

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received NOV 15 1983
date entered DEC 15 1983

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

1. Name

historic NA
and/or common St. Michael's Catholic Church Complex (GY06-1)

2. Location

street & number NA NE of Greeley Ctr. NA not for publication
city, town Spalding NA vicinity of
state Nebraska code 31 county Greeley code 077

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Diocese of Grand Island, c/o Most Rev. Lawrence J. McNamara
street & number 311 West 17th Street, P. O. Box 996
city, town Grand Island NA vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Greeley County Courthouse
street & number NA
city, town Greeley state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date On-going federal state county local
depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society
city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

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 <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Michael's Catholic Church Complex is located in Spalding, Nebraska, approximately 18 miles northeast of Greeley Center, the county seat of Greeley County. The complex includes five major structures, the Gothic Revival brick church built in 1909-14, the academy building, a two-and-one-half story brick ediface constructed in 1912 and the convent, a three story brick structure, dated 1926-27. A ranch style house, (c. 1960's) which presently serves as the rectory, and a parish center (c. 1970's) are also included in this nomination but will be considered non-contributing due to the nature of the different materials used and the newer construction.

Structural and historical integrity of the site and grounds has been preserved, except for alterations made in the church interior.

The St. Michael's Catholic Church Complex is located in Spalding, Nebraska (1983 population: 645). Spalding is situated in the northeastern corner of Greeley County. The complex is a prominent feature in the rolling countryside of the Cedar Valley which lies on the outskirts of the sandhills. It consists of three major structures, St. Michael's Church, Spalding Academy, and the Sisters' convent. The church property comprises two city blocks and includes two non-contributing sites: the rectory, (c. 1960's) and St. Michael's Center (c. 1970's).

Calvary Cemetery, established in 1886 by Father DeVos, is located just outside the north edge of town. The new St. Michael's Cemetery is located south of Spalding. Due to their proximity to the church buildings, the cemeteries are not included in the nomination.

The present St. Michael's Church was erected in 1909-14 in the Gothic Revival style of architecture, with J. H. Craddock serving as architect. Readily identifiable architectural features are incorporated into the building design including pointed arched window and door openings, steepled towers, buttresses, copings and stringcourses. St. Michael's, measuring 152' along its north-south axis and 60' along its east-west axis, features a prominent entry pavilion flanked by two engaged towers, 100' and 135' high, at the east and west corners of the south (front) facade.

The building is constructed of brick, layed out in a modified Latin Cross plan with a gable roof covered with clay tiles. Much of the detailing is in brick, including hoodmold details above doors and windows and corbeling. Buttress weatherings, battlement copings and water-table are all in stone.

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 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify ethnic)

Specific dates 1926-27
 1909-14, 1912, Builder/Architect Craddock, Nachtigall

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Michael's Church is significant to central Nebraska for providing the spiritual, social and cultural base of a group of Irish immigrants settling in Greeley County in the late 19th century. The church complex is significant to Greeley County as an assemblage of buildings closely related to instructional needs to Irish-Catholic families, and stands as a landmark in the Spalding community. Architecturally, the complex represents an intact grouping of vernacular structures with interpretations of the Gothic Revival and Renaissance Revival styles of architecture.

The history of St. Michael's parish began with a few families who settled in the northeast corner of Greeley County in the 1870's. Priests from the Gleason settlement, now Platte Center, made their way up the Loup Valley and along the Cedar River to the area, offering mass in the sod houses and dugouts. In 1876 Bishop James O'Connor was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska. Together with Archbishop John Ireland and Bishop John Spalding they organized the Irish Catholic Colonization Association. In 1879 when the Association was officially incorporated, 25,000 acres of land were purchased in Greeley County from the Burlington and Missouri Railroad. This land was to be the site of a colony, but was actually a detached chain of farms stretching from Halifax (Spalding) to the colony of O'Connor and westward (Polhemus, p. 4). The Association's goal was to establish Irish towns in the midwest which would serve as economic and ethical refuges for Irishmen caught in the cities of the seaboard or in the mine fields of Pennsylvania and Ohio (McShane, Murphy, 1976, p. 378).

In 1854, when Nebraska territory was opened for settlement, the Irish ranked among the first to seize the opportunity (McShane, Murphy, 1976, p. 374). U.S. Records indicate that Ireland was the native land of the largest number of immigrants in each census period from 1790 to 1840. During the years from 1845 to 1855, 200,000 people emigrated each year. (McShane, Murphy, 1976, pp. 371, 373). In Nebraska, Greeley County remained a strong Irish Catholic center over the years and is heavily Catholic still today.

The town of Spalding was established in 1881 when the Post Office was moved from Halifax, a half a mile east, to the Association's newly platted townsite. The town became an important nucleus for the northern settlers, serving as a mission of O'Connor, the center of the Catholic Colonization Society for Greeley County. Spalding was named after the Association's president Bishop John Lancaster Spalding (Fitzpatrick, 1960, p. 69).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than 10 acres

Quadrangle name Spalding, Nebr.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is located on Block 1, Original Town and Block 33, First Addition, Spalding, Greeley County, Nebraska, including all real estate associated with said buildings in church complex nomination.

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

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joni Gilkerson, Preservation Associate/Cora Esch, President

Nebraska State Historical Society/

organization Greeley County Historical Society date September 1983

P. O. Box 82554/

street & number R. R. 1, Box 13 telephone 402/471-3270

Lincoln/ Spalding

city or town state Nebraska

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 Moraw D Knelt 11/4/83

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date

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

[Signature] Entered in the National Register date 12/15/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The cathedral is entered through double doors, with concentric Gothic arches expanding away from the door, framed by a gabled pavilion with corner buttresses, stone copings, and buttress weatherings. The main (south) facade is further adorned with a rose window decoratively surrounded by concentric pointed arches, and pointed arched brick corbelling at the roof line. A Latin cross is situated at the gable apex. The engaged towers feature corner buttresses, brick corbelling, stone copings and buttress weatherings. The belfries display stringcourses, corner pilasters with spires and decorative gable walls. Each facade shows a window arrangement consisting of paired Gothic windows and a nave arcade pierced with round window openings. Fenestration in the tower consists of groupings of three pointed arched windows with three flat window openings below, joined vertically by wall pilasters framing Latin crosses between. Each tower is capped by a pyramidal-shaped steeple with Latin crosses situated at the apexes.

The east and west facades show buttresses framing the stained glass windows, forming four bays along the nave. The transept wings display corner buttresses, brick corbelling, a large Gothic window, and spires. Pointed arch clerestory windows penetrate the nave facades and transept wings. At the rear of the church (north facade) is the pentagon-shaped apse, additional entries and two internal chimneys.

The interior plan consists of a nave, transept, chancel, ambulatory and two sacristy areas. The vestibule, balcony and baptistry area are located at the south end of the church. Within the chancel is the high or main altar and altar table. Altars to the Blessed Virgin and Joseph are located to either side of the chancel area.

The decorated style of groin vaulting is composed of transverse and diagonal ribs which cross at a boss. The clustered columns are pointed to give the appearance of marble and are crowned with Corinthian capitals. The entire church interior is decorated with mural paintings and stenciled borders surrounding the window openings. The three prominent murals located above the high altar depict the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The large rose window located in the balcony depicts St. Michael the triumphant surrounded by symbols from the Old and New Testaments.

In the spring of 1981 alterations were made in the church interior. The altar area was enlarged thus requiring removal and relocation of the pews to the transept wings (see photo #8). The central portion of the communion rail was also removed.

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The Spalding academy, built in 1912, is a vernacular product of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture. The two-and-one-half story brick ediface is rectangular-shaped in plan and has a raised basement and gable roof with elbow parapet walls. The roof line is penetrated by gabled wall dormers with elbowed fronts and stone copings. The prominent entry pavilion (south facade) features a hipped roof with bracketed cornice, and a raised entry with round-arched openings and double doors with sidelights and transoms. The words "Spalding Academy" appear directly above the arched opening. A two and three-part segmentally arched arcade is found around the upper portion of the pavilion. A decorated Latin cross is situated at the roof apex. A prominent wall cornice with brackets is displayed on the front (south) facade of the academy. Fenestration in the building consists of segmentally arched window openings with brick segmentally arched window hoods. Rectangular shaped window openings are present in the lower level of the building.

The Sisters' convent, built 1926-27, also represents a vernacular interpretation of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture. The three story brick building, measuring 45' x 87', is rectangular in plan and devoid of excessive ornamentation. The main (south) facade displays an entry "pavilion" consisting of wall pilasters visually supporting a pedimented front with corner battlements. The parapet wall shows a prominent wall cornice which arches at the pavilion and continues around the side (east, west) facades. A stone water table and a brick belt course encircle the building at the sill line of the first and third story windows, respectively. Lugsills and copings are executed in stone. Fenestration in the building for the most part, consists of segmentally arched window openings. Round arched window openings are found on the first level of the west facade. The rear (north) facade shows a one story extension. A fire escape is located on the west facade. A three story brick wing joins the academy and convent buildings on the west and east facades, respectively. The Sisters' convent was designed by architect Jacob M. Nachtigall, of Omaha, Nebraska.

The Grotto, located directly east of the academy was erected by the Our Lady of Lourdes graduating class of 1937.

The present rectory (c. 1960's) is a one-story brick ranch-style house. The original rectory, a two story frame Italianate structure was moved to a vacant lot in town. The building is abandoned and in deteriorated condition.

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St. Michael's center (c. 1970's), located directly north of the academy is a large, "quonset-type" structure, nondescript in nature. Access to the building is provided through a brick entry pavilion adjoined on the east facade. The center is used as a parish hall, serving various social and religious functions for the St. Michael's congregation.

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A small frame church was built in 1882, measuring 30' x 50'. The new church was named Saint Michael's to honor Michael Sullivan, who came to Cedar Valley in 1876 and befriended many of the new settlers as well as helping the priests in their endeavor to settle the Irish immigrants. In the year of 1890 a larger church was needed so construction began on the "Red" church. The cornerstone was laid October 12th. The church measured 50' x 104' and had a seating capacity of 700. It was designed in the Gothic style of architecture, modelled after a church in Belgium built in the 13th century. The church was constructed of frame with brick veneer, at a cost of \$13,000 (Burbach, 1960, p. 45). Bishop Richard Scannell dedicated the structure June 9, 1891.

In 1890 the Sisters of Mercy from Omaha came into the community to teach school. When the first church became too small it was remodeled into a school with two classrooms on the first floor and an assembly room on the second. The Sisters of Mercy maintained the school until 1900 when the Dominican Sisters from Kentucky replaced them. A convent was constructed c. 1900. Around the turn of the century, about 75% of the congregation was Irish, the rest Germans and Belgians.

In 1909 the cornerstone for the present St. Michael's church was laid. "A beautiful brick building, known as one of the largest churches west of the Mississippi, with a seating capacity of 1500." (Esch, 1976, p. 18). It was dedicated by Bishop Scannell on September 29, 1914. J. H. Craddock of Omaha was chosen as architect in the designing of the Gothic Revival ediface.

In 1912 plans were made for the construction of a new school building. The cornerstone was laid that year and the building was ready for occupancy in March of 1913. The years from 1902-1918 the Spalding academy served as a school for young ladies. The Spalding college (no longer extant), a boys school, was opened by the fathers and brothers of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis in 1908. In 1918, due to financial difficulties within the community, the college closed its doors and the Spalding Academy became coeducational.

A new convent was built in 1926-27 which comprised a chapel, rooms for receiving visitors, living rooms, kitchen, and facilities for the sisters. The building was designed by architect Jacob M. Nachtigall, of Omaha, Nebraska.

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The St. Michael's Center (early 1970's) and the present rectory (c. late 1960's), although lacking architectural merit and historic value, both play an important role in the present activities of the St. Michael's parish.

St. Michael's church and Academy are today, as they have been in the past, the focal point and social center of the Spalding community. It is around the church and school that the lives of this predominately Catholic community revolves.

Architecturally significant, the St. Michael's Catholic Church exemplifies the Gothic Revival style of architecture, which was evident in Nebraska during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Probably the most distinguishing characteristic of the Gothic style is the pointed arch used in window and door openings. Most buildings are large, entailing heavy construction materials and techniques. Designs for church plans are typically of the nave and aisle type, most incorporating transepts. Towers, incorporated into the church design, dominate the front facades and may or may not have steeples. Buttresses, corbelling, pinnacles, and copings, are examples of structural and decorative elements used in the architectural design of Gothic churches (Panek, 1976, p. 14-1, 34-1).

The monumental scale of the church gives it an outstanding landmark quality, especially when placed in a local context. Situated in the center of Spalding, the church stands as the focal point of the communities architectural environment with the towers being visible for miles outside of town.

The Spalding Academy and Sisters convent are vernacular interpretations of the Renaissance Revival style which gained prominence in the United States during the 1840's-1890's. The style was popular in Nebraska during the early years of the 20th century. Characteristics of the style include formalism in plan, heavy construction materials, belt or stringcourses, heavy cornices and raised entries (Panek, 1976, p. 16-1, 33-1). Again, the massive scale and architectural design of these buildings lend them prominence as landmarks in the town of Spalding.

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St. Michael's Church was designed by J. H. Craddock, architect. James Henry Craddock was born at Mystic River, Connecticut in 1856. His father, a native of Ireland, came to the U.S. in 1848, and settled in Connecticut. Craddock pursued his education in the schools of Mystic River and in the Mystic River Institute. In 1885 he arrived in Nebraska locating at Lincoln, where he began his practice as an architect. He also maintained an office in Omaha, until in 1904, he disposed of his business in Lincoln, and set up residence in Omaha. Craddock continued his practice until his death in 1932. During his career, he designed school and public buildings as well as numerous churches in the state of Nebraska.

J. H. Craddock also served as architect for the Church of the Visitation at O'Connor in Greeley County (being nominated simultaneously to the National Register of Historic Places with the St. Michael's Church).

Jacob M. Nachtigall of Omaha served as architect for the Sister's convent. Nachtigall came to the U.S. from Germany in 1883 when he was eight years old. He was employed as a laborer in Omaha until 1898 when he was hired as a draftsman for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Nachtigall was employed as a draftsman by Thomas Rogers Kimball, a well-known Nebraska architect, from 1900-08, and in 1909 he opened his own office. During his career Nachtigall designed numerous buildings including Father Flanagan's House in Omaha, (see NRHP, September 6, 1979), and the St. Bonaventure Catholic Church (see NRHP, October 19, 1982) in Ravenna, Nebraska.

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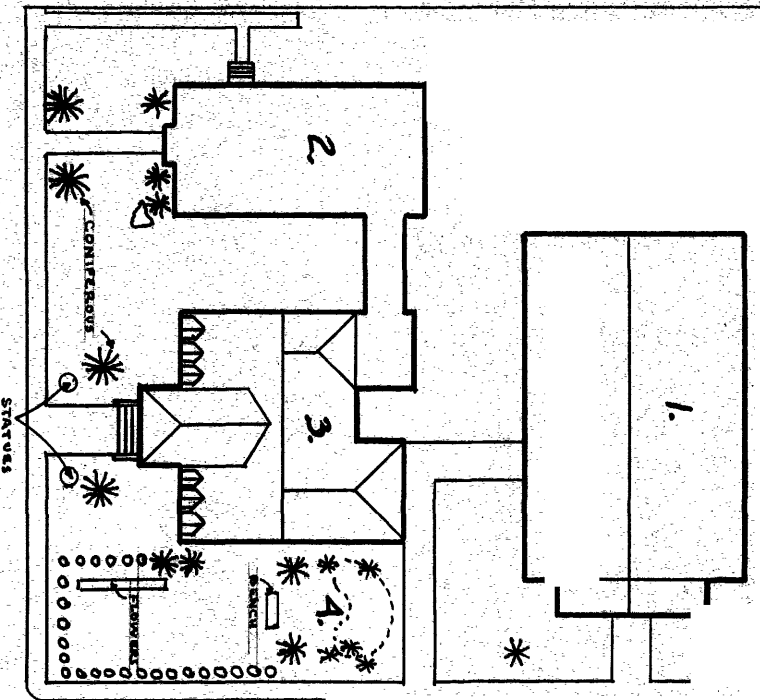
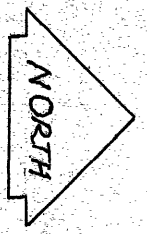
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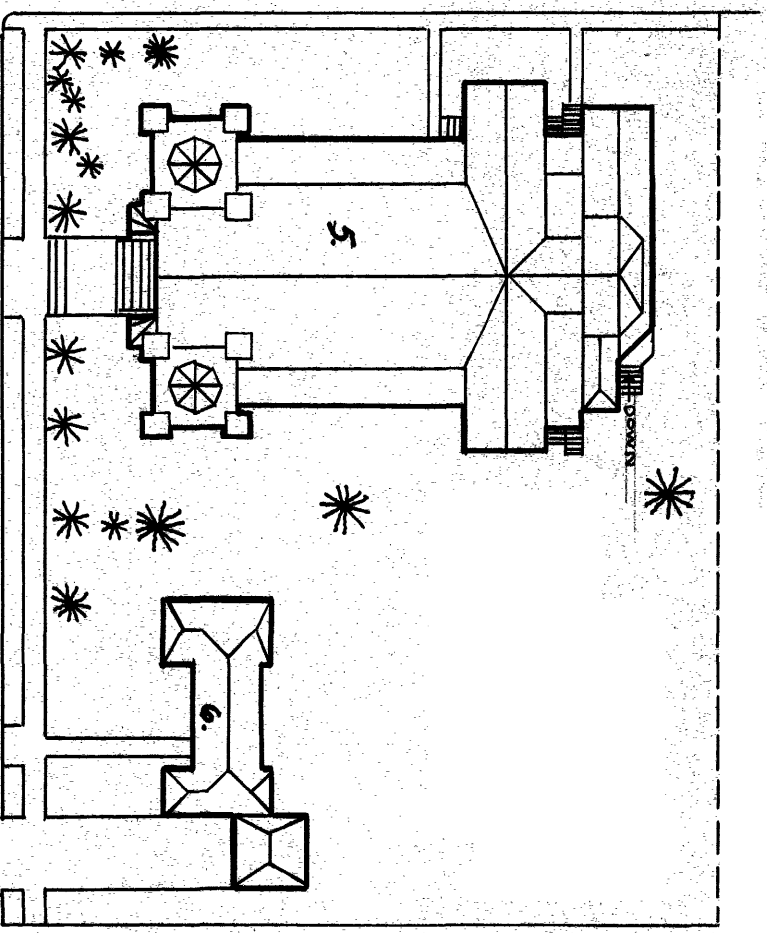
ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPLEX
 (GYOG-1)
 SPALDING, GREELEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA

NO SCALE



- 1. ST. MICHAEL'S CENTER
- 2. SISTERS' CONVENT
- 3. SPALDING ACADEMY

MAP DRAWN BY ED BUKACEK
 FROM FIELD NOTES BY
 PENNY CHATFIELD SOPHI, NMSA
 MAY, 1983.



- 4. OUR LADY OF LOURDES GROTTO
- 5. CHURCH
- 6. RECTORY

LEGEND