

NR listed 6/5/91

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Agnes Catholic Church
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 8th and Walnut Streets not for publication N/A
city, town Mena vicinity N/A
state Arkansas code AR county Polk code AR 113 zip code 71953

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd
Signature of certifying official
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4-29-91
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Mission

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stone

Brick

roof Ceramic Tile

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Summary

St. Agnes Catholic Church, located at the southwest corner of 8th and Walnut Streets and constructed in 1921-22, is a single story, fieldstone masonry and concrete church building designed in the Spanish Mission style but constructed with locally-available materials. Its northern or front facade is dominated by the square, asymmetrical, hipped-roof towers that flank the central entry.

Elaboration

St. Agnes Catholic Church is a single story, fieldstone masonry and concrete church building designed in the Spanish Mission style yet rendered in locally-available materials. Though anchored by a Latin cross organization of the principal internal spaces, the overall plan augments that fundamental arrangement at its eastern end with a central narthex and pair of flanking square towers, and at its western end with a separate, three-sided apse flanked by anterooms. A single, fieldstone chimney rises through the roof immediately to the north. All the roof surfaces - the gable roof over the narthex and nave, the hipped roofs that over the towers and the apse, and the shed roofed anterooms - are covered with green ceramic tile, the walls are faced with fieldstone, and the building rests upon a continuous cast concrete foundation.

The eastern or front elevation of the church is dominated by the two asymmetrical towers flanking the central entrance to the narthex set into the end of the gable roof that covers the nave to the west. The central, monumental Gothic window in the upper half of the gable end is trimmed with brick and glazed with leaded glass set into lancet windows with triangular crowns. The large entrance below echoes the shape of the window opening above, though the angle of the triangular crown is flattened further to accommodate the double-leaf entry with its sidelights and transom. The shorter tower to the south is covered with a low hipped roof, punctuated by a tall lancet window above a shorter lancet below, and ornamented with corner buttresses that feature one offset as they join the tower walls near the roof. The taller tower to the north is of the same general type as its counterpart, yet features a second offset and an open belfry at the top due to its additional height. A small cross caps the roofline of each of the towers.

The northern elevation is divided into seven window bays: the side of the tower to the east, four bays along the nave wall, another in the gable end of the transept, and a single-leaf entrance toward the western end or rear of the church. These windows, like those on the eastern elevation, are glazed with leaded stained glass set into geometric Gothic lancets. The southern elevation opposite is virtually identical, the only difference being the addition of a basement entrance at the extreme western end of the elevation and the absence of a

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handicapped ramp accessing the other entrance above and just to the east.

The western elevation is divided into five principal bays: the two flanking square-headed windows that light the anterooms behind flank the central, three-sided apse that is lighted with a single taller window in each of its flanking bays, the central, broader bay being blank. The tall stone chimney rises to the north of the apse roof and against the rear wall of the nave.

The significant exterior details are limited to the triangular lancet windows, largely faced with brick, the corner buttresses that virtually surround the building, and most of all, the rough, indigenous character lent the design through the natural texture of the native fieldstone.

Boxed wood ceiling trusses, stained a natural, dark color, and the plaster walls, painted an off-white, combine to create a refined, elegant interior. The tall, figural stained glass windows run the full length of both sides of the nave, through the transepts and into the apse, thereby surrounding the worship space with richly-colored light and providing a decorative counterpoint to the relatively simple, painted plaster walls. The three-sided apse contains an altar set upon a raised wood platform, and is visibly distinguished from the nave itself by a slightly different paint color and separate lighting.

St. Agnes Catholic Church remains virtually unaltered, retaining even its original suspended lanterns in the nave.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1**Summary**

Criterion C, local significance

St. Agnes Catholic Church is eligible under Criterion C with local significance as a remarkable example of an ecclesiastical design of the Spanish Mission architectural style that was adapted to the abundance of local stone available in the Mena vicinity. Its noteworthy features include a green clay tile roof, an abundance of richly-colored stained glass, and the two flanking asymmetrical towers, with their offset buttresses and hipped roofs.

Elaboration

The formation of a Catholic congregation in Mena occurred as of September 16, 1896, when the first delegation was sent by the archdiocese to select a site for the erection of a church and school. The recent completion by the railroad entrepreneur Arthur Stilwell of his Kansas City-Southern Railroad line through Mena, and the small, growing community that resulted, drew much attention to the mountainous, relatively uninhabited region from around the state. At the same time, the perceived need of the new community for spiritual guidance and leadership became a concern to a number of the established Christian denominations in the state. However, it was of especial importance to the Roman Catholic archdiocese due to the fact that, as was typical of railroad construction throughout the nation at the time, a significant percentage of the laborers who helped construct the railroad were ethnic immigrants from countries of predominantly Roman Catholic populations. Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock and Rev. Father Enright of Fayetteville were the first clergymen to visit the new community in an official capacity on behalf of the Roman Catholic church, and they selected a site for a church before departing. Father McCormick, an experienced missionary, was assigned the duties of starting the congregation and erecting the first church building, a small, gable roof, wood frame structure, which he accomplished within the first year.

By 1897, the Bishop selected a young pastor by the name of Rev. A. P. Gallagher to take over the permanent spiritual duties within the new Mena church. Reportedly the Bishop decided upon Rev. Gallagher largely because the Bishop considered his youth and enthusiasm to be of advantage in the rustic and relatively rough surroundings of the new community. This choice proved to be well-advised, for among the other trials Rev. Gallagher faced in establishing a spiritual community in this rough setting he also faced a wave of anti-Roman Catholic sentiment that spread throughout the region during the period 1912-1916. The flames of this prejudice were fanned by both local lecturers and the regional media, which circulated a number of derisive characterizations of "Romanists." Fortunately, the entrance of America into World War I, and especially the valiant service rendered by Roman Catholic soldiers of various ethnic backgrounds under the American flag quelled such sentiments.

Among the achievements of the school was the establishment and maintenance of St.

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Joseph's Academy, a Catholic parochial school. It was established at the same time as the church itself and was operated by a group of nuns from Fort Smith called the Sisters of Mercy. It served many of the families of Mena well into the twentieth century, though it no longer exists today.

The parish prospered under the tutelage of Rev. Gallagher and attracted several influential Mena citizens to its membership. The church soon paid off its \$1,400 debt on its original church building. Almost immediately thereafter Rev. Gallagher accomplished one of his goals for the church. Rev. Gallagher had long desired to relocate to a new site further from the courthouse square and closer to the principal residential section of Mena; he with the blessings of the archdiocese, he successfully oversaw its relocation from its original site to the site of the present building by 1910. However, due to the steady growth of the congregation, it soon became necessary to construct an addition on the original church. By the middle of the new century's second decade, it became evident that a new structure would be necessary.

In envisioning the form of his new church, Rev. Gallagher had dreamed of a rough-hewn, rustic church built from local boulders. In fact, the new church as it was constructed followed closely the original plans drawn by Rev. Gallagher himself. The groundbreaking took place on October 16, 1921, with the work proceeding through that winter and into the following spring and summer. One year to the day after the groundbreaking, Rt. Rev. Bishop Morris dedicated the building. The church measured 85 feet by 50 feet, with 18-inch thick walls. Its construction required 3,500 sacks of cement, eight cars of sand, one car of stone, one car of brick, one car of mill work, about 1,000 wagon loads of rock, sixty-five thousand feet of lumber for forming the concrete and building, and ten tons of plaster. The final cost was approximately \$25,000 and the stone masonry was laid by two local laborers, a Mr. Swift and a Mr. Warren.

This unique rendering of the Spanish Mission style in bouldered fieldstone indigenous to the mountains and hills surrounding Mena distinguishes St. Agnes Catholic Church as one of the most impressive and architecturally significant structures in Polk County. It is thus being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C with local significance.

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Bibliography

Deed, on file at Roman Catholic Diocesan Office, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Mena Star, Mena, Arkansas; August 27, 1936, August 19, 1971, January 15, 1987.

Remembering 75 Years, 1896-1971; Commemorating 75th Anniversary of Founding of Parish.
Published by St. Agnes Church, 1971.

St. Agnes Church. Dedication Booklet published by St. Agnes Church, 1922.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1921-22

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gallagher, Rev. A.P.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one

UTM References

A

1	5
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3	8	6	0	4	0
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3	8	2	7	6	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beginning at the point formed by the intersection of the western edge of 8th Street with the southern edge of Walnut St., proceed westerly along said edge to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the church's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the church's southern elevation, thence proceed easterly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the western edge of 8th Street; thence proceed northerly along said edge to the point See continuation sheet of beginning.

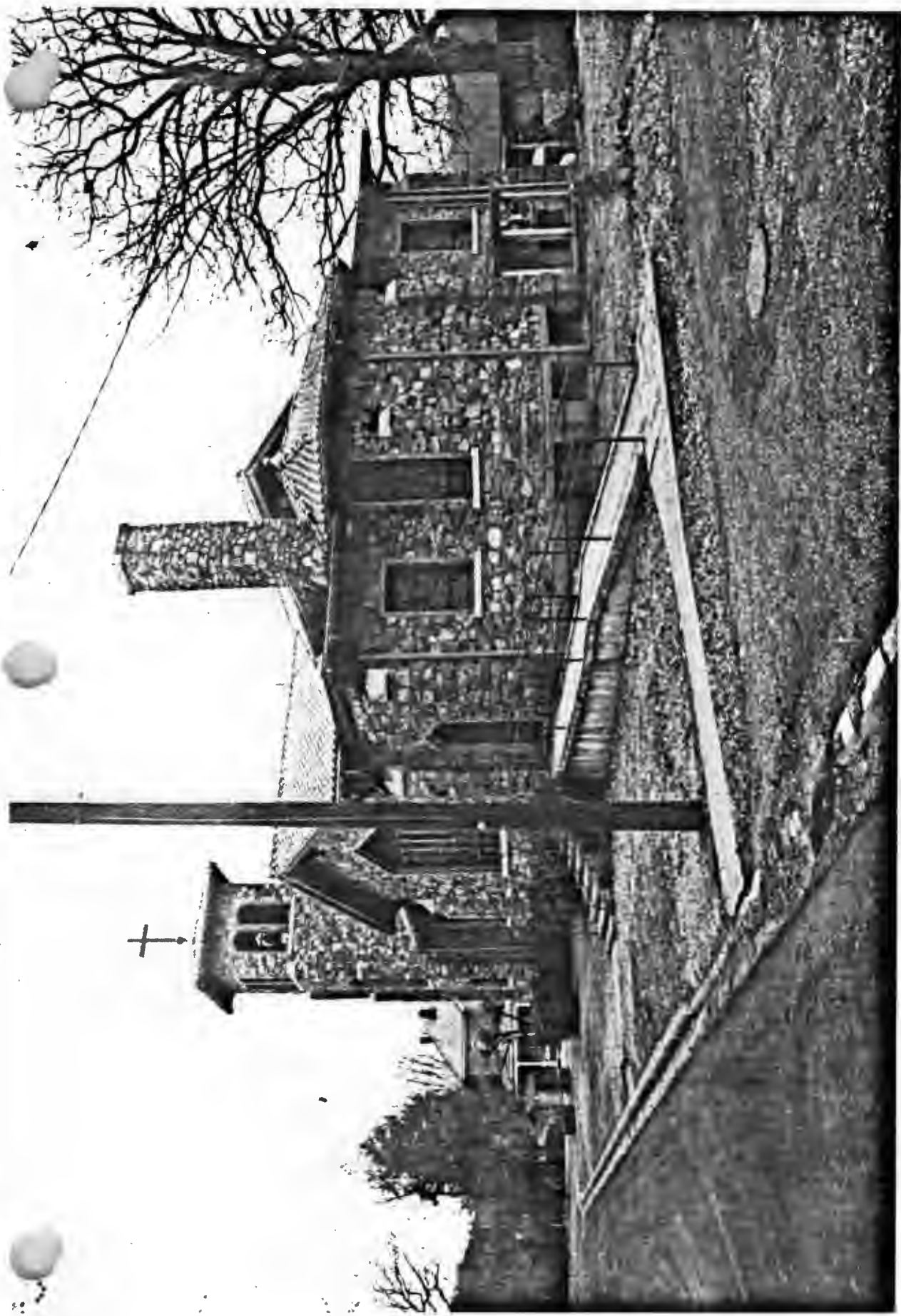
Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

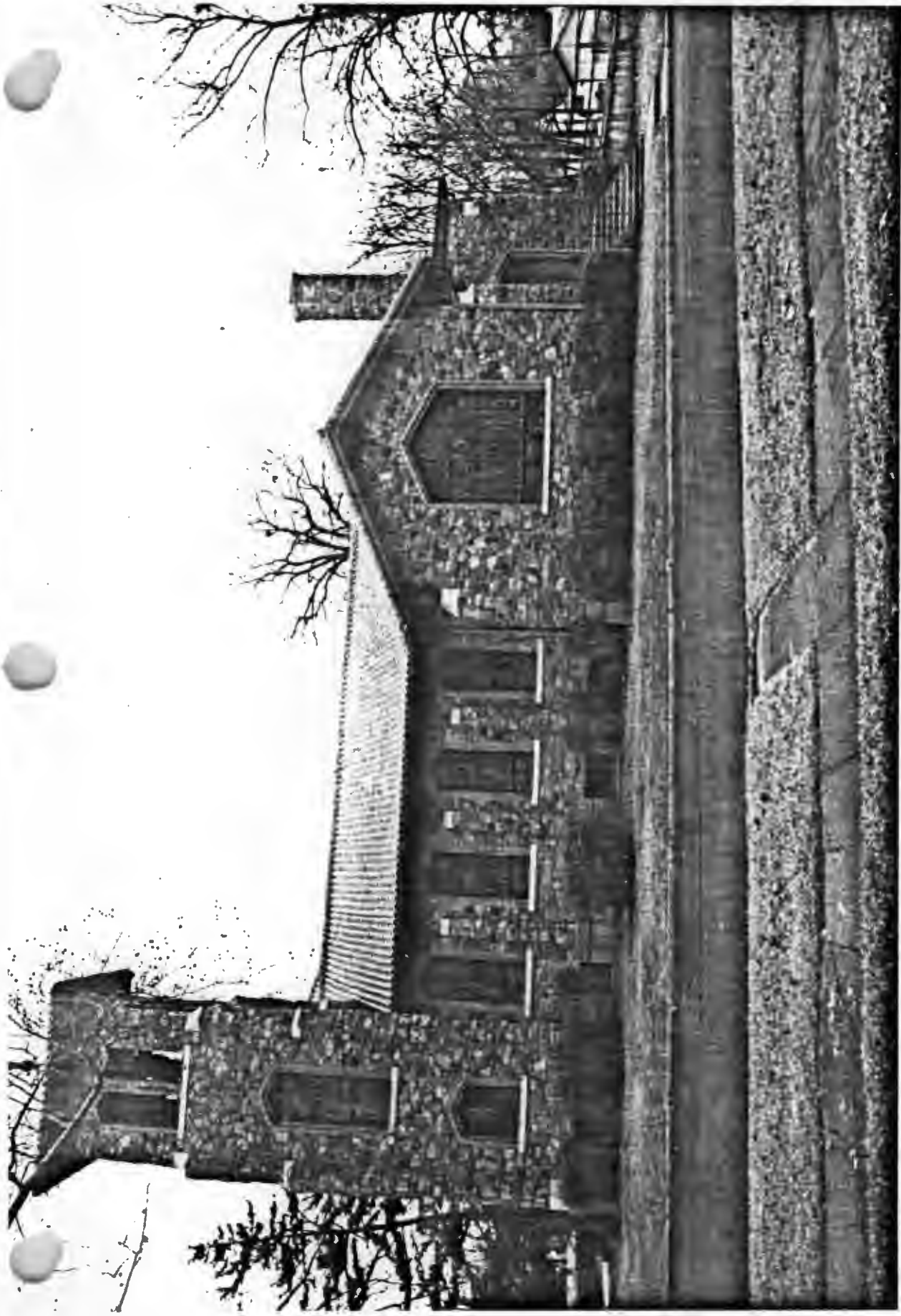
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian/Shirley Goodner, Historian
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 4/101/91
 street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300 telephone (501) 324-9346
 city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201



VT. LANDS COMMISSION
MENA, ARKANSAS
PROCESSED BY D ZOLNER
VAUGHN, 1991
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANSP
VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



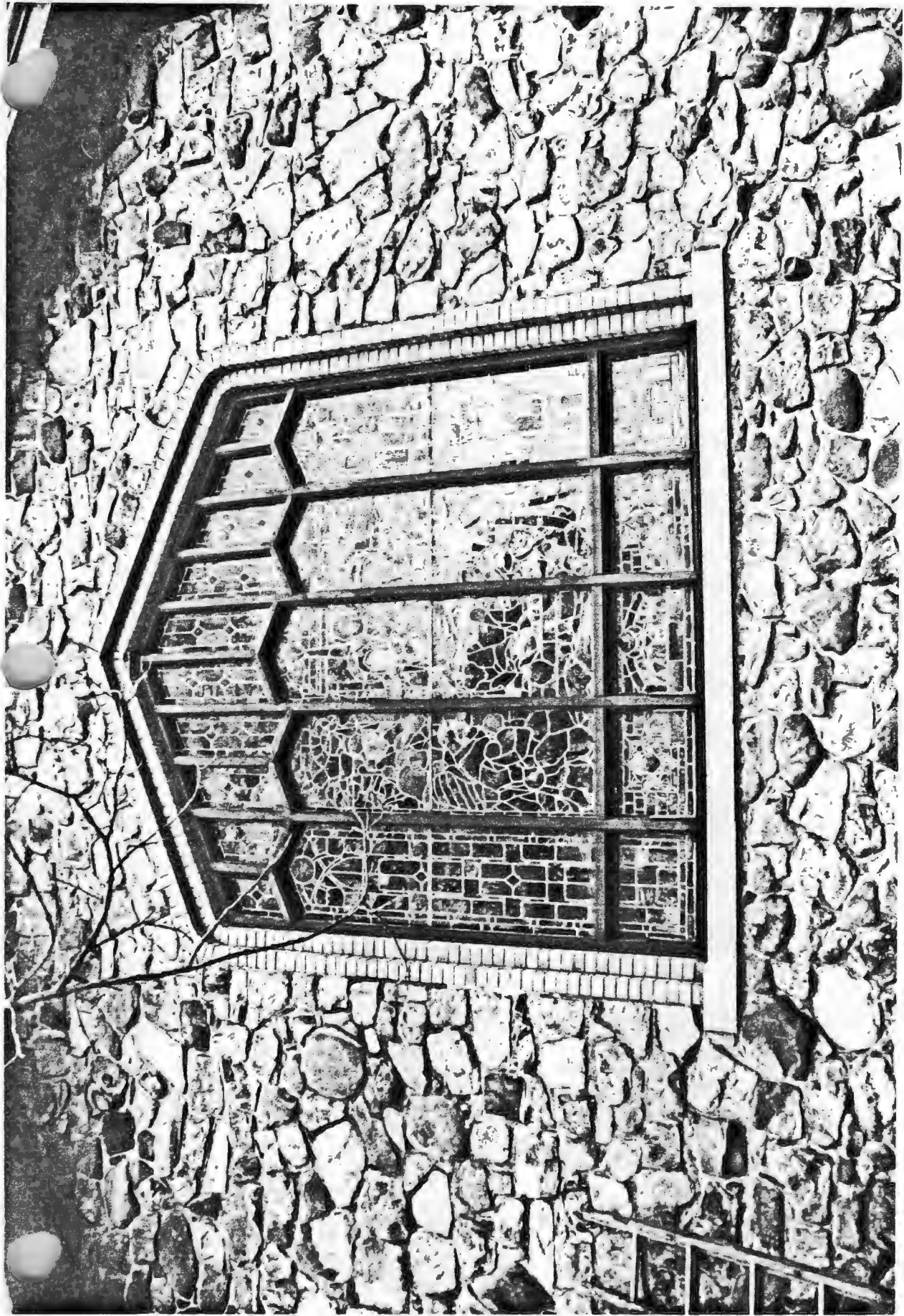
U.S. Census Bureau
MINN. DISTRICTS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. DOLLNER
JANUARY, 1991
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
VIEW FROM NORTH



LA TANGS PARADISE GURNEY
PEN. ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY J. DORRANCE
VANUZZI 1991
VEGETATION ON THE N. AMP
VIEW FROM NORTHEAST



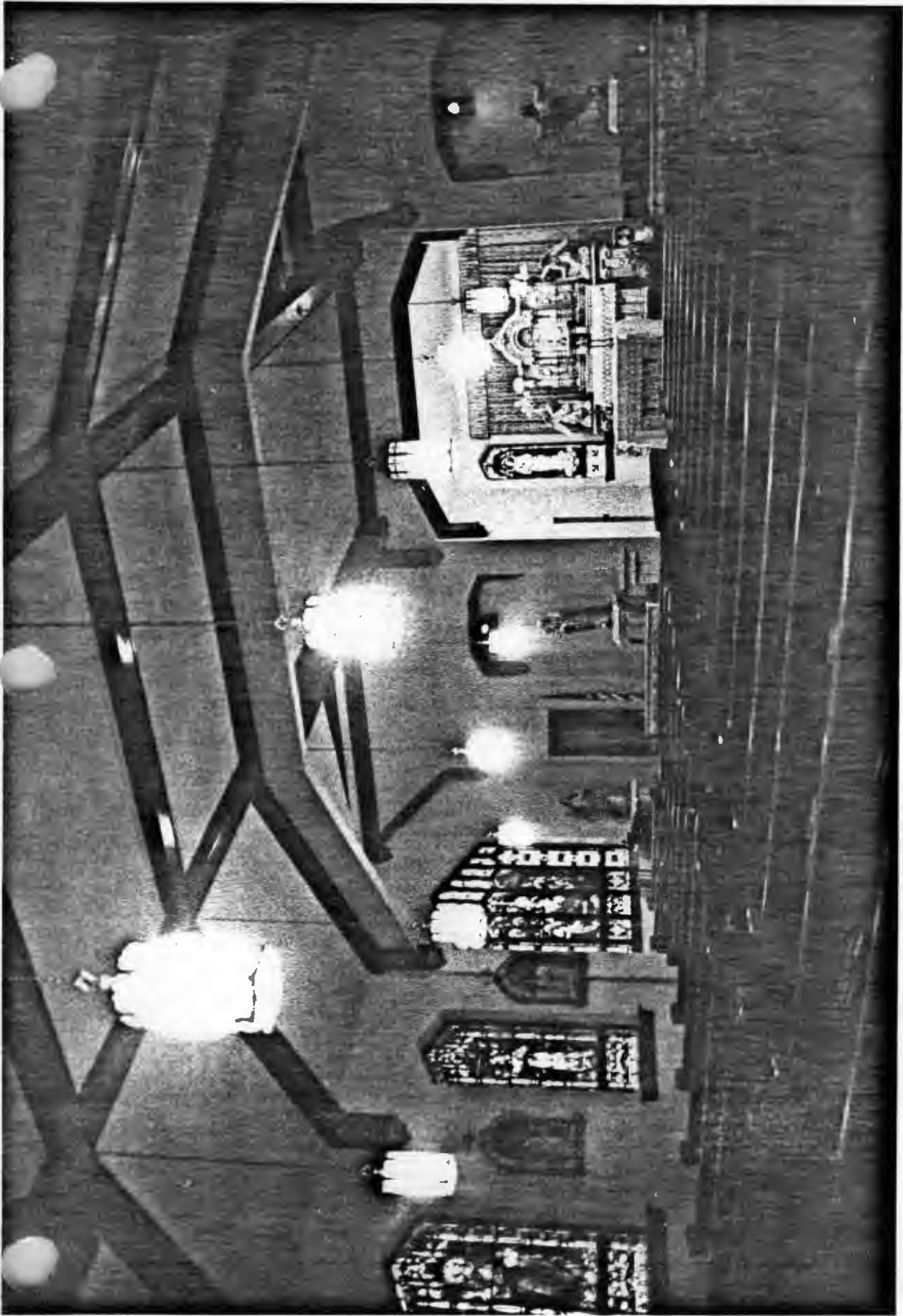
Ms. Birds of the World
MENA
JANUARY 1901
VIEW FROM EAST



PL. AGNES PERIODIC CORRECTION
MENU, PERKINS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. DORR
JANUARY, 1991
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MONUMENTAL WOODS DISTRICT



St. Agnes Catholic Church
Winnipeg
January, 1991
Night on the App
View from Southwest



St. Louis Catholic Church
St. Louis, Missouri

View of Interior
1901

View of Interior
St. Louis, Missouri