

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 26 1980

MAY 27 1980

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Long Valley Finnish Church

AND/OR COMMON

"Finn" Church

LOCATION SE of Lake Fork

STREET & NUMBER

Farm to Market Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lake Fork

vic

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Idaho

CODE

16

COUNTY

Valley

CODE

085

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY

DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

X PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

X YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDEN

X RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Long Valley Finnish Church, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lake Fork

VICINITY OF

STATE

Idaho 83635

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Valley County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cascade

STATE

Idaho

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1972

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Idaho State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Boise

STATE

Idaho

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 Long Valley Finnish Church is a picturesque white frame structure which sits at the top of a hill on the east side of Farm to Market Road in Valley County. The building is comprised of an 8'x8' enclosed entry on the north side, and a 26'x48' main section containing the meeting hall. The main section is four bays deep, with tall, transomed, double-hung sash windows under molded window heads. The same molding occurs over the double entry doors.

The sanctuary is at the south end of the wainscoted interior, separated from the seating area by a wooden ballustrade. A ten-foot-wide dais is centered in the sanctuary. To the left is a hundred-year-old pump organ, donated anonymously to the church. In the center is a podium and a sacrament table, made from Long Valley pine by a member of the congregation, Edwin Kantola. On the sacrament table is a Finnish Bible brought to this country by Finnish immigrants and donated by Tilda Nortuni Barker. The chairs in the meeting room were purchased in 1917. The painting of Christ above the sacrament table was donated by the Finnish Ladies' Aid. Except for carpeting and an occasional coat of paint, the interior has not been altered since the building was constructed.

The exterior, with its steep, bracket-supported front facing gable and its tall, slightly inset enclosed belfry, is also largely unchanged. A small shed-roofed storeroom in matching materials has been added on the east side of the entry. Tin has been laid over the shake shingles, and a concrete stoop and wrought-iron rails installed in front. The ship-lap siding has been repainted several times, maintaining its original condition. The belfry still contains a bell donated by a Finnish congregation in Rock Springs, Wyoming, a predominately-Finnish mining town. The entire structure is in very sound condition.

South of the church is a small frame outhouse. North of the church is the Finnish cemetery, where most of the Finns who settled in the valley are buried. The cemetery is not included in the nomination, but it contributes to the site integrity of the church, as do the surrounding fields and woods.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☒ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

PECIFIC DATES 1917 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Builders: John Ruuska and John

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Heikkila

The Finnish Church in Long Valley is significant beyond its age and picturesque qualities. Its significance is both architectural and historical. It is a well-preserved example in an unspoiled rural setting of a simply-planned frame church that has appealed to diverse ethnic groups in many different areas. The appropriateness of the form for Scandinavian immigrants is corroborated by the similarities between this structure and the Norwegian Lutheran churches in the Deary area of North Idaho. The Finnish Church has even greater significance as the best-kept remaining artifact of the Finnish settlement in Long Valley--one of two such settlements in the state. It is a testimony to the collective effort of the community to erect a building where it could meet and hold religious services in its native language.

The Finnish settlement in Long Valley began in 1896 with the entry into the area of three Finnish families--the Lahtis, the Haralas, and the Koskelas. These were soon followed by others, and by 1907, forty-three Finnish farmers had filed homestead patents on land in the valley.¹ By 1915, eighty-five Finnish families lived on the farms in the area, with the greatest concentration of them along the Farm to Market road south of McCall.²

Among the early settlers was the Reverend John William Eloheimo. Eloheimo was an important person for this relatively small Finnish community to count among its number. He has been credited as one of the founders of the Suomi (Finland) Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, and he held national offices in that organization.³ He immediately began holding church services for his countrymen in his home, and at times preached from the podium of the Methodist Church in nearby Roseberry.⁴ But the Finns wanted a church of their own.

Unfortunately Eloheimo did not live to see the building erected as he died in 1913. The Ladies' Aid began soliciting contributions soon after Uriel Kantola donated a portion of his land for the building in 1915.⁵ Donation records show that contributions ranged from twenty-five cents to over a hundred dollars, and that some members contributed three or four times to the cause. In 1916 enough money was collected (\$1811.37) to begin the building, and the volunteer work was supervised by two local Finnish carpenters, John Ruuska and John Heikkila. When the cornerstone was poured, community members gathered and put something in the concrete--a passport, or a Finnish coin, or a photograph. The church was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1917.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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The church has been maintained by the Finnish Ladies' Aid Society, the group primarily responsible for raising the money for its construction. The Society, organized in 1904, is one of the oldest community groups in the entire valley. The building is kept spotlessly clean and in excellent condition by the Finnish women. Their numbers are dwindling, however, as the ethnic group is assimilated into the larger society of the Valley, and the older members pass away. At present, there is no Finnish minister in the valley, and the church is used only for weddings, funerals, and in the summer as a place for Bible classes of the Donnelly Community Church.

The Long Valley Finnish Church building is significant for several reasons. First, it is evidence of an ethnic community's collective efforts to permanently establish itself in a new land. Second, it represents a particular segment of the Finnish-American population--the strict Evangelical Lutheran group.⁶ Third, as the best-preserved building of the Long Valley Finnish community, it is the most likely to withstand time and weather and be a reminder to future generations that there was once a substantial Finnish community in the valley.

As one of the two Finnish communities in Idaho,⁷ the Long Valley group deserves recognition for its effort to help settle the isolated mountain country of Central Idaho. Their church is symbolic of their collective generosity, perserverance, and "sisu"⁸ and as such a worthy nominee to the National Register of Historic Places.

¹This number was determined by a survey of patent notices in The Long Valley Advocate, the area's newspaper.

²This number was taken from a count of Finnish homesteads listed on an old map now owned by Don Koskie, a McCall surveyor.

³A. William Hoglund, Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880-1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 42.

⁴The 1906 issues of The Long Valley Advocate frequently mention that Eloheimo will preach at the Methodist Church in Roseberry.

⁵All the facts relating to the building of the church were taken from the records of the Church and Ladies' Aid meetings, now in the possession of Mrs. Ellen Ikola, Church secretary.

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⁶ Arthur E. Poutinen, a scholar on Finnish-American immigrant communities, wrote his Ph.D. dissertation (Chicago, 1973) on the conflict between Finnish "churchmen" and socialists in a Michigan mining town. Entitled "Finnish Radicals and Religion in Midwest Mining Towns, 1865-1914," the dissertation proceeds from the thesis that the Finns were either very religious or very radical, politically. His ideas can be applied to the two Finnish communities in Idaho; Long Valley's represent the "religious" segment, while the North Idaho group was definitely socialist-minded.

⁷ The North Idaho Finns have also left behind a community building, the Enaville Worker's Hall. This building is not in very good shape at all, however, and may deteriorate before any substantial preservation effort can be launched to save it. As things stand now, the Long Valley church is the only Finnish building (of either community) in the state that is in good condition.

⁸ Perserverance

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Long Valley Advocate newspaper, 1904-1906.

A. William Hoglund, Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880-1920. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1960.

Arthur E. Poutinen, "Finnish Radicals and Religion in Midwest Mining Towns" unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1973.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre (208 feet square)

QUADRANGLE NAME Lake Fork

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 1 5, 7, 5 4, 2, 5 4, 9 6, 2 9, 5, 5

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

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J

K

L

M

N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at the intersection of the south boundary of Section 12, Township 17 North, Range 3 East BM, and the east-right-of-way boundary of the Valley County Farm to Market Road, thence east, south, west, north 208 feet.

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

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Alice Koskella, Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Idaho State Historical Society

DATE

2 February 1980

STREET & NUMBER

610 North Julia Davis Drive

TELEPHONE

334-2120

CITY OR TOWN

Boise

STATE

Idaho

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Mark Wells

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

29 February 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

for W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5/27/80

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

5-14-80



Long Valley Finnish Church
Farm to Market Road, Lake Fork,
Valley County, Idaho

Photographer: Patricia Wright
October 1979

Negative on file at: Idaho
State Historical Society,
Boise, Idaho

View from northeast

Photograph #1 of 1