

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1198

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Mary's Catholic Church
Other names/site number: GE0204
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 301 West Highland
City or town: Paragould State: Arkansas County: Greene
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:

___ national X statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B X C ___ D

Martha Miller 12/3/14
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

1-27-2015
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Renaissance Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT/Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE, ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has

Summary Paragraph

St. Mary's Catholic Church, located at the intersection of West Highland and North Second Street in Paragould, Arkansas, was designed in the Romanesque Revival style with modernist influences. Designed in 1935 by Charles Eames and Robert Walsh, the church is a brick and steel structure that rests on a full basement with concrete foundations. Completed in 1936, the church is topped by a three-story tower with a shallow hipped roof. The church also includes unusual stained-glass windows, composed of randomly colored abstract patterns and Christian symbols.

Narrative Description

St. Mary's Catholic Church is located in downtown Paragould, Arkansas, to the northwest of the intersection of West Highland Street and North Second Street. The church is rectangular in shape, with the long axis running from east to west. The western end of the church includes a sacristy, small chapel and a short hallway that wraps around the rear of the altar space. The main façade faces North Second Street. The roof is composed of a main gable over the two-story sanctuary space with lower shed roofs over the secondary one-story spaces. A three-story tower is located above the inner altar space and is capped by a shallow hipped roof. All of the roofs are composed of asphalt shingles. The church is composed of brick masonry walls and rests on a concrete foundation. The church also has a full basement, composed of reinforced, poured concrete foundations, walls and large column supports. The floor of the first-story is also poured

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concrete with the wooden form patterns still visible along the ceiling of the basement. All of the windows have extended brick sills and protective clear storm windows on the exterior.

East Façade

The east façade is the primary front façade. This façade faces North Second Street. A Romanesque-inspired arch, composed of smooth cut stone, surrounds a pair of wood textured metal entrance doors. This arch also surrounds a small white relief sculpture of a stylized Virgin Mary with two attending angles in low relief at her feet. This statue is centered directly above the doorway and below the smooth stone arch. The door is flanked by a small pair of metal and glass light fixtures. Above the doorway is a set of twelve small square stained-glass windows. These windows all contain the same orange and yellow starburst pattern on a blue field. These windows are arranged in a Greek cross pattern.

The entry doorway, which is located above ground-level, is reached by a flight of five stone steps that surround the entrance. This front façade is flanked on its outer edges by pairs of brick buttresses that extend from the ground level to two-thirds up the exterior of the building. These buttresses, which are only located on the two western corners of the building, are terminated by a sharp slope of brick at their tops. The southwestern buttress contains the cornerstone with the year of the construction recorded on it as "MCMXXXVI" (1936). The gable of the front façade is highlighted by four courses of decorative brick work that creates a cornice of implied dentils directly under the shallow eave of the roof.

North Façade

The north façade is composed of three separate masses; the central two-story form is flanked by a lower, one-story section that extends from the second bay of this façade to the rear of the church and the three-story tower portion. The main body of the church, extending from the corner of the west façade to the tower contains seven bays of windows. The two-story section of this façade contains a pair of tall, rectangular stained-glass windows covered by stationary, clear, protective panes in each bay. The first bay from the west contains a single large arched stained-glass window, again covered by a three-pane stationary clear protective window on the exterior. All of the arched stained-glass windows along the first story are covered by three-pane stationary, clear protective windows. The first story of the rest of this façade extends from the main body of the church, creating a traditional outer aisle in the church with the second-story windows forming a traditional clearstory to provide light to the interior of the church. The second and third bays also contain large arched stained-glass windows on the ground floor. The first story of the fourth bay extends further from the other extended sections of this façade. This additional extension houses the interior confessional space. This extension includes only one small rectangular clear window. The fifth and sixth bay, at the first story level, reverts back to the initial extended width of the aisle space with an arched stained-glass window in each bay. Just to the east of the arched window in the sixth bay, the first story again extends outward to the north to accommodate an interior baptistery space. This extended first-story section encompasses the seventh bay of the church and turns back toward the main body of the church at the western edge of the church's tower. Directly to the east of this extended section is a single

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The southern façade of the small section that houses the circulation space around the inner altar includes two small rectangular stained-glass windows with exterior stationary protective windows. This small section takes up the first-floor of the seventh bay of the main sanctuary of the church, counting from west to east (echoing the bays on the northern façade). The next five bays are identical and include a central arched stained-glass window in the center of each bay at the first-story level. This façade of the church echoes the northern façade with seven bays in the main sanctuary space, a clearstory on the second-story and extended sides that accommodate the interior outer aisle. The upper story includes pairs of rectangular stained-glass windows centered in each bay. The extended aisle space ends at the second bay. The wall of the first bay is flush with the wall of the clearstory at the second-story level of all the rest of the bays. This bay features three asymmetrical, tall rectangular stained-glass windows that follow the path of an inner staircase that leads from the main floor of the church to the choir loft at the western end of the church above the entry space.

Stained Glass Windows

All of the stained-glass windows in the church are abstract in nature, except for the three tall arched windows located along the rear of the church at the second-story level. These three windows represent a central robed Christ figure atop the globe. The two flanking windows portray angels. All of the other windows are composed of abstract designs with random symbolic motifs and text scattered throughout. These symbols include the Greek Alpha and Omega symbols, images of loaves and fish, chalices, crowns and candles as well as text such as "CRUCIFIXION", "PAX" (peace) and "LUX" (light). The various colors used include blue, yellow and green. The window along the east wall of the chapel contains an image of the Virgin and Child as well as abstract patterned glass.

Interior

The interior of the church includes the traditional baptismal and confessional spaces as well as a grand double height space above the inner altar space. The original altar is positioned along the rear (eastern) wall of the sanctuary space in an alcove. The sanctuary nave is double-height, including the clearstory above. The outer-aisle is only a single-story in height. Each bay is defined by inner brick columns with the upper brick walls supported on flat steel lintel between the inner support columns. The entry way is defined by the choir loft above, a stairway to the south and an enclosed room for mothers and rowdy children to the north. Around the central altar space, a chapel, sacristy and utility spaces fill out the rest of the interior.

Original interior fixtures include two large electric fans at the west end of the sanctuary. Above the sanctuary, the elaborate exposed beams of the roof are still visible and intact. The interior walls of the sanctuary are composed of various shades of buff brick with small inset square stones with carved Greek crosses interspersed around the perimeter of the church.

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wood-textured metal door. This portion of the first-story extends beyond the east edge of the church's tower and includes two pairs of rectangular casement windows. A small area, demarcated by a short wooden fence, is connected to the northwest section of this façade and houses the air unit and exterior utilities for the church.

The tower section of this façade includes an extended section with two rectangular windows that provide light for the interior of the bell tower and the access area for the third-story of the bell tower. The northern façade of the tower also includes a brick chimney stack for the original furnace, which extends above the roof of the bell tower. This chimney stack serves as the buttress for the northwestern corner of the bell tower. All of the other corners of the exposed bell tower have a pair of buttresses, one at each façade edge. The third-story of the northern façade of the bell tower includes a single arched opening, filled with louvered panels. A narrow rectangular window is located below the western arched third-story opening on the bell tower. All of the other facades of the bell tower include two matched pairs of arched openings with louvered panels at the third-story level. These panels allow the tower to be open for the bells to be heard while protecting the interior of the tower from the elements.

East Façade

The east façade is the rear façade of the church. It includes the rear of the bell tower with its two arched openings at the third-story level and supporting brick buttresses along the towers corners. At the second-floor level of the bell tower, a small protruding bay houses the three arched, figural stained-glass windows that are above the interior altar space at the base of the bell tower. These large stained-glass panels are protected by two-pane exterior windows. This extended five-sided bay is capped by a hipped roof with the same decorative courses of brick work as the rest of the church along the eaves. The first-story of the east façade includes a single rectangular window to the north and three pairs of tall casement windows protected by single-pane exterior stationary windows. The southern edge of this façade contains a one-and-a-half story gable roofed section with extended brick detail at the apex of the gable. This detail includes a small arched opening and is topped by a small gable detail. This section of the façade is the exterior expression of the small inner chapel space. This chapel façade includes one high central arched, stained-glass window.

South Façade

The south façade faces West Highland Street. The exterior façade of the chapel includes three rectangular windows to the east. To the west of these windows, a single wood-patterned metal door is surrounded by two layers of inset brick and topped by a brick in-filled gable. This doorway is reached by a small set of two stone steps. The door sill is made of smooth cut stone. The chapel space ends directly to the west of this doorway and the façade steps back to the outer wall of the secondary spaces around the base of the bell tower and around the interior altar space. The west façade of the chapel, visible due to the step-back of the façade at this point, includes a round window under the apex of the gable and a small rectangular window to the south.

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Integrity

The church has changed little since its construction in 1935-1936. All of the original stained-glass windows are still intact. The only exterior change is the replacement of the original oak doors with elaborate wood-patterned metal doors. The rest of the exterior of the building is in remarkable condition and has not been altered. Only the protective stationary windows have been added to protect the stained-glass windows. New asphalt roofs have been added when necessary. On the interior, the arch at the entrance to the altar space, which was originally flat, echoing the surviving arch over the rear alcove of the altar space, was replaced to allow better views of the stained glass windows above the altar. The flooring of the sanctuary has also been replaced.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1935-1936

Significant Dates
December 13, 1936

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Charles Eames (Architect)
Robert Walsh (Architect)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Paragould, Arkansas is one of only two buildings in Arkansas designed by renowned Architect and designer Charles Eames. The church is also an important example of Eames's architectural philosophy before he was "discovered" by Eliel Saarinen and offered a fellowship to Cranbrook Academy. This church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance as one of only two important early architectural works in Arkansas by Charles Eames and as an excellent example of a late Romanesque Revival church with early modernist influences. The property is also being nominated under Criteria Consideration A as a religious property.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Charles Eames

Charles Ormand Eames, Jr. was born in 1907 and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. His father, also named Charles Ormand Eames, was from New England and had fought in the Civil War. After his war service, the elder Eames settled in St. Louis. In 1901 the elder Eames married the much younger Celine Lambert, the daughter of a prominent French catholic family in St. Louis.¹ After the elder Eames was wounded by a gunshot while on the job as a train guard for the Pinkerton service, he devoted much of his time to his hobbies photography and painting, both practices that the younger Eames would later come to master.² The younger Eames became especially focused on photography after his father's death in 1921.³

Unfortunately, the death of Charles Eames father left the family in dire financial straits. Charles, his mother, and sister Adele eventually moved in with his two aunts in order to save money. By age 14, Charles Eames was working for a local steel company while attending high school. He displayed such an impressive ability to quickly learn drawing skills and engineering principles that he was offered a scholarship to study engineering. He had, however, already decided on architecture as a career path.⁴ Eames entered Washington University in St. Louis to study architecture in 1925. He also started working for the St. Louis firm of Trueblood and Graf, Architects.⁵ Although Eames was asked to leave the university after his sophomore year due to his unwavering interest in Modernism, he did earn high honors from the architecture program for designs in the "ultra-modern" manner.⁶

¹ Pat Kirkham. *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 9-12.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ John Neuhart et al., *Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1989), 17-23.

⁶ Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 12.

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In 1929, Eames married Catherine Dewey Woermann, a graduate of Vassar and a fellow student at Washington University.⁷ They then departed on a multi-country European honeymoon, a wedding gift from Catherine's parents. During this trip, Eames was able to see work by Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Henry van de Velde.⁸ After returning to the United States in 1930, Eames joined with previous colleagues Charles Gray and Walter E. Pauley and formed a new architectural firm.⁹ In 1933, Eames worked for the first time with Emil Frei, a renowned stained-glass designer and fabricator. With the Great Depression in full swing, Eames worked for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in St. Louis and New Orleans as part of the Historical American Building Survey (HABS) program in 1934. Late in 1934, Eames left his family in St. Louis and headed to Mexico for an extended, eight month journey, taking odd jobs along the way and painting.¹⁰

In 1935, Eames returned to St. Louis and opened a new firm with a previous colleague at Trueblood and Graf, Robert T. Walsh.¹¹ The pair started designing small homes and churches, including two churches in Arkansas. These two churches were St. Mary's Catholic Church in Helena (NR listed 1.24.2007) and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Paragould.¹² These two projects, the only two known works by Eames in Arkansas, were also the first complete large-scale, nonresidential design projects that Charles Eames undertook from start to finish.

Paragould, Arkansas

The community of Paragould was founded in 1882 when the Texas and St. Louis Railroad met and crossed with the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad in southeastern Greene County. This crossing was a result of the fierce business rivalry between the presidents of the two companies. Jay Gould of the Iron Mountain Railroad had devoted himself to breaking James Paramore's Texas and St. Louis Railroad in Arkansas. In order to divide Paramore's business, Gould sought to cross his lines whenever possible so as to divide profits by providing an alternative direction of travel.¹³ This rivalry insured the future development of Paragould and Greene County, as the area was now primed with complete transportation facilities that ran in all directions. The new town was christened Para-Gould in honor of both railroad Presidents and the area was officially incorporated in 1883.¹⁴

⁷ Neuhart, *Eames Design*, 17-23.

⁸ Neuhart, *Eames Design*, 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Neuhart, *Eames Design*, 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ National Register Nomination: Paragould Commercial Historic District (NR 7.18.2003), Arkansas Historic Preservation Files.

¹⁴ Mack Hamblen. "Paragould (Greene County)." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, August 13, 2014. Accessed October 1, 2014.

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At the time of Paragould's incorporation, the town was little more than a timber camp, with many tents that served as both residences and businesses.¹⁵ The first substantial permanent buildings were built near the intersections of Front and Main Streets and Main and Pruett Streets. In 1884, after growing steadily, Paragould was elected the new County Seat by a local referendum vote.¹⁶ By early 1890, Paragould was home to over 1,500 residents and the town boasted four churches and a multitude of businesses.¹⁷

Through the early 20th century, Paragould thrived on the local timber industry and its role as a local transportation hub. For forty years, timber-related industries such as the creation of barrels, railroad ties, heavy construction lumber, baskets, boxes, handles, dowels and spokes supported the thriving local economy.¹⁸ As the timber in the area was exhausted, the timber boom drew to a close by the late 1930s. The subsequent agricultural industry of the area was not large enough to prolong the early growth of the area and the economy of the community stagnated. It wasn't until 1950, with the growth of factories that the town's economy again started to grow.¹⁹

St. Mary's Catholic Church

St. Mary's Catholic Church was established in Paragould in December of 1883 by Monsignor John Eugene Weibel.²⁰ At the time of its founding, there was no Catholic church in Paragould so the first mass was celebrated in the Commercial Hotel downtown.²¹ The new Catholic congregation of Paragould soon acquired a wood frame building due to a local contract dispute.²² A nearby Protestant congregation had refused to pay the asked price for a new wood frame church after issues with the original contract were discovered by the protestant church's board of directors. After learning that the new Catholic congregation was in need of a building, the builder approached the congregation and offered them the building for \$825.²³ The only problem with this arrangement was that the building still sat on land owned by the Protestant church. A land trade was offered but refused. A firm was finally found who could safely move the entire structure to the corner of North Second Street and West Highland Avenue in just under three days.²⁴ After the successful move, the first mass was held in the new church in May of 1890.²⁵

¹⁵ National Register Nomination: Paragould Commercial Historic District (NR 7.18.2003), Arkansas Historic Preservation Files.

¹⁶ Hamblen, "Paragould (Greene County)."

¹⁷ National Register Nomination: Paragould Commercial Historic District (NR 7.18.2003), Arkansas Historic Preservation Files.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ "St. Mary's Catholic: December 1883." *Paragould Daily Press: Centennial Edition*. August 29, 1983. Churches, Sec. 1 p 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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This first St. Mary's Church was carpenter gothic in style and traditional in form, consisting of a large sanctuary with four tall windows on both the north and south façades. The church was topped by a tall gable roof, which ran from east to west. A three-story bell tower was centered on the western façade with the main entry at the base of the tower. The original church included many fine wooden details including an elaborate steeple on the bell tower.²⁶ This church building served the local Catholic congregation for just forty-five years before the structure was torn down to make way for a slightly larger brick building on the same site and with the same orientation.²⁷

The construction of the new St. Mary's Church building was led by the longtime pastor of the congregation, Father Joseph M. Hoflinger. Father Hoflinger, who was appointed the pastor of St. Mary's Church in Paragould in 1914, was born in Germany in 1875. He was raised in Germany and first visited the United States in 1890. After returning to Germany to study for priesthood, father Hoflinger was ordained in Austria in 1906. After returning to the United States in 1906, Father Hoflinger was appointed to various communities and posts throughout Arkansas. In 1914, Father Hoflinger was sent to Paragould and at once set to erasing the debt of local church. After only six years, Father Hoflinger was able to erase a total of \$10,000.00 worth of debt and put the church back on a secure financial footing. After settling the debt of the church, Father Hoflinger started to plan for the construction of a new church building, one that was more substantial than the current wood-frame building.²⁸

Unfortunately, the money that had been saved for the new church building was feared lost with the stock market crash of 1929 and the failure of the institutions that had held the funds. Father Hoflinger persevered and refused to sell his invested bonds at a reduced rate and eventually was able to extract the full value from his previous investments by the mid 1930s.²⁹ This allowed the local congregation to start planning for a new building in 1935.

By September 1, 1935, an announcement was made in the local paper under the church informational column that the members of St. Mary's were looking over plans for a new church and that work may soon commence on a new building.³⁰ After only two weeks, another announcement was made on September 17th that the building committee was meeting to select an architect and decide on a final budget for the project.³¹ By October 19th, a contract had been submitted by the selected architects and the committee was planning to approve the contract and start demolishing the existing church during the following week.³²

²⁶ Postcard, Catholic Church and Grounds, Paragould, AR. C. 1920. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Files.

²⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Paragould: 1930, 1930-1947.

²⁸ Pamphlet: Fifty Golden Years Told in Story: St. Mary's Church, Paragould, 1956. "Monsignor Hoflinger Has 34-Year Record As Pastor At Paragould." *The Guardian*, February 11, 1949, p.6. "Hoflinger Dies at 83." *The Guardian*, January 23, 1953, p. 1.

²⁹ Pamphlet: Fifty Golden Years Told in Story: St. Mary's Church, Paragould, 1956.

³⁰ "Catholic." *Paragould Daily Press*, September 1, 1935, Church News sec. p 4.

³¹ "Local Catholics Planning To Build New Church Here." *Paragould Daily Press*, September 17, 1935. p 1.

³² "Catholic." *Paragould Daily Press*, October 19, 1935, Churches sec. p 4.

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After less than a month, the old church had been completely torn down and the excavation work on what would become the foundations and basement area of the church was already half-way done.³³ This early work was done mostly by volunteers from the local congregation. This helped to speed the building process along as well as keep costs down on the overall project. During the construction phase of the project, students at the nearby Catholic school would dedicate part of their day to help on the building site, specifically bringing bricks from their delivery point just a few blocks away at the Paragould railroad depot.³⁴ It is also very probable that local craftsmen were hired or provided volunteer service for the church, just like at the Helena church construction. In both the Helena and Paragould churches, Eames stated that they would design all aspects of the church, from the building to the vestments. In Paragould, due to its limited budget and smaller size, many of the elaborate touches that are seen in Helena were omitted. However, the local congregation was included in the design and construction of the church.

“...and also with Bob [Robert Walsh] we did some oddball churches in the South – one in Paragould, Arkansas and one in Helena, Arkansas....
Yes, they're still in existence. That was a wild experience, doing those things. We would do the sculpture, the painting, the murals and all the glass. We did all the vestments – we'd get fabrics up in St. Louis, taken them down and make designs for the vestments. These were Italian Catholics in redneck Ku Klux Klan country, so you can imagine the sort of situation. I would supervise the women of the community, and they did marvelous things. I was a nut on the revival. While I had never been raised in the Catholic Church, my mother's family had ben Catholic; I wasn't Catholic but I at least had a little feeling for it; and in the South there we did what later became very modern changes within the rubrics and ritual of the church. Old Emil Frei was interested in that, and Emil got to be part of the scene.”³⁵

In the local Catholic Church column on November 9, 1935, volunteers are requested to continue the construction work during the next week. As St. Mary's Church in Paragould was starting its major construction phase, St. Mary's Church in Helena (NR 1.24.2007), also designed and constructed by the firm of Eames and Walsh, was completed. Having started construction in early 1935, by December of 1935, the first mass was held in the Helena church. In May of 1936, the Helena church was dedicated by Bishop Morris of Little Rock.

After a year of demolition and construction, the first mass was celebrated in the new church in Paragould on October 17, 1936.³⁶ Although the church was complete enough to house the

³³ "Catholic." *Paragould Daily Press*, November 9, 1935, Churches sec. p 4.

³⁴ Interview with Father Sinkler, Pastor of St. Mary's, Paragould, March 7, 2014.

³⁵ Interview with Charles Eames. Interviewer Virginia Stith, 13 October 1977. Venice, California. Charles Eames Oral History Project.

³⁶ "Catholic." *Paragould Daily Press*, October 17, 1936, Churches sec. p 4.

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congregation, an appeal was issued in the local paper for help with completing the furnishing of the church.³⁷ An article featured on the first page of the local paper on October 19th, 1936, celebrated the completion of the new church and described it in detail.

“The new building, which was constructed of steel, brick and concrete, is 105x35 feet and has a seating capacity of 400 persons. The building also has a basement, which is the same size of the main auditorium and also a choir loft or balcony. The basement of the building houses a large recreation room, the furnace and fuel rooms. The building has a 20x16 window chapel for services where only a small number attend.”³⁸

The article goes on to describe a set of three stained-glass windows that recently arrived from Munich, Germany, to complete the church's interior. These three windows are the ones that are located above the altar space along the eastern façade of the church. The article also notes the special materials used in the church.

“Batesville marble was used for the altar, front steps and arch over the front entrance. Large attractive oak doors with specially constructed hardware add much to the entrance of the building... The new building is air conditioned and is equipped with an automatic Angelus, an electric toller that rings a 6 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m. The ringing of the bells is controlled by electric switches.”³⁹

The church was completed for only \$40,000.00 with local church members and even Father Hoflinger himself acting as construction foremen and purchasers of materials.⁴⁰ In comparison, the Helena in church was completed in 1935 at a cost of \$65,000.00, but was a larger and slightly more elaborate structure.⁴¹

St. Mary's Church of Paragould was formally dedicated by Bishop John Baptist Morris of Little Rock on December 13, 1936. In an article in the next day's paper, it was noted that crowd of nearly 600 attended the mass with over 100 turned away due to lack of standing space.⁴²

The church that Eames and Walsh designed for the Paragould Catholic congregation was only slightly larger than the footprint of their previous wood-framed building. However, the added open basement level and the addition of a small chapel and utility spaces allowed for a much more functional space. The building itself was designed to fuse the older traditional

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ "First Services Held Sunday in Catholic Church." *Paragould Daily Press*, October 19, 1936. p 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ "New Church To Be Dedicated Sunday Morn." *Paragould Daily Press*, December 12, 1936. p 1.

⁴¹ National Register Nomination: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Helena, Arkansas. (NR 1.24.2007).

⁴² "Bishop John Baptist Morris Dedicates New St. Mary's Catholic Church Sunday." *Paragould Daily Press*, December 14, 1936. p 1. "Catholic." *Paragould Daily Press*, December 12, 1936, Churches sec. p 4.

St. Mary's Catholic Church

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Romanesque Revival style that lent a sense of grandeur and permanence due to its use of large brick masonry planes with the new modern aesthetic of simplicity of form. The round entry arch, composed of Batesville stone inset into the brick façade of the building, creates a grand entry portal. The façade is buttressed at each corner; however the Romanesque Revival style is simplified and symmetrically designed, rather than the earlier typical design which incorporates intensely detailed, often asymmetrical forms. The building plan is asymmetrical with the chapel space creating an extended façade along West Highland Street. The large central tower is also reminiscent of the revival style, with buttressing elements at each corner. Although the primary form and style of the church is Romanesque Revival, it is tempered with a modernist aesthetic. The facades are simplified, with the often rich detailing of the typical revival styles used only to create a brickwork cornice and to emphasize the window openings. The common rose window motif is transformed into a cruciform set of 12 small square windows on the front facade. The exterior wall planes are left flat, with little ornamentation.

On the interior, the red brick of the exterior gives way to a neutral buff brick. The most impressive modernist touch is the sanctuary stained-glass windows. These windows are composed of abstract patterns of blue, green and yellow panes of glass interspersed with Christian symbols including chalices, shepherd's crooks, fish, loaves, the Alpha and Omega symbols, as well as phrases relating to the Catholic faith. Both the upper clearstory windows and the first-floor sanctuary windows contain these abstract designs. The more utilitarian windows of the choir loft stairwell also contain the same yellow, blue and green glass as the more elaborate windows of the sanctuary. These abstract windows were possibly designed by Eames with the help of Emil Frei of St. Louis, a renowned stained-glass designer and producer with work both across the United States and across the world. This was the same collaboration that produced the stained-glass windows in the church by Eames and Walsh in Helena. The abstract windows are an interesting counterpoint to the more traditional figural windows above the altar space at the head of the church. Interestingly, the three tall, arched windows imported from Germany were mentioned in newspaper articles during the construction of the church, while the abstract sanctuary windows are not mentioned.⁴³

After completing the Arkansas Catholic church projects, Eames and Walsh continued to practice in and around St. Louis until 1938, when Eames was offered a fellowship to attend Cranbrook Academy of Art by Eliel Saarinen.⁴⁴ Saarinen had stumbled upon Eames architectural design work in an article in an *Architectural Forum* magazine from 1935 which featured images of the newly completed St. Mary's Church in Helena. This publication featured the St. Mary's Church in Helena while the church in Paragould was still under construction. The design work on the Arkansas churches so impressed Eliel Saarinen that he contacted Eames and eventually both Eliel and Eero Saarinen became important mentors and collaborators in Eames early career.⁴⁵

⁴³ "New St. Mary's Catholic Church To Be Dedicated Sunday By Bishop Morris." *Paragould Daily Press*, December 11, 1936, p 1.

⁴⁴ Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 20. Neuhart, *Eames Design*, 23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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While attending classes and teaching at Cranbrook Academy, Eames designed and built his now famous bent plywood chair for The Museum of Modern Art's "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" competition in New York City in 1940. In May of 1941, Eames divorced his first wife Catherine. He then married Ray Bernice Alexandra Kaiser in June of the same year. Ray and Charles had met at Cranbrook Academy only one year earlier. After the wedding, they moved to California to live.⁴⁶ While in California, Charles and Ray Eames continued to experiment with molded wood designs, architecture, art, graphics, photography and video for the next four decades, becoming some of the most well-known designers of the 20th century.

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Paragould, Arkansas is one of only two buildings designed by renowned Architect and designer Charles Eames in Arkansas. The church is also an important example of Eames's architectural philosophy before he was "discovered" by Eliel Saarinen and offered a fellowship to Cranbrook Academy. This church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance as one of only two important early architectural works in Arkansas by Charles Eames and as an excellent example of a late Romanesque Revival church with early modernist influences. The property is also being nominated under Criteria Consideration A as a religious property.

⁴⁶ Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 24-25.

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

"Being Honored." *The Guardian*, January 25, 1957. Accessed October 1, 2014.
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<http://arc.stparchive.com/>. p.49.

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Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://arc.stparchive.com/>. p 27.

Sanborn Maps, Paragould, 1903, 1909, 1914, 1923, 1930, 1930-1947.

"St. Mary's Church, Paragould." *The Guardian*, May 12, 1950. Accessed October 1, 2014.
<http://arc.stparchive.com/>. p.5.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): GE0204

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 726283 | Northing: 3993348 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Pruett First Addition, Block 11, Lots 10, 11 and 12.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated the main church structure.

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500, Tower Building
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail calliew@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9880
date: October 10, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Name of Property

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Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Mary's Catholic Church

City or Vicinity: Paragould

County: Greene

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams, National Register Historian, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Date Photographed: March 7, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 18: East Façade (front), Photographer facing West.
- 2 of 18: Detail of Northeast corner, Photographer facing Southwest.
- 3 of 18: North Façade (side), Photographer facing South.
- 4 of 18: Detail of Northwest corner, Photographer facing Southeast.
- 5 of 18: West Façade (rear), Photographer facing East.
- 6 of 18: Detail of Southwest corner, Photographer facing Northeast.
- 7 of 18: South Façade (side), Photographer facing North.
- 8 of 18: Detail of front entry, Photographer facing West.
- 9 of 18: Detail of East Façade cornice, Photographer facing West.
- 10 of 18: Interior of Sanctuary from choir loft, Photographer facing West.
- 11 of 18: Interior of Sanctuary, Photographer facing West.
- 12 of 18: Interior of Sanctuary, Photographer facing Southwest.
- 13 of 18: Interior, Detail of windows in choir loft, Photographer facing East.
- 14 of 18: Interior of small chapel, Photographer facing Southwest.
- 15 of 18: Interior of Sanctuary, Detail of interior bay with stained-glass windows, Photographer facing North.
- 16 of 18: Interior of Sanctuary, Detail of clearstory stained-glass windows, Photographer facing North.
- 17 of 18: Interior, Detail of window in choir loft stairwell, Photographer facing South.
- 18 of 18: Interior, Detail of original electric fans at rear of sanctuary, Photographer facing East.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

St. Marys Catholic Church, Paragould, Greene County, Arkansas



Google earth

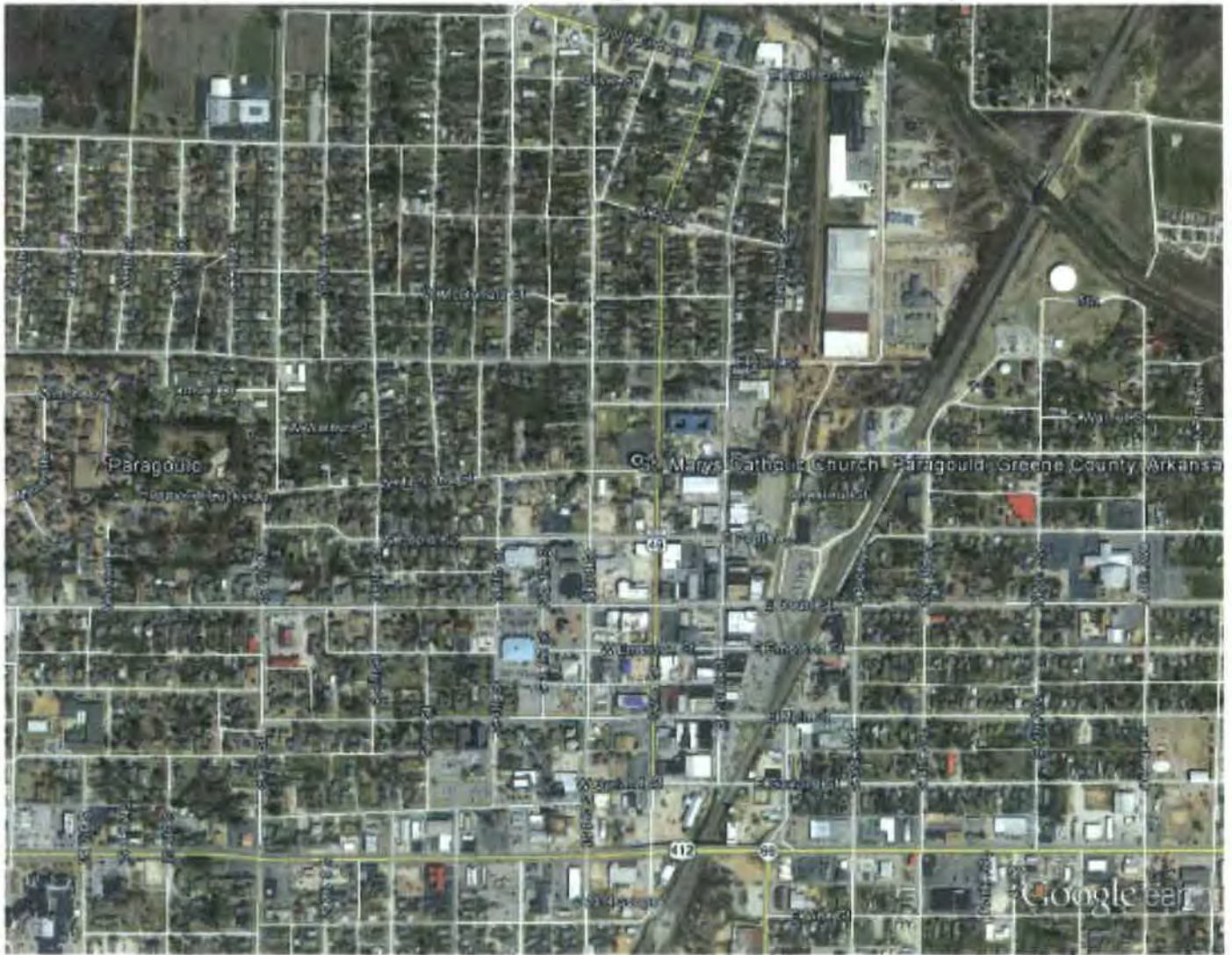


UTM

Z 15 E 726283 N 3993348

NAD83

St. Marys Catholic Church, Paragould, Greene County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

Z 15 E 726283 N 3993348

NAD83





































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: St. Mary's Catholic Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Greene

DATE RECEIVED: 12/12/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/27/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001198

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-27-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Interesting, modern interp of classic
Romanesque Basilica form, done by one of the most influential
designers of the 20th Century at the beginning of his career.
Integrates modern art into design*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Crabtree

DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____

DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/~~N~~ see attached SLR Y/~~N~~

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

December 3, 2014



Mike Beebe
Governor

Martha Miller
Director

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
8th Floor
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

RE: St. Mary's Catholic Church – Paragould, Greene County,
Arkansas

-
- Arkansas Arts Council
 -
 - Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
 -
 - Delta Cultural Center
 -
 - Historic Arkansas Museum
 -
 - Mosaic Templars Cultural Center
 -
 - Old State House Museum
-

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Callie Williams of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Martha Miller
State Historic Preservation Officer

MM:clw

Enclosure



Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program



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