role of German settlement in Iowa via New Orleans and St. Louis.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish born scientist, philosopher, humanist and theologian who challenged the basic theological tenets of the predominant Lutheran faith of his day. "He recognized a divine center of the universe from which flow all creative forces and find expression in both a spiritual and natural kingdom. Infinite love and wisdom, united in use, are the essentials of the personal God" ("Emanuel Swedenborg", Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., New York, n.d.). Swedenborg believed that there was no contradiction between religion and science, that faith without works was dead, that one's life choices prepared the soul for a spiritual afterlife, denied the existence of a physical "hell" (he believed that "hell" resided within the individual in the form of selfishness, evil thoughts, etc), substituted a spiritual sense for a literal interpretation of the Bible, and emphasized the symbolic nature of church ritual. Swedenborgian thinking was especially attractive to Germans who opposed religious and social conditions in their states. During the latter half of the Eighteenth Century liberal and forward looking Swedenborgian concepts were influencing progressive minds in Europe and America. An organized church took form in the Eastern United States beginning in 1792, and by the late 1830's was strongly developed in the eastern border and northeastern states. Church bodies were located as far west as Illinois.

Iowa's single Swedenborgian colony was the result of the work of Herman H. Diekhoner, a German-born immigrant who organized a study group in his St. Louis cobbleshop. Many additions were made to the membership after refugees from the 1848 revolution began to reach the city. These immigrants had all arrived at New Orleans, and settled in St. Louis, a route of immigration and settlement which was contrary to the norm for Iowa settlement. The group formed the "Jasper Colony" and sent agents into Iowa in early 1851 to locate a new home. By April of that year, land was purchased in what became Lenox Township, Iowa County. The center of the colony was in Section 8, Lenox Township. Each house sheltered two families and a communal kitchen and dining hall served all. The "communal" log cabin housed religious meetings which were led by Diekhoner. The colony, then consisting of twenty families, rejected communal ownership in early 1853, resulting in the departure of their founder, and the land holdings were distributed among the colony settlers. Two years later, the Society of True Inspiration (the Amana Colonies) settled in the same area to the south. A New Church Sunday school was founded in 1857, and moved into its own building in 1859. This building, "Excelsior School" then housed all religious activities until the subject church building was constructed in 1880. Missionary efforts during the 1870's and 1880's spread the word and resulted in the founding of reading circles in Newhall, Benton County, Roger's School, Solon, Ely, Davis School, Norway, Newhall, Atkins, and Flint River. In 1889 The General Society of Iowa for the Church of the New Jerusalem was organized, centered on the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet, 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Middle Amana

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	8	8	9	8	0	4	6	3	1	3	1	7	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing										

B

Zone		Easting				Northing										

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The southeast corner of Section 6, Township 81N, Range No. 9 West, being three quarters of an acre. Measures from the SE corner of Section, on west

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n.a. code county

state code county

side of N-S road, north 150'. west 150', south 150' code and east 150' to place of beginning.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO

date 24 August 1983

street & number Historical Building
E. 12th & Grand Ave.

telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines,

state Iowa

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

Adrian H. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Dept.

date 24 August 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

9/29/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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county's smallest township, and this church has been for many years the only church to be built in that township (excepting the communal meeting houses of Amana Colonies).

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Lenox Township congregation, and this focal point coordinated the thirty-five other groups in the state (none of which actually built their own churches) and in neighboring states. The driving force behind these efforts was Rev. Stephen Wood, minister at this church. Annual meetings were held at the church and brought together a wide circle of church members. In 1900, minister William Martin founded the only Swedenborgian church publication in the state "The Echo." The church declined in membership and influence after 1901, due to language problems and to the loss of older members through death. The church continues to host annual yearly statewide reunions, but is no longer considered to be an active congregation by the Swedenborgian church. The church continues to be active "in spirit" and do hold special services. This is especially true since 1980.

The Lenox Township church was built during the summer and fall of 1880, and dedicated on December 12 of that year. Rev. Gerald Busman, a carpenter by trade, designed the church and served as the first ordained minister for the community from 1863 through 1883. A Mr. Wagner, of Norway Iowa was the primary builder. The church cost \$1,500 to construct. The New Jerusalem Church Society finally purchased the three quarter acre property in December 1882.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

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Parks, Clara M. Centennial: Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem, Iowa County, Iowa, 1851-1951. Alcester, S. Dakota, Robert W. Shields, 1952.

Hawley, Charles Arthur. "A Communistic Swedenborgian Colony in Iowa." Iowa Journal of History and Politics. 33 (January 1935), 3-26.

Schulte, Sylvia Jane. "Lenox New Jerusalem Society: History of Lenox Township New Jerusalem Church." 1980.

Cedar Rapids Gazette, _ July 1951.

Des Moines Register, 5 December 1976.