

National Registry

By Rolf Berg

How and why did the Viking Lutheran Church get named to the National Registry of Historical Buildings? What are the reasons and qualifications needed for this honor to be placed on the Registry? These questions are often asked. It is not only the fact that it is a beautiful church building, but equally important is the role it has had in shaping our rural community, state, and area.

We have always known that our church building had a "unique look", beautiful stained glass windows, and structural design superior to the average rural church in our area. At a North Dakota State Planning Conference in Bismarck in December, 1976, I attended a workshop on preservation of historical buildings and sites, and natural sites of archaeological significance. I realized the importance of our church building and its role in the history of our community.

The first step was to visit with the North Dakota State Historical Society staff and request that they inspect the church and determine its possible eligibility. This first "on site" inspection took place in 1977. Needless to say, they were impressed.

The second step is to develop the formal application where all structural design, measurements, description of structure, and significant role in the development of the area and state history is defined. This was accomplished with the help of the State Historical Staff at Bismarck. Upon completion of the application, it was presented at the regular board meeting of the Society and was requested the formal recommendation be sent to the National Board of Registry for Historical Buildings.

A Catholic priest from Richardton, ND, made the formal presentation to the State Historical Society and requested their approval of the application and recommended it be forwarded to the National Board. It was approved. This was a happy and proud moment for us, as Helen and I represented Viking Church at this meeting.

Time moved slowly while waiting for final approval and official notice, but the waiting was worthwhile. Our Viking