

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAR 19 1986

date entered APR 17 1986

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

1. Name

historic Holy Cross Church and School Complex, Latonia

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 3600 Block of Church Street (See Map II) not for publication

city, town Covington vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Kenton code

3. Classification

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | NA in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | NA 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Social/ Humanitarian |

4. Owner of Property

name Diocese of Covington

street & number 1140 Madison Avenue

city, town Covington vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kenton County Courthouse

street & number 303 Court Place

city, town Covington state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title The Covington Legacy (Church only) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

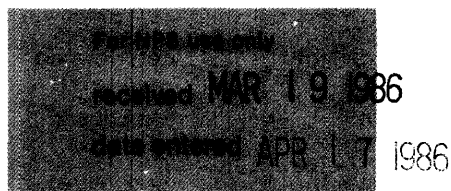
date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Covington

city, town Covington state Kentucky

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7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

Check one

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

original site
 moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Holy Cross Church and School Complex consists of five buildings on both sides of the 3600 block of Church Street in Latonia, a community within the City of Covington (see Maps I, II, III, IV). Covington lies on the southwest banks of the Ohio and Licking Rivers opposite Cincinnati, Ohio, and Newport, Campbell County, Kentucky, respectively. The valley of the Licking, like that of the Ohio, is surrounded by fairly high hills, which circle southeast around the older, downtown portion of Covington, almost approaching the Licking River near 26th Street. Latonia is located in the basin on the west side of the Licking south of this ridge, which is also known as Tunnel Hill (or Buena Vista), as the former Kentucky Central Railroad (now part of the Louisville and Nashville system) running northward from Central Kentucky approaches downtown Covington and eventually Cincinnati through a tunnel near the east end of the ridge.

Traversed as well since the late 1880s by an east-west railway line, and by several former turnpikes since early times, the Latonia area nevertheless consists of a series of gridded residential areas, offset at slightly different angles. Its geographic and commercial center is Ritte's Corner, the intersection of five roads or streets at about 37th Street (this small commercial district is also being nominated separately to the National Register at this time). The main north-south street of the Corner is DeCoursey Avenue, which splits at the Corner to run southeast, with Winston Avenue continuing southwest. Parallel to DeCoursey north of Ritte's Corner one block to the east is Church Street. The 3600 block lies between E. 36th (formerly Franklin) Street and East Southern Avenue, the equivalent of 37th St., which extends east from the Corner several long blocks to the Licking River (where there is a golf course on the bottom-land). East Southern Avenue forms the central axis of one of the older and finer residential neighborhoods of Latonia, which may well be nominated to the National Register as a district in future; between DeCoursey and Lincoln Avenue, one block east of Church Street, is the Williamson Sub-Division (platted perhaps somewhat prematurely in 1873, among the earliest developments of Latonia); east of that is the early 20th-century Dinmore Park Sub-Division, named for an estate located in the area in the late 19th century. Thus, the Holy Cross Church and School Complex is situated near the heart of Latonia, both commercially and residentially. It is the most impressive by far of a series of ecclesiastical establishments in the area: Latonia, around Ritte's Corner, still maintains an unusual number of churches, most thriving, although several represent small congregations of different branches of the same basic denomination (several of these other churches are glimpsed in the photographs of the outskirts of the Ritte's Corner nomination).

There are asphalted parking lots--originally play-grounds and lawns--in front and to the north (on the southwest corner of Church and 36th Streets) of the schools in the proposed district, but they are contained by attractive iron fences with stone coping and piers (see especially photos 2, 9, 10). The entire west side of the block, back to a north-south alley dividing it from the rear of the business properties on the east side of the 3600 block of DeCoursey Avenue in the Ritte's Corner District, is included in this district, as it contains only the 1914 Elementary School, 1930 High School, and 1940 former Sisters' Convent building. The east side of the 3600 block of church Street has the Church itself on the southeast corner of 36th Street, with the Rectory adjacent to the south, but the remainder of the block (back to another north-south alley to the east) contains residences and a compatible commercial-

(continued)

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"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates *

Builder/Architect **

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Holy Cross Church and School Complex, consisting of five handsome buildings dating from the first half of the twentieth century, is in many ways not only the most conspicuous visual and architectural landmark, but the chief religious, educational, and social institution of Latonia, a community within the City of Covington that still retains its own identity for geographic, historic, and socio-economic reasons. Established in 1891 during the period of the early growth of the area and only a short block from Ritte's Corner, which provides many of the other services required by the community, the Holy Cross complex has provided leadership and a symbolic focus for the continuing development of Latonia.

The present church, built in the first decade of the century to replace a modest combined school and church located on the opposite side of the 3600 block of Church Street, is an externally severe but highly impressive stone structure of German Romanesque influence. Dominated by its twin towers topped by bronze domes and characterized by its appearance of combined verticality and solidity, it probably expresses as much the aspirations of Father John B. Reiter, the priest whose energy and vision caused it to be built, and the faith of the budding congregation, as the skill of the little-known Cincinnati architect, Anthony Kunz, Jr., who designed it. The interior, originally described as "in the Roman style," has a surprisingly wide barrel vault, a generous crossing with transepts, and a colossal Corinthian order; the darkly intense non-narrative stained glass, polished pink-red marble revetments, and streamlined mural decoration mainly date from a 1951-52 remodeling, but the impressive space and architectural fabric are basically original.

In 1914-15 a red-brick elementary school, designed by Cincinnati architect Howard McClorey, was constructed on the site of the former church/school, and in 1930 a somewhat more elaborate high school was erected beside it; in 1924 a rectory or priest's house had been built opposite, adjacent to the church. A Sister's Convent(nuns from the Order of Saint Benedict played a considerable support role during the history of the Church), now the Catholic Social Service Bureau serving the Diocese of Covington(which includes Eastern and Central as well as Northern Kentucky), was built in French Provincial manner in 1940. Designed by prominent local architect Edward J. Beiting, it completes the district, although a modern classroom and gymnasium/auditorium facility was constructed in the early 1960s north of the church. The schools and service buildings

(continued on next page)

* Church 1906-1908; Elementary School 1914; High School 1930; Convent 1941; Rectory 1924

** Church: Anthony Kunz, Jr.; Elementary School: Howard McClorey; Convent: Edward J. Beiting;

Rectory: Unknown; High School: Unknown.

Criteria: Although nominated primarily as an architectural and urbanistic complex, the Holy Cross church and School buildings were intended to serve, and continue to serve major, religious, educational, and social/humanitarian purposes for a large and significant portion of the population of the Latonia community of Covington. All the structures included are essentially intact. The church is a highly distinctive, impressive example of its type, the other buildings are well-designed representatives of their, all designed by a series of architects identified closely with the Roman Catholic institutions of Northern Kentucky.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.3 acres

Quadrangle name Covington, Ky.-Ohio

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|------|-----|-----|-----|---|
| A | 116 | 7116 | 1112 | 413 | 214 | 912 | 9 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| B | 116 | 7116 | 215 | 4 | 413 | 214 | 912 | 9 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| C | 116 | 7116 | 215 | 4 | 413 | 214 | 816 | 8 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| D | 116 | 7116 | 118 | 3 | 413 | 214 | 816 | 8 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| E | 116 | 7116 | 118 | 3 | 413 | 214 | 810 | 7 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| F | 116 | 7116 | 111 | 2 | 413 | 214 | 719 | 7 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| G | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| H | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Walter E. Langsam, Historical Surveyor

organization City of Covington

date May 1984; revised Feb., 1986

street & number 303 Court Place

telephone (506) 292-2111

city or town Covington

state Kentucky

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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 11, 1986

For NPS use only

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

James M. McPherson
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/17/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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residential building (see Photo 1); these would be appropriate components of the suggested East Southern Avenue residential district, but are not being nominated at this time as part of the Holy Cross thematic complex. Northwest of 36th and church are more turn-of-the-century dwellings, as well as the totally remodelled former Latonia Christian Church; northeast of the intersection is the recent Holy Cross School Building, a low brick structure somewhat integrated into the more modest residential neighborhood around it, but not visually or chronologically compatible to the church opposite (see a glimpse at left, Photo 3). On the southeast corner of E. Southern and Church Street is the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, with additional residences around to the south, east, and west; the last, some with commercial use, serve as a transition to the Ritte's Corner commercial area beyond (see Photo 13 for the relationship of the two districts along the north side of E. Southern Avenue).

Holy Cross Church itself, with its tall twin stone towers, is a visual landmark of central Latonia (see Ritte's Corner nomination, Photos 1 and 10, for instance) and visible as well from the surrounding hills and highways on both sides of the Licking River. In scale, verticality, material, and the relative austerity of its surfaces in which masonry predominates, the church stands out not only within the proposed district, but also in the entire community, as befits its symbolic role for the large and prominent local parish. The adjacent brick Rectory harmonizes with the residences to the south (a mixture of red and buff brick and frame dwellings), and the two older schools and convent on the opposite side of the block share a very similar scale, material, setback, and stylistic modesty. They also carry on the scale and to some extent the materials of the adjacent commercial district, especially as they are set back against the alley to the west. There are fine trees and other plantings around the former convent, the rectory, and the church, with smaller trees planted along the sidewalks around the parking lots as well.

Holy Cross Church is set fairly close to the sidewalks to the north and west (Photos 1, 3, 4; also Illus. V), with the rectory close to the south and a parking lot at the rear to the east (Photo 6). It is a large and tall cross-shaped stone sanctuary designed in what might be considered a German Romanesque style, although the interior was described, presumably by the architect himself, as "of Roman style" at the time (Ky. Post, April 13, 1906, p.2). The slightly projecting twin towers, 110 feet high, flank the gabled west front, which encloses a circular "rose" window over the three round-arched entrance portals. The nave of the church has three bays behind the towers, articulated on the outside by slender and shallow stepped stone buttresses (which probably have a structural function as well). The transepts rise the full height of the main roof ridge, extend a considerable distance beyond the nave walls, and are almost solid masonry except for large round-arched windows on the north and south faces. The chancel continues the main roof-ridge line, with a flat gabled masonry rear elevation plus a smaller semi-circular stone apse whose semi-conical roof fits the angle of the gable above; the apse rises from a low one-story rectangular vestry wing that runs across and slightly beyond the sides of the chancel. A square chimney with a stone arcade at the top rises at the south side of the apse against the chancel east wall and punctuates the rear skyline. The bronze crosses atop the towers and four main gables also enliven the otherwise somewhat compact and heavy massing.

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The front towers, however, have a surprisingly light and soaring quality, partly because of the tall open round-arches of the main stage of the towers above the course marking their diminution from the square bases (whose surfaces above the ground floor are subtly articulated to suggest setback corners) to the octagonal upper stages. These octagons have much smaller corners than their main faces, a proportion that extends through the elegantly curved roofs of the towers and their diminutive louvered bronze lanterns, although the lanterns' own tiny domes are curved and topped by the molded bases of the crosses.

Again, the dominant effect of the exterior is of solidity, with a very small proportion of openings to masonry surface--somewhat in contrast to the effect of the interior, where the windows are more prominent although still embedded in masses of wall and ceiling surface. The walls are entirely of a light gray limestone suggesting "Kentucky marble" with hints of yellow in some blocks. The foundations, horizontal trim courses, and copings are of uniform thickness, but the main surface of the walls is laid with relatively small rectangular blocks without coursing, with very narrow joints indeed. There appear to be some slightly deeper or higher large stones near the base, with those at the top of the walls flatter, but this may be an illusion; there is a slight suggestion of quoins at the corners as well, and the voussoirs of the arches are regular. The effect of the surface as a whole, however, is of tapestry-like small blocks in vast quantity. The building and its decorative elements are in fact much larger as one gets close to it (especially being set so close to the sidewalks) than it appears from a distance.

There is also a pristine geometric aspect to the exterior, reinforced by the regular repetition of triangular gables, and rectangular shallow recessed panels between the stories of the west front and towers. "Blind" Greek crosses are also set between the buttresses over the round-arched windows on the sides of the nave and chancel, and the circular rose window appears to be exactly centered in a generous square masonry surface over the rather lower entrance story. Also contributing to the effect of solidity is the relative shallowness of the windows, the doors, and the articulating courses, panels, and surrounds. The windows are set almost as close to the exterior surface as they could be, in contrast to many masonry buildings, especially from the turn-of-the-century medieval revival. The smaller windows and the main entrances on the west front of Holy Cross Church are set just perceptibly deeper, perhaps to suggest the thickness required at the base of masonry construction; or perhaps it could be said that the windows are in the same plane as those above and the lower wall surfaces project slightly. In fact, the recessed panels above the first floor seem to be on the same plane as the second-story surface above, and similarly the upper panels correspond to the parapet at gable-height. Further minimal recessions occur at the corners of the tower, as mentioned above, and flanking the central square between the towers.

The front--unlike the sides and rear, which are almost completely unarticulated except by the buttresses--also has horizontal delineation: regular, slightly ribbed stone courses of the foundations; bands above and below both sets of panels, which themselves emphasize the horizontal; and a triple course corbelled back at the base of the central and tower gables. It should also be noted that the gables are not especially high on the front, although they are steeper on the transepts and perhaps equilateral at the rear.

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There are also shallow arched machicolations under the tower domes (and on the chimney). The stone arches around the openings have regular voussoirs within the planes of the walls, neatly defined at the outer edges and graduated with the size of the openings. Only the three arches of the main entrance have a hint of capitals consisting of raised stone blocks at impost level (see Photo 4). The stone tracery of the tower belfrey openings, with pairs of tall, narrow round arches divided by unfluted stone attenuated Tuscan columns with roundels above, provides the only ashlar masonry and carving on the entire exterior. The main windows have similar, but simpler tracery, with a cross inscribed in the rose window around a central small circle. The front doors, of vertical oak boards with handsome wrought-iron hinges, supply the only warmth to the outside. There is no porch or even platform, as the concrete front steps rise directly to the doors from the sidewalk.

The main roofs are slate, with imbricated graduated slate on the main domes of the towers.

The "Roman" interior provides a very different effect from the outside of the church (Photos 7,8). It is dominated by the broad vaults of the ceiling, entirely unsuspected from outside except perhaps in the repetition of semi-circular forms. A great feeling of breadth, openness, rhythmic repetition, and warmth of coloring is obtained by the current decorative scheme, which retains the essential elements of the original decor, but with the substitution of a polished red porphyry wainscot or dado, which is fairly low at the sides and rear but rises almost to the impost level of the pilasters below the high windows of the apse. These vertically striated but solid and unarticulated marble surfaces, as well as the bold geometric, almost Art Deco treatment of the current ceiling and wall decoration, contrast somewhat with the classical Corinthian capitals of the colossal pilasters and the molded cornices and other low-relief trim that remain from the original scheme.

The latest major redecoration occurred in 1951-52. The large broad main altar was set effectively against the porphyry surface of the apse; the impressive ciborium echoes almost exactly the form of the exterior tower lanterns (Photo 7). The statues of kneeling angels on pedestals that flank the main altar also enrich the rhythms, relating to those of the Holy Family in the dark round arched niches over the side altars, which are within the main level of the chancel. The polished terrazzo floors laid in a diagonal checkerboard pattern in the nave and transepts and the chevron-patterned marble stripes within the chancel continue the bold geometry. The only Gothic elements are the altar rail (not original), which consists of quatrefoil openings in circles between plain pedestals, and the hanging lanterns.

The rear or west end of the auditorium is perhaps even more rhythmic than the east end (Photo 8). The balcony over the fairly shallow narthex curves suavely out in the center in front of the organ, whose pipes rise into the circle of the rose window. Above the balcony railing, consisting of small blind round arches, are three great arches. They rise from the side-wall pilasters and two square piers; these correspond to the triple division of the west front, with smaller arches at the base of the towers and a huge round arch rising the full height of the ceiling and seeming to radiate from the rose window; the side arches also seem to frame the round-arched large windows in the second

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story of the towers. The wall under the balcony is similarly divided, by double pilasters whose stylized capitals continue the pattern of the concave cove under the projecting balcony floor; unadorned round-arched openings are punched out of the wall adjoining the pilasters, and the central entrance, with double doors and a transom in the tympanum, is differentiated mainly by wall-painting. Even the panels of the doors are round-arched.

From inside, of course, the openings appear to be rather deeply set, with three-dimensional tracery, and the windows themselves are richly colored stained glass in a somewhat modern vein. Most of the windows, in deep reds, greens, and blues, with gold accents, are non-representational except for emblems in mandorlas in the nave, small scenes in panels in the high chancel and apse windows, and splendid elongated hieratic figures in the large triple windows on the transepts, suggesting the late Romanesque. The windows in the balcony stage of the tower feature golden angels with dazzling yellows, and the west rose window has darker, more saturated colors by contrast. The red and white windows of the narthex and tower stairs are purely geometric, with rows of concentric circles.

The broad and relatively short interior space is divided horizontally by the original entablature, which is rather narrow, with delicate classical modillions and a dentil course. Below are the colossal Corinthian pilasters at every corner, negative and positive, and facing perpendicularly at the crossing corners and chancel arch with re-entrant corners. The fluting of these pilasters has been accentuated in the current color scheme by grouped vertical bands of tan and cream. Below the low window-sill level is now the marble dado which projects to form bases for the pilasters.

Above the main entablature rises the huge ceiling, which is divided into curved and flat planes. It consists of barrel vaults divided down the center by a flat panel from the balcony to the chancel wall, although the narrower (but still wide) transepts lack the central panel. The bays are distinguished by shallow ribs that cross from pilaster to pilaster; similar ribs also frame the main arches and define the central panels. These ribs have alternating circles and squares in low relief, which originally served as sockets for electric light-bulbs (see Illus. VI and description below). The crossing groins have more delicate ribs. The original articulation of the apse walls and vault is now missing, however, as the 1951-52 remodelling left a continuous curved surface with unmolded, if deepset, window openings. Moreover, the polished marble surface below is totally unmodulated, except for its integral textured look.

There are handsome aedicular triple confessionals at the ends of the transepts under the large north and south windows. A somewhat exotic note, evoking Spanish Renaissance, Baroque, or Colonial Revival preferences, is the series of Stations of the Cross framed with complex curved and squared moldings that perhaps originally echoed the tracery of the first rose window, as the re-entrant corners of the crossing and chancel arch echo the recessed planes at the exterior corners of the towers.

The overall color scheme of the interior in its present form is ocher and gray, warmed by gold highlights and the variegated pink-red of the marble dado, with narrow bands of maroon in the upper apse decoration. The three bright white altars stand out by contrast. The terrazzo main floors are light and dark gray with pinkish borders, and dark green

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bands in the chancel. The narthex or vestibule across the front is fairly plain, with a patterned ceiling-cove like that under the balcony. Under the northwest tower is the small Baptistry and stairs to the balcony, both of which have handsome wrought-iron gates. Under the southwest tower is the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes, remodelled with a darker marble base for the traditional statues (perhaps removed from the main sanctuary when it was redecorated). The doors and staircase are of light oak, and the hardware is fine brass cast in a Sullivan-like Art nouveau pattern. The pews, perhaps replaced, have been bleached.

The interior of the church as illustrated in 1916 (pp.4,22; Illus.VI) was a good deal plainer than later, lacking wall paintings altogether. The main altar was set back against the apse rear wall, of course, with the central arch above it blind (i.e. with no window). An interesting feature, characteristic of the period, was the use of bare electric light-bulbs to outline the entablature and ribs, including the ribs that divided the three bays of the apse vertically in the original scheme. (The 1916 brochure also shows the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes in its original form)

The 1941 brochure (p. 6; Illustration VI) shows the interior in perhaps its most elaborate form, with the original architectural details such as the arch and rib ornament, and most of the wall-surface of the chancel and apse, enriched with color and pattern. Exciting angels with trumpets were portrayed in the spandrels of the chancel arch, with circular panels including God the Father with outstretched arms at the crossing; a variety of statues stood on prominent pillars and elsewhere. The central arch of the apse was still blind, but filled with a painted scene. By this time the light-bulbs had been removed and the series of fine modified Gothic lanterns installed; they seem to emphasize the longitudinal axis by continuing past the transepts from the nave into the chancel. (It is possible that the rather similar lanterns at the main entrance were replaced when these were installed, but at least the wrought-iron standards and chains appear on the early photographs of the exterior.)

Even the present scheme of interior decoration seems to have been modified recently, as views dated shortly after the 1951-52 remodelling show many more striped patterns in the vault of the apse, for instance. The entire church, both inside and out, with the exception of some slight water damage on parts of the entablature, seems to be in excellent condition, like the other buildings being nominated.

The Holy Cross Elementary School, built in 1914 according to an inscribed cornerstone beside the south entrance (left in Photo 11), is a standard two-story brick school building of the period (see also Photos 2 and 9; Illus.VIII). The plan is basically E-shaped with short projecting ends and a barely projecting center pavilion, flanked by the two main entrances in the links; the three projecting pavilions have triple windows and the links double; grouped pairs of windows reflecting the layout of the classrooms are on the sides and rear, which is set directly along the alley.

The first floor is raised above a high basement clad in regular courses of rough stone,

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but the front entrances are set directly at ground-level, now the asphalt surface of the parking lot. The watertable is ashlar, as are the elegant classical entrances with handsome stone consoles under solid Grecian pediments. A recessed segmental-arched stone plaque in the raised central parapet is inscribed "Holy Cross School." The parapets on the end pavilions are pedimental, with small stone diamonds in the center. The plain brick parapets rise above a shallow dentillated brick frieze, and dentil-like headers also define the coping. There is still a bronze cross over the central parapet, and there were originally also flagstaffs over the side parapets (see Illus. VIII). The dark red wire-brick surfaces are varied by buff brick "quoins" that link first- and second-story bands of windows, with narrow stone "Tudor labels" over the stair-windows above the entrances. The red brick panels between the upper and lower windows are trimmed with brick panelling and stone lozenges. The oak double doors appear to be original. Transoms over most of the one-over-one-pane sash windows have been filled in.

The 1930 High School Building is both larger and more elaborate (Photos 2, 10, 12). Also set back along the alley, it projects considerably farther in a deep rectangle. It has two front entrance towers, each flanked by classrooms with triple windows; there is in effect no central feature, except for a narrow stone-shouldered buttress-strip like those at the corners and between rooms on the sides. This building too has two main stories, above a high concrete-faced basement. The entrances in the faces of the "towers" are raised a few steps above the surface of the play-ground/parking lot, with brick antepodia. The entrances are emphasized by means of stepped buttresses, a narrow stone course that rises over the wide segmental-arched entrance, and a stepped parapet with diagonal vertical bricks ribs under crowning sculpted eagles. The windows, which also appear to have transoms, presumably because the ceilings inside have been lowered, have flush stone ashlar lintels with raised edges suggesting Tudor labels. The buttress strips have raised edges and small square blocks at the ends which contribute to the rather spotty effect of the trim. The entrance doors under original transoms have been modernized.

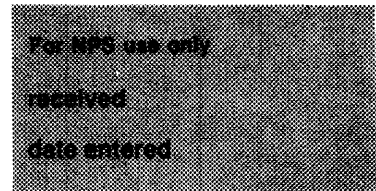
The 1942 former Sisters' Convent is a three-story brick building in "French chateau" style according to an contemporary reference, but actually has a somewhat French Provincial character (Photos 2, 13; Illus. IX). It is basically L-shaped but with a slightly lower gabled south wing balancing the full-height wing at the west end of the north side. It has well-laid pinkish brick walls with regular brick quoins and an upright brick cornice under the compact hipped slate roof. The eight-(or six-) over-six-pane sash windows lack lintels or jackarches. The gable of the south wing has stone coping. Small circular dormers on the roof echo the concave metal roof of the rather charming little east entrance, with its iron supports; this is flanked by windows with long shutters. (See also p. 8 below.)

The 1924 Rectory (or Priest's House) (Photos 1, 14, rear 5, 6; Illus. X) is a two-and-a-half-story, dark red wire-brick residence on rough stone foundations with a slight Arts and Crafts and/or Colonial Revival flavor. An almost cubic rectangle, it has a hipped slate roof with hipped-roof dormers projecting from the apex. The front entrance pavilion projects forward and incorporates the dormer to suggest a low three-story tower, with a low-pedimented entrance porch that has horizontal stone banding on the square brick pillars at the base. Windows are grouped in twos and threes, with attractive bevelled-glass panels in the front door and sidelights. Interior woodwork is heavy but handsome.

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The former Sisters' Convent Building on the northwest corner of Church Street and East Southern Avenue was built less than fifty years ago (1942) and therefore has to be considered Non-Contributing in the technical sense. Nevertheless, it is visually and historically an integral part of the nominated complex, and so may be considered contributing in a more general sense, although not of exceptional importance in its own right. The west side of the 3600 block of Church Street belongs entirely to Holy Cross Parish and is devoted to the activities of the church and the Diocese. The scale of the buildings, their setback, and the enclosure by a wall-fence unify the block visually (see Photos 2, 13).

The Convent building was conceived and constructed in response to the growth of the school facilities, then entirely staffed by nuns of the Benedictine Order; most but not all of the sisters at the convent taught at the adjacent schools. They had formerly lived in the church-school complex, and later in an adapted residence; this was the first structure in the complex devoted specifically to their needs, and it was an unusually large convent for the time. As the demand for and availability of nuns as teachers decreased, however, the facilities became too large and expensive for the order to maintain; three sisters (two of them still teachers) now occupy a residence in the 3500 block of Church Street opposite the new high school. Early in 1979, the convent, which includes a chapel, was converted into the offices of the Catholic Social Service Bureau, a diocesan function reflecting changing emphases in the local diocese, as elsewhere. Although no longer confined to the Holy Cross Parish, the Bureau serves it as well, providing a broad range of social-humanitarian services.

Finally, as indicated above, the Convent is not only architecturally harmonious with the other buildings of Holy Cross, but provides a thematic link in the series of prominent local architects "of Catholic persuasion" who have contributed to the architectural development of the Holy Cross complex.

Contributing Buildings: 4

Non-Contributing: 1

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within the district have a combined Arts and Crafts and traditional architectural character that effectively integrates them both with the adjacent Ritte's Corner commercial area and with the mostly early 20th-century residential neighborhood (sprinkled with Protestant churches) in which the Holy Cross complex is set. The congregation is still prosperous, as reflected by the superb condition and maintenance of the church and plant, and still active in the community, as the renewal of the school and social facilities indicates. Few modern institutions so convincingly represent the nature and growth of their surroundings as the Holy Cross complex.

HISTORY

The present community of Latonia within the City of Covington developed in the late 19th century around the river, railway, and highway systems. Originally known as "The Flats," it is located in the bottomland on the west side of the Licking River Valley south of downtown Covington. The area was an informal governmental unit known as Milldale (with Rosedale to the south) until the Town of Latonia was incorporated in 1899. Latonia in turn was annexed to Covington in 1909.

Although there was some prior development around the transportation systems (the Kentucky Central Railroad was run north-south through the basin in the early 1850s, connecting the Blue Grass region of central Kentucky to Covington by rail for the first time) and several mills and distilleries were located along the Licking River and Banklick Creek in what is now the Latonia area in the mid-19th century, there was probably no real residential development until the early 1870s, when the Louisville, Lexington and Cincinnati line was laid east-west, crossing the Licking River and the Kentucky Central line about 35th Street.

In 1873 the Williamson Sub-Division was platted. This consisted of two bands two blocks wide, one running north from East Southern Avenue east of DeCoursey, the other extending northeast at a tangent from DeCoursey at Union Street toward the Licking River. This seems to have been the location of some of the earliest residential development in Latonia. Several early structures in that Sub-Division perhaps remain along Church Street, particularly in the 3400 and 3500 blocks north of Holy Cross. By 1883 there were only a few dwellings in the 3600 block of Church Street.

The few Roman Catholic families living in the Latonia area in the 1880s attended St. Augustine Church at 19th and Holman Streets in what was known as Central Covington (now the Peaselburg neighborhood of Covington).

In 1887 two local citizens began to solicit subscriptions for a church and school for the thirty-odd Catholic families then in the area. They were John N. Weber, proprietor of the saloon and store on the northeast corner of East Southern and DeCoursey Avenues that gave Ritte's Corner its earlier name of Weber's Corner (see Ritte's Corner National Register nomination form; the building is now 3634 DeCoursey) and Peter Keller, probably the proprietor of Keller's Hall (now 3629 DeCoursey). They were refused permission to pursue their intentions at that time, however, by Bishop Camillus Maes of the Diocese of Covington, who feared

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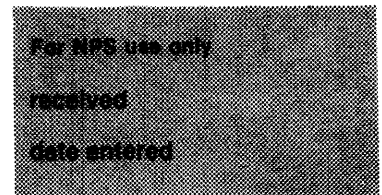
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that a division would cause St. Augustine's additional hardship in its current financial difficulties. When these were resolved two years later (in 1889), the bishop, who was also responsible for the erection of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption at 12th Street and Madison Avenue in downtown Covington (listed on the National Register July 20, 1973), gave his support to the proposal.

The founder of the Latonia parish was the Reverend Paul Abeln, pastor of the St. Augustine's Church. On December 26, 1889, the name sanctioned for the new parish and church was "Holy Cross Church." A site was bought on the West side of Church (then called Longworth) Street in what is now the 3600 block and the cornerstone for the new combined church and school building was laid on August 24, 1890. The first mass was said in the building Christmas day 1890, even before the pews were installed. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Covington on May 3, 1891. 1891 is the date celebrated by the congregation as its founding, as reflected in the 1916 Silver Jubilee and 1941 publications.

Many of the prominent early residents of the Latonia area were members of the Holy Cross building site and construction committees, and as the original wardens and trustees. Both the laying of the cornerstone and the dedication ceremonies were community-wide events, perceived at the time as symbolizing the rapid progress of the town in the previous two decades. Characteristically, the German sermon at the dedication was followed by an address in English by Bishop Maes.

The progress of the construction is recounted in the 1916 Silver Jubilee brochure in some detail. The original building is shown in old photographs (its architect and architecture are discussed below). Seventy feet long and forty-three wide, it contained two large classrooms upstairs and four living rooms on the first floor, for the use of the pastor and later the nuns.

In February 1891 a school for eighty pupils opened in the original building with a single male teacher, but in August of that year, with over one hundred students, it was put in charge of three Benedictine sisters from St. Walburg's convent on Twelfth Street in Covington, with various supplementary facilities as required. In 1901 a nearby candy store ten by fourteen feet in dimensions was moved to the school-yard and became known as the "High School"! A two-story house was later converted to a residence for the sisters, so that additional space in the original building could be freed for schoolrooms.

In 1892 the original parsonage was erected on the southwest corner of 36th and Church Streets, the pastor having had to vacate his original quarters at the rear of the church-school building for the Benedictine teachers. Built by Matthew Felten, one of the original members of the congregation and a successful Latonia builder, the two-and-a-half-story brick residence was designed by Daniel Seger, a Covington architect who also designed the rectory for St. Aloysius Church in the West Side about this time (see below).

The first resident pastor of Holy Cross was the Reverend B. A. Baumeister, appointed in December 1890. He was pastor until 1895, remaining during the years of national

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financial and economic depression that began in 1893. After two years under the Reverend J.D. Meinzer, the congregation, then consisting of seventy-two families, was taken over in 1898 by the Reverend John B. Reiter. It was he who led the parish during its period of maximum growth and the construction of both the present magnificent church and the 1914 elementary school building, the latter on the site of the original church-school. (On Reiter and Holy Cross, See Kerr, III, 114-15.)

The early years of Father Reiter's tenure coincided with the building boom that hit Latonia at the turn of the century, continuing after the annexation by Covington in 1909. The old church soon became too small for the burgeoning congregation, and with considerable foresight and great effort Father Reiter succeeded in persuading the parish to procure additional property on the east side of the 3600 block of Church Street at the southeast corner of E. 36th (then Franklin) Street, on which the present sanctuary was constructed in 1906-1908. A property one hundred fifty feet square, containing two frame dwellings, was acquired in 1903. In 1902 this block had been the first in the new Town of Latonia to be "improved" by the macadamization of the street and the laying down of sidewalks, at considerable expense to the congregation.

The cornerstone of the new Holy Cross Church was laid on November 22, 1906, by Bishop Maes. It was built of stone-clad steel, with a seating capacity of almost a thousand persons, an extraordinary achievement for so young a congregation. The achievement of this goal is all the more remarkable in that many members of the congregation were newly married and in fairly modest circumstances, and also building their own homes at the same time. The scale, splendor, and daring conception of the church can only be appreciated in the context of Latonia as it then was: The community was in the midst of a real building boom, but with only incipient city utilities and, to judge from the few old views of the Holy Cross complex, a dearth of trees and other plantings. Still dominant on the Latonia horizon (except for a high-rise home for the elderly on E. 39th Street), the church building must have been an amazingly impressive sight when new.

The designer of the church was Anthony Kunz, Jr., a little-known Roman Catholic architect of Cincinnati (see below), and the builders and the size of their contracts are listed in detail in the 1916 booklet (p. 17). The church building is essentially intact, although it has been gradually furnished and remodelled over the decades, responding to anniversary occasions, such as the Golden Jubilee celebrated in 1941 and such church events as Vatican II, and reflecting the prosperity and/or generosity of the congregation (see below).

After the construction of the new church the old facility became an auditorium for the school, but even this was not sufficient for the growing school, which had almost three hundred pupils through the fifth grade in 1910. By 1913 there were over three hundred fifty students and the congregation, in spite of being burdened both as a whole by the debt for the new church and individually as home-buyers (usually through building and loan associations), decided that it would be necessary to erect a school building. Fortunately, an anonymous donor made it

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possible to do so. Howard McGlorey of Cincinnati was chosen as architect (see below), and the Carl Brothers of Covington were the major contractors (for a detailed list, with costs, see the 1916 brochure, pp. 35-35). Ground was broken June 23, 1914, and the building was dedicated on April 5, 1915, again by Bishop Maes, shortly before his death.

The school was considered modern for its time, with nine classrooms for the eight grades plus a new "Commercial department"; only three classrooms used each staircase, and there were adequate facilities in the raised basement, with special attention paid to lighting, heating and ventilation throughout. The original church-school building, just south of the new elementary school, was converted into a gymnasium as well as an auditorium and served until 1930, when the high school was built on the site of the old building. Its architect has not been identified, nor the exact dates of its construction and dedication.

In the meantime, the present rectory or priest's house was constructed in 1924 beside the church on the site of the former frame convent, and the nuns moved into the former 1892 rectory on the southwest corner of Church and 36th. In 1940 they moved again, into the elegant French Provincial-style building designed by Edward J. Beiting of Newport (see below) on the northwest corner of East Southern and Church, the site of the former Bird family residence (see the Ritte's Corner nomination on the Bird Building, 103 West Southern Avenue at Winston Avenue). The convent, now used as the Diocesan Catholic Social Service Bureau, also contained a chapel.

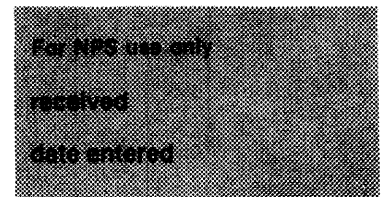
In the depths of the depression, the much-loved and modest yet astoundingly effective Father Reiter died of pneumonia after thirty-four years of devoted service at Holy Cross. He was succeeded shortly afterward by the Reverend Louis G. Fey, who assisted with the development and furnishing of the high school, and largely cleared the congregation's considerable outstanding debt before undertaking the new construction of the convent and the thorough refurbishing of the church in preparation for the Golden Jubilee, celebrated in 1941. The sanctuary was again remodelled in 1951-52, with the addition of marble wainscot and a general simplification of the fresco and other decoration in a "moderne" or Art Deco manner suggestive of the work of the prolific Cincinnati Roman Catholic architecture firm of Crowe and Schulte, who were also responsible for the modernization of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains in Cincinnati about that time.

The construction of the new High School north of the Church and the conversion of the former convent to a social services bureau have reflected more recent changes in the mission and direction of the church, without essentially altering its vital role in the community. The physical structures have remained adaptable to modern needs, and have been well maintained, although there is at present a desire for improvements to the school as well as the church, within the context of their historic character.

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ARCHITECTURE

The architectural history of the Holy Cross Church and School Complex, including the original buildings, provides a cross-section of local architectural practice, especially among the Roman Catholic community.

The designer of the original 1889-90 church-school building (later used as the school's auditorium and gymnasium before it was replaced about 1930 by the High School Building) was E.H. Ashley, a hitherto almost unknown Covington architect. He is listed in the Covington City Directories as an architect at various addresses (including finally St. Elizabeth's Hospital) from about 1874 to 1906-07. The only other known buildings designed by Ashley (listed as Ashley & Leroy) are several matching residences with a delicate Neo-Classical flavor still at 9, 11, 13, and 15 East 15th Street in Covington, for James M. Clarkson about 1896. The builder was A.J. Craig, like the original Holy Cross.

Old photographs (1916 brochure, pp. 14 and 64) indicate that the original Holy Cross Church, School, and Rectory was a tall two-story brick building with stone trim, including shouldered buttresses, keystones, and lintels. The building had a frame belfry on the front of the roof, but this seems to have been removed by 1916 (probably when the new church was completed.)

A good deal has been discovered in the last two years about Daniel Seger, the architect of the original Holy Cross Rectory or Parsonage (1916 brochure, p. 14). Thanks to two notices in The Kentucky Post (March 18, 1893, p. 6; February 26, 1896) and a few references to individual buildings, a sense of his major works and their character can be gained, especially in downtown Covington (see the National Register District, listed June 9, 1983). He designed the recently renovated Eilerman Building and the much-altered Pieper's Block/Citizens' Bank Building on the northeast and southeast corners of Pike and Madison Streets, respectively; the nearby Fire Station No. 1, on W. 6th Street (now a restaurant); and the Phoenix Furniture Company building formerly at 4th and Russell Streets. Among residences he is known to have designed the villa of John R. Coppin in Lakeside Park in Latonia (site of the 9th District School and playground); "a handsome Swiss cottage of five rooms in Rosedale" (the southeastern section of Latonia) for Fred Schmitz (probably on Glenn Avenue); and his own home at 1549 Holman Street (altered); and it seems likely on stylistic grounds that many dwellings in the West side (such as 611 W. 7th Street and many of the houses in the 800 block of Willard and Greer Streets erected about 1890) were designed by Seger, possibly with the assistance of William Rabe (see Johnson, III, 1221), another local architect trained under Seger in the 1890s.

Among Seger's other Catholic commissions were the "Catholic Orphans' Home, Lexington Pike," possibly an annex for the housing of boys added in 1892 to the St. John Orphanage on Dixie Highway in Fort Mitchell, Kenton Co. (see Ryan, Diocese, p. 434).

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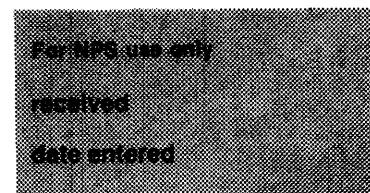
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Seger also designed the impressive Queen-Anne Style Parsonage for St. Aloysius' Church in the West Side, at 716 Bakewell Street, which survives although with composition-stone over the original brick surfaces. The original Holy Cross Parsonage by Seger seems to have been quite large but less elaborate than St. Aloysius, combining T-plan and pyramidal-roof aspects.

Surprisingly, less is known about the career and works of Anthony Kunz, Jr., the architect of the impressive new Holy Cross Church, than about Seger. Kunz seems to have practiced in Cincinnati in the first quarter of the twentieth century, mainly for Catholic clients. His St. Joseph's Church in Crescent Springs, Kenton County, still exists at 2470 Lorraine Court; curiously, it resembles a smaller version of the original Holy Cross far more than the present Holy Cross. Kunz & Beck are listed as the architects of the 1927-28 "New School" of the former St. Joseph Church, now known as the Bishop Howard Non-Graded School, at 1124 Scott Boulevard, Covington.

The 1914-15 Holy Cross Elementary School Building was designed by Howard McGlorey, another Cincinnati architect who specialized in Catholic commissions. Aside from a number of residences that have been identified from the "Building Notes" in The Kentucky Post in the mid-1910s, McGlorey designed the St. Augustine's School at 19th and Jefferson Streets in Covington; St. Vincent de Paul Church and School, Clifton, Newport; repairs to the former St. Boniface Church in Ludlow; St. Francis de Sales Parish House in Cote Brillante, Newport; Blessed Sacrament Church, Fort Mitchell (part of the St. John's Orphanage complex mentioned above) and the Latonia Baptist Church on E. 38th Street. These known commissions seem to range through semi-modern and traditional styles of the period, from bungalows and stripped Classical to the Neo-Classical Baptist Church. The Holy Cross School too seems to combine an Arts & Crafts feeling, with its wire brick and low parapets, and a more classical sensibility, especially in the elegantly simple entrances.

The architect of the 1930 High School is not known. Edward J. Beiting, Sr. (1894-1968), who designed the former Holy Cross Convent building, was an architect and builder from Newport trained at the Ohio Mechanics Institute before World War I. He designed and built a combined school and gymnasium for the Corpus Christi parish in Newport, and was the contractor for several important Catholic churches in Northern Kentucky designed by Edward J. Schulte (1890-1975; Crowe & Schulte from 1921 to 1935, with Robert E. Crowe, 1881-1944), a prominent Cincinnati architect; these included St. Thomas' in Fort Thomas, St. Stephen's in Newport, and St. Joseph's in Cold Springs, all in Campbell County. Beiting also built St. Henry's in Elsmere, Boone County, designed by McClorey (both Beiting's and McClorey's sons are still in practice in Cincinnati and Newport, respectively). Until at least World War II there tended to be a distinction in the greater Cincinnati area, including Northern Kentucky, between "Catholic" architects, especially of parochial schools, and other practitioners, particularly in the case of commissions for the public school systems; the former group is well represented in the Holy Cross complex.

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Holy Cross

For understanding of the history and development of the Latonia Community the writer is indebted to the late Howard Litzler of Latonia and Joseph Gastright of Covington, as well as Michael J. Hammons, also of Covington, who supplied much useful background information as well as invaluable copies of the Holy Cross Parish brochures (1916 and 1941), not otherwise available. Father Joseph Brink of Holy Cross provided information and photographs of the interior, and a notice in the parish newsletter produced an interesting selection of materials from a parishioner. The resources of the Kenton County Public Library, Covington, were useful. City directories and Sanborn Insurance maps have been utilized as well.

"Holy Cross Church." Covington, 1941; incorrectly referred to in the text above as "Sesquicentennial"

Kerr, Judge Charles, ed. History of Kentucky. 5 vols. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1922.

Ryan, the Rev. Paul E. History of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. Covington: The Diocese of Covington, 1954.

"Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 1891-1916, A Brief Historical Sketch of Holy Cross Parish, Covington, Ky., Latonia Station." Covington, 1916.

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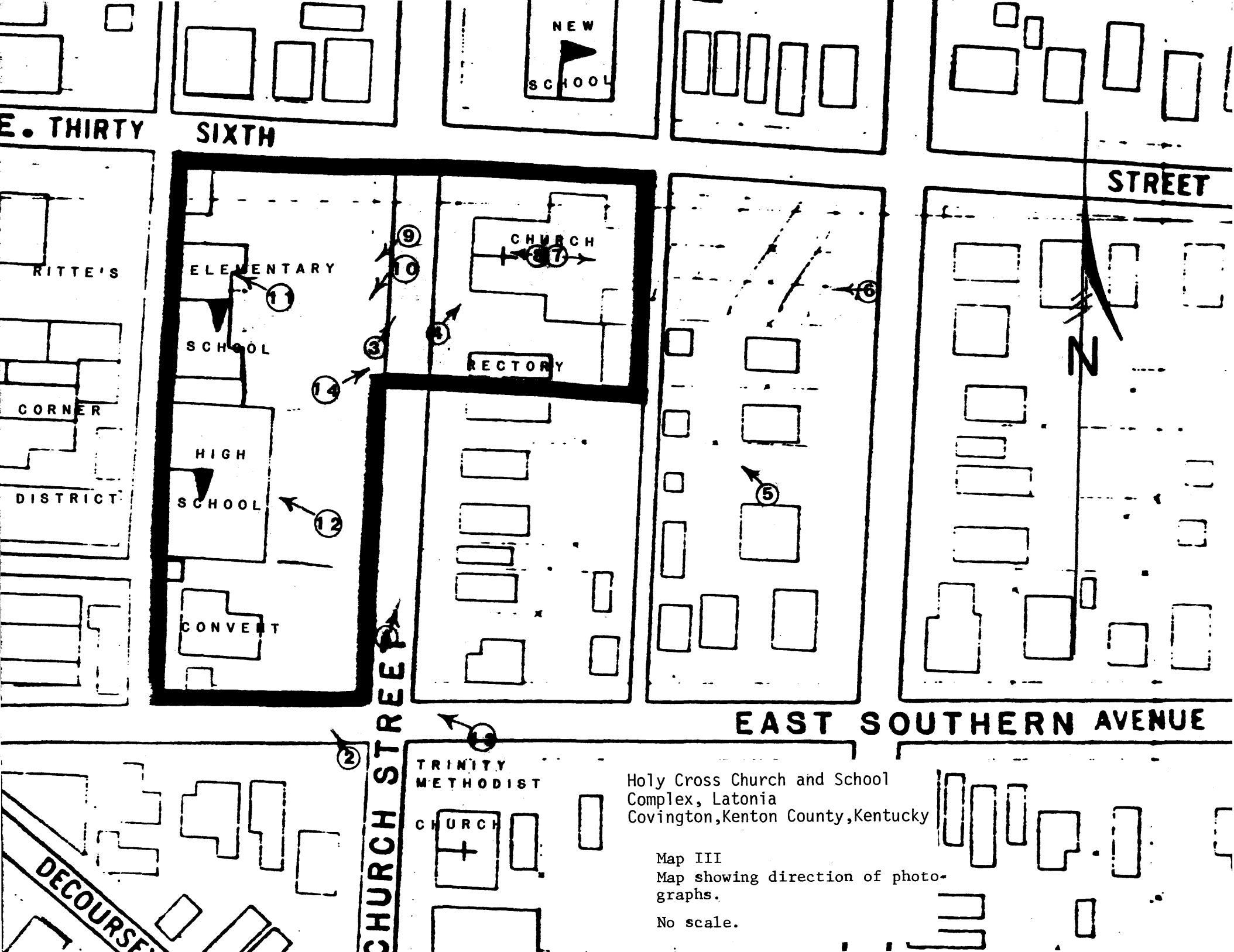
HOLY CROSS CHURCH AND SCHOOL COMPLEX, LATONIA

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Beginning at a point, said point being the intersection of the South Right-of-way line of Thirty-Sixth Street and the East Right-of-way line of the first alley East of Decoursey Avenue; thence along the South Right-of-way line of Thirty-Sixth eastward 360.00 ft. to a point, said point being the intersection of the South Right-of-way line of Thirty-Sixth Street and the West Right-of-way line of the first alley East of Church Street; thence with the West Right-of-way line of said alley southward 150.00 ft. to an intersection with the South Property line of Holy Cross Church; thence with said Property line of Holy Cross Church westward 210.00 ft. to a point projected in the West Right-of-way line of Church Street; thence southward along the West Right-of-way line of Church Street 260.55 ft. to a point, said point being the intersection of the West Right-of-way line of Church Street and the North Right-of-way line of East Southern Avenue; thence westward along the North Right-of-way line of East Southern 150.06 ft. to a point, said point being the intersection of the North Right-of-way line of East Southern and the East Right-of-way line of the first alley East of Decoursey Avenue; thence northward along said Alley's East Right-of-way line 367.63 ft. to the point of beginning.



E. THIRTY

SIXTH

NEW
SCHOOL

STREET

RITTE'S

ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

CHURCH

RECTORY

HIGH
SCHOOL

CORNER

DISTRICT

CONVERT

EAST SOUTHERN AVENUE

CHURCH STREET

TRINITY
METHODIST

CHURCH

Holy Cross Church and School
Complex, Latonia
Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky

Map III
Map showing direction of photo-
graphs.

No scale.

DECOURSE

Holy Cross Church and School
Complex, Latonia
Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky

Map IV
1909 Sanborn Insurance Map,
showing recently-completed
church (then 904 Church Ave),
former church-school (917)

adapted as "Parochial School,"
old Rectory (901), and resi-
dence on site of present Rectory
(A.).

No scale.

Map courtesy of Map Collection,
University of Kentucky Library.
Lexington, Ky.

