

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 17 1976

DATE ENTERED

DEC 22 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

St. Joseph's Mission

HABS

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

E of Tampico on
Tampico Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Midway between Tampico & Wiley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th - Mike McCormack

STATE

Washington

City

VICINITY OF

CODE

53

COUNTY

Yakima

CODE

077

3 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
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Corporation of the Catholic Bishop of Yakima

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 901

CITY, TOWN

Yakima

VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Assessor's Office, Yakima County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Second and "B" Streets

CITY, TOWN

Yakima

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

October, 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Running west at the base of the Ahtanum Ridge to join the Yakima River at Union Gap, Ahtanum Creek roughly defines the northern border of central Washington's Yakima Indian Reservation. St. Joseph's Mission is situated about fifteen miles west of the city of Yakima in a grassy meadow on the banks of the Ahtanum. Through the widespread use of modern irrigation, the surrounding valley has been made green, but the high hills which define this valley setting remain dry and brown. The mission itself is pleasantly sheltered in a grove of cottonwoods, evergreens, and apple trees. The latter are said to have been planted by the Oblate fathers in the 1860's in what may have been the earliest attempt to cultivate fruit in the Yakima Valley.

The mission is presently maintained and managed by the Knights of Columbus as a public park. In addition to the timbered chapel and "priest's house" of the mission proper, a small caretaker's house, an open garage-tool shed, and a pumphouse occupy the property, as well as picnic tables and restrooms. Although these recent elements have altered the isolation which must have characterized the early log structures, they do not significantly reduce the integrity of the mission within its pastoral setting.

The chapel itself is a single story log structure, cruciform in plan. Constructed in 1869 by the Oblate Father Louis Napoleon St. Onge and his lay-assistant J. B. Boulet, it is the second chapel on the mission site, originally established between the years 1849-1852. The logs employed in the chapel are unusually large ones, some 8-12 inches in width. All were reputedly cut and hewn square by Father St. Onge and his hired help in the nearby mountains. The tightly-fitting dovetail joints and the exceptionally plumb and square components of the wall construction indicate an uncommonly high quality of workmanship.

The chapel has undergone regular maintenance and "restoration" ever since 1919, when the Knights of Columbus became involved in efforts to save the mission structures from further deterioration. The building now rests on a concrete foundation, and its thick joints have been re-chinked with cement mortar. In addition, the Knights were responsible for the reconstruction of the chapel's gabled roof in 1959. Sawn rafters, exposed at the eaves, are now sheathed with wooden shakes, and gable ends have been sealed with board and batten siding.

The fenestration of the chapel was inserted at an unknown date. In their present form, the windows are framed by simple plank surrounds, and contain double-hung vertical paned sash over one-light sash. Entrances to the chapel occur at both east and west gable ends. Each doorway consists of a simple plank enframingent and a single slab wood door.

Additional exterior features of interest include an iron cross of unknown origin, which crowns the easternmost gable ridge. A short distance from the east chapel entrance is a mission bell, also of uncertain date, mounted high on a wood scaffolding.

The interior of the chapel has been fortunately retained in an unfinished condition relatively close to its original appearance. Log wall surfaces remain exposed, as does the framework of the reconstructed roof. A cement floor has been added, however, and crude pews have been installed at an unknown date for use at the occasional services still held in the chapel. There remains no evidence of the three original altars built by Father St. Onge and Boulet in the winters of 1870 and 1871. However, a crucifix placed above the present-day altar is said to have been carved from a limb of one of the ancient apple trees standing near the chapel.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

1869

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Father Louis Napoleon St. Onge

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Joseph's Mission on Ahtanum Creek was founded by a French order of missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, between the years 1849 and 1852. Existing records suggest that the Ahtanum mission was established as a seasonal sub-mission, and was purposely situated near the summering camp grounds of Chief Kamiakin, famed leader of the Yakima Indian nation. Originally known as Sainte-Croix d'Ahtanum, the mission soon became the headquarters of the various Oblate stations in the Yakima Valley.

Until the arrival of the Catholic missionaries, the Yakima had experienced little contact with white men. While the Oblates were not entirely successful in converting the native Americans to Catholicism, they were instrumental in helping the Yakima adapt to the changes rapidly taking place around them. It was here, for example, that the Indians were first instructed by the priests in the science of irrigation, a practice which eventually evolved into the extensive fruit-growing industry of the present-day Yakima Reservation.

Following the total destruction of Holy Cross Mission by troops of the Puget Sound and Oregon Volunteers in the Indian War of 1855, the log chapel which stands today was reconstructed by the diocesan priest Father Louis Napoleon St. Onge in 1869. Thereafter, the Ahtanum mission was known as St. Joseph's Mission. The present-day structures symbolize the perseverance of the Catholic ministry among the Yakima Indians, a ministry which continued on the site until the late 1880's.

In September and October of 1847, the first party of Oblates arrived at Fort Walla Walla in the Washington Territory, eager to begin their work among the Yakimas. The party included Father Pascal Ricard, superior of the Oblate Juniorate of Notre Dame de Lumieres, seminarians Eugene Casimir Chirouse, Charles John Felix Pandosy, and George Blanchet, and lay-brother Celestin Verney. The earliest mission was established at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers by Father Ricard in the fall of that same year. The land was given by Yakima sub-chief Pew-Pew-Mox-Mox, and the mission was named St. Rose-on-the-Yakima. In late December, Ow-hi, another sub-chief of the Yakima, appeared at St. Rose and requested the presence of a "black robe" in his own territory. Brother George Blanchet and lay-brother Verney accompanied the chief some 125 miles up the Yakima River, and founded a second mission, possibly on the banks of Manastash Creek in the Kittitas Valley. The maison-chapel which they constructed at that time was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

An epidemic of measles and fever raged throughout the Oregon Territory in 1847, affecting thousands of Indians and directly inspiring the massacre of missionaries at the Whitman Mission near Walla Walla. Hostilities between the Cayuse Indians and the whites gradually escalated. The Oblates, however, continued to work among the Yakimas in complete personal safety. In 1848, Kamiakin himself requested that a mission be established on his own vast lands, extending from the present-day town of Prosser west to Naches. On July 6, 1848,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Boulet, Rev. J. B. Address to be read at the Re-dedication of St. Joseph's Mission, July 13, 1919.
 The Catholic Northwest Progress, Central Washington edition, Vol. 79, No. 26. June 25, 1976. "Ahtanum Seen Cradle of Faith and Irrigation."

continued on attached page

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	67,19,0,0	5,15,53,5,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Florence K. Lentz

ORGANIZATION

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation;

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

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

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

September 13, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

12/22/96

ATTENDANT, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

12/20/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Historic American Building Survey, Wash.-40

Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

X Federal

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Situated adjacent to the chapel is a small log cabin of considerable age on which no documentation has yet been located. The cabin has never been shored up to permit the addition of a foundation, so that serious structural deterioration and settling have resulted over the years. It is apparent, too, that the cabin was constructed with a lesser degree of craftsmanship than was the sturdy chapel. The logs themselves, although tightly dovetailed at each wall intersection, are irregular in length and width, and are crudely squared. These indications of hasty construction suggest that the cabin was intended as a temporary shelter. It is probable that the cabin is the first building erected by Father St. Onge in the winter of 1867, following his arrival on the Ahtanum the previous September. J. B. Boulet, the Father's lay-assistant at the mission between the years 1868-1871, described this structure in his re-dedication address of 1919, as "a log house 16 by 24 feet in dimension, for church and home purposes".

The cabin has been substantially altered in recent years. A shed addition has been appended to the rear, and a small covered porch attached to the cabin's main front entry. All joints have been re-chinked with cement mortar, now badly in need of maintenance. The roof has been reconstructed and covered with wood shingles, as have the gable ends. Doors and windows are of relatively modern fabric. On the north gable end, an original door opening has been filled in with segments of log and with a casement window. The interior of the cabin has been entirely encased with modern wall, floor, and ceiling materials. Originally utilized by the Knights of Columbus as a caretaker's cottage on the mission property, the cabin is now used chiefly as a dressing-room at the occasional weddings which take place on the mission grounds.

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the first St. Joseph's Mission was founded, reputedly on the Simcoe River, although there exists some confusion today as to its exact location. This station was headed by the newly-ordained Father Chirouse. Two additional sub-missions were temporarily set up in the area, under the direction of Fathers Pandosy and Blanchet.

Holy Cross Mission on the upper Ahtanum was established shortly thereafter. Historians of the Church do not agree upon a precise date, and it is possible that the mission existed for a few seasons as no more than a summer camp whose location corresponded to the summering grounds of Kamiakin's people. Father Louis Joseph d'Herbomez, an Oblate newly arrived at St. Joseph on the Simcoe in 1850, reportedly assisted Father Pandosy in the eventual construction of shelters on the Ahtanum site. An early description of these structures in their natural setting was recorded by one Theodore Winthrop as he traveled on horseback through the Yakima Valley in 1853:

A strange and unlovely spot for religion to have chosen for its home of influence. It needed all the transfiguring power of sunset to make this desolate scene endurable The mission was a hut-like structure of adobe clay, plastered upon a frame of sticks. It stood near the stony bed of the Atinum (sic). . . .

As I drew near, a sound of reverent voices met me, - vespers at this station in the wilderness. Three souls were worshipping in the rude chapel attached to the house. It was rude indeed, - a cell of clay, - but a sense of the Divine presence was there, not less than in many dim old cathedrals, far away,

Messrs. D'Herbomez and Pandosy had been some five years among the different tribes of this Yakimah (sic) region, effecting of course not much . . .

. . . . Their fare was mine. Salmon from the stream and potatoes from their own garden spread the board

Winthrop failed to elaborate, however, on the dramatic success of the priests and Indians in their efforts to make productive the arid soil around the mission. Through the use of stream-fed irrigation ditches, their gardens produced at an early date not only potatoes, but peas, corn, melon, wheat, and pumpkins. Winthrop, moreover, did not observe the progress made by the Oblates in terms of communication, trust, and evangelization in their few short years among the Yakimas. Kamiakin himself had been converted to the faith and had offered up his own children for baptism, thus dispelling the Indians' natural fear of such strange "medicine".

Two years later, the hopes of Kamiakin and the Oblate fathers for permanence and peace among the Yakima nation were dashed by the outbreak of war. The ever-increasing influx of whites on the Indians' ancestral lands, the broken promises of the white man's government, and finally, the murder of the Indian agent A. J. Bolen brought about the inevitable hostilities.

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Kamiakin was forced to leave his gardens near the Ahtanum mission to lead his people in war. In November of 1855, the Oregon and Puget Sound Volunteers under the command of General Gabriel Raines camped near the mission site. In describing the senseless plundering and destruction of the small settlement, Lt. Philip Sheridan also documented the material progress made by the Fathers and their Indian flock since Winthrop's visit two years prior:

In digging up the potatoes some one discovered a keg of powder which had been buried in the garden by the good father to prevent the hostile Indians from getting it to use against the whites. As soon as this was unearthed, wild excitement ensued and a cry arose that Father Pandoza (sic) was the person who furnished powder to the Indians; that here was proof; that at last the mysterious means by which the Indians obtained ammunition was explained - and a rush was made for the mission building. This was a comfortable loghouse of good size, built by the Indians for a school and a church, and attached to one end was the log-cabin residence of the priest. Its destruction was a matter of but a few moments. A large heap of dry wood was quickly collected and the whole Mission, including the priest's house, was soon enveloped in flames and burned to the ground.

The Yakima Indians were ultimately defeated in September of 1858 by the troops of Colonel George Wright, and were everafter confined to the Yakima Reservation. Kamiakin himself chose to spend the remainder of his days in retreat at Rock Lake near Spokane.

The Ahtanum mission was uninhabited until the fall of 1867, when Father L. N. St. Onge arrived on the scene from Holy Angels College in Vancouver. St. Onge had journeyed to the northwest in 1864 with the express purpose of evangelizing the Indians of the region. Upon reaching the Ahtanum, St. Onge constructed an Indian smokehouse as a temporary shelter, and during the winter built a log cabin 16 by 24 feet to serve as both chapel and lodging. This structure the Father floored and ceilinged with split timbers, lining the walls with Indian mattings. It is possible that this shelter is the cabin which today stands adjacent to the chapel. This completed, Father St. Onge returned to Vancouver to bring back lay-brother J. B. Boulet, in accordance with a previous agreement between the two men. In March of 1868 they returned to the Yakima Valley to begin their ministry among the Indians in earnest. That summer a school for the Indian children was opened under a crude shed roofed with green branches. Wall maps were printed with wood block letters, there being no books yet available.

In 1919, the Rev. J. B. Boulet wrote, in the text of an address to be read at the re-dedication of the mission:

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In the spring of 1869 we came to the conclusion to erect the present church building. Father St. Onge hired some white men to go with him twelve miles away in the mountains to cut and hew the logs necessary for the intended building, and on the arrival of the logs the two of us commenced the work. Then Father St. Onge, who had been unwell since he reached the coast grew worse and worse. When he felt fairly well we might put up five or six logs per day, other days three or four, and many days only one. So finally he left me alone and went East to consult doctors

I then hired a white man and we finished the job, except the three altars which we built in the winter, of '70 and '71, after Father St. Onge's return.

Father St. Onge was reputedly a massive man, 6' 4" in height and possessing unusual strength. His ability to lift great weights and to shoulder entire timbers was a source of amazement among the Indians and whites who assisted him. Nevertheless, the Father's health was rapidly failing, and he was forced to seek medical aid in Canada and Europe. Upon his return to the mission, it became apparent to Boulet, still a layman, that they would not be able to carry on with their work.

St. Onge and the Bishop of Walla Walla earnestly requested the Jesuits to assume the ministry on the Ahtanum. In the late summer of 1870, Father Joseph Caruana was sent from a Jesuit mission at Coeur d'Alene. Father St. Onge and Boulet remained until the following summer to assist Father Caruana with the language and to acquaint him with the Indian flock. The mission was left in his care in May of 1871, two months before the church itself was dedicated to St. Joseph.

Father Caruana faced unusual difficulties during his ten year stay at St. Joseph's. Not the least of these was the opposition of the Indian agent at Fort Simcoe, on the Yakima Reservation. Under President Grant's Indian Policy, all Indians of a particular tribe were to be evangelized by one denomination only, and the Yakimas were to be placed under the care of the Methodist mission at Fort Simcoe, headed by the Indian agent himself. The Jesuits were forbidden to work upon the Reservation, and were even pressured to abandon St. Joseph's although it lay outside Reservation boundaries. Father Caruana held fast to the mission and succeeded in drawing some of the Yakima people off the Reservation to receive Catholic instruction.

The eventual closure of the mission on the Ahtanum was presaged by the rapid growth of the settlement of Yakima City (now Union Gap), and in 1885 the remarkable exodus of that town to a new site four miles up river, known at that time as North Yakima (now Yakima). White Catholics in both communities established churches of their own, although ultimately the parish of St. Joseph was officially located in North Yakima. The church building was transported from Yakima City to the new site and reassembled, as were many of the town's structures, and a school and residence for the Fathers were erected anew. The

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Fathers living on the Ahtanum soon moved to their new quarters in town, and the Indian mission was completely abandoned, the structures having served there for less than 20 years.

Some 30 years later, Catholics of the Yakima vicinity exhibited renewed interest in the Ahtanum site and the significance of its role in regional and Church history. In 1919, the Yakima Council of the Knights of Columbus voted to expend several hundred dollars on the repair of the log chapel's foundation and roofing. The precise measures undertaken at that time are not known, although some work was definitely completed with the intention of arresting further deterioration of the structure. On July 13 of that year, a rededication ceremony was held on the site. It was a particularly meaningful ceremony in that many of the Indians, priests, and settlers who participated had witnessed first hand the flourishing of the mission.

Again in 1959, the Knights of Columbus attempted to preserve the mission site for the enjoyment and instruction of the public. In addition to restorative measures on the mission structures themselves, the Knights sought to create a public picnic grounds and park. Presently, the grounds are operated as such and are well-maintained and protected by a caretaker couple who live on the premises. During the summer, mass is regularly said in the Church, and weddings are occasionally held on the property.

The significance of St. Joseph's mission lies beyond the interest of the remaining elements of the 1869 log church. The Oblate fathers were the first and certainly the most positive contact between the Yakima Indians and the white man. Throughout their ministry in the Yakima Valley, the Oblate's relationship with the natives of that region was both a good and a strong one. Although it was not the first mission in the Valley, Holy Cross on the Ahtanum was perhaps the most effective and significant, for it was situated in the heart of Kamiakin's particular domain. It was here that his people were taught the science of agriculture and irrigation, the source of the Yakima Valley's present-day economy. St. Joseph's Mission, as reconstructed by Father St. Onge and his lay-assistant Boulet, and continued in good faith by the Jesuits, carried on the enlightened Catholic tradition of brotherhood and learning among the Yakima Indians.

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Anton Soester. "Earliest Accounts of the Ahtanum Mission".

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