

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0681598

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RECEIVED AUG 9 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 17 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Presbyterian Mission Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1413 Chavez Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

San Miguel

CODE

047 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church ✓

STREET & NUMBER

475 Riverside Drive

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York 10027

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Miguel County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

August 24, 1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Educational Finance & Cultural Affairs
Historic Preservation Program

CITY, TOWN

P.O. Box 1629
Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico 87503

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Erected 1871-73 in the historic northern New Mexico town of Las Vegas, the Presbyterian Mission Church is a 100'x25' pitched-roofed building made of adobe bricks covered with adobe colored plaster. Situated three blocks south of the original Las Vegas plaza (National Register 12/74), the church is in a quiet residential section, one of the town's oldest but now somewhat deteriorated. According to the deed recorded when the church property was first purchased in 1871, the original east boundary was an acequia (ditch), which irrigated the vegetable gardens then found throughout the neighborhood. Today few gardens are grown and the acequia, although still evident, is no longer used, but the closely clustered adobe and frame houses facing narrow streets remain to recall another era. North of the church on the same lot is a large one-story building which replaced an adobe structure originally used as a church school. Of recent construction, it is still owned by the congregation and is used for church supported activities but is not included in this nomination.

Located at the corner of Chavez and Socorro Streets, the church property is enclosed by a low retaining wall made of indigenous brown sandstone. Facing east, the church entrance is reached by two short runs of stone steps and a flagstone walk which lead to a porch floored with the same material. The walk bisects a narrow lawn landscaped with several elm trees and lilac bushes. Rising over the stone floor of the porch and dominating the facade, a gabled pediment supported by four square columns carries the roof line forward to form a massive portico. An early attempt at a Classical temple front, the portico is said to be unique in New Mexico architecture of the Territorial period. A rose window is centered in the pediment which is covered with lap siding painted white. The columns were made by nailing four boards around timbers and embellishing the tops with mitered segments which form capitals. Agreements signed in October, 1871 indicate that the carpentry work throughout the building was executed by craftsman David H. Powell who received \$650.00 for his services.

Powell's entry is framed by simple pilasters capped by a cornice with a dentil design, a motif seen again just under the mullioned transom over the double doors. The paneling in the doors is repeated in the deep reveals which accommodate the entry to the 30" thick adobe walls. Fenestration originally consisted in five double-hung windows with 9 over 9 lights topped by pedimented lintels in both the north and south walls. Those to the south remain unchanged but two doorways have been installed on the north in recent years to make the building conform to modern fire codes. To counter some structural problems caused by occasional excessive accumulations of moisture, the north wall has been reinforced by three stone buttresses. In 1970, during a general rehabilitation, a concrete pad was poured in an effort to eliminate the same problem.

The church was first roofed with wood shingles manufactured at the nearby village of Tecolote and delivered in Las Vegas by Pierre Lesperance. During the 1970 refurbishment it was covered with a modern red composition material. A tall belfry, visible over much of the town, towers high above the building. Although part of the original construction, it is somewhat

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Constructed 1871-73 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Presbyterian Mission Church, constructed in Las Vegas, New Mexico 1871-73, was the first Protestant Church built in that important 19th century commercial center and is the oldest Protestant church building remaining in New Mexico. At mid-century, Las Vegas was exploiting its strategic location on the Santa Fe Trail to achieve economic dominance over a wide area of the Territory. The erection of the impressive Presbyterian Church, which resembled many houses of worship in the East and mid-West, exemplified the growth of Anglo influence in the original Hispanic-Roman Catholic community. Although the building's imposing portico and tall belfry are derived from architectural styles which the newcomers brought with them, the massive walls, made of adobe bricks covered with adobe plaster, were put up in the traditional New Mexico manner. The church, thus, combined elements of both cultures and represented the advent of new ideas into New Mexico in both an architectural and religious sense.

The first permanent settlement in the Las Vegas area was made during the period of Mexican administration in New Mexico by twenty-nine landless families from the nearby Pecos Valley community of San Miguel del Vado. On April 6, 1835 the new settlers were placed in possession of a community land grant on the Gallinas River by Alcalde Mayor José de Jesús Ulibarri y Durán as ordered by Governor Francisco Sarracino. Most of the same area was later claimed by the heirs of Luis María C de Baca as having been granted by Mexican authorities in 1820 to Baca who attempted to establish a ranch near the Gallinas but found the area untenable because of Indian depredations. After lengthy litigation the conflict between the heirs and the residents of the Las Vegas Grant was resolved in 1858 by the Surveyor General of New Mexico in favor of the grantees with the Baca claimants being compensated with other lands elsewhere.

The 1835 settlers immediately began construction of a plaza on the west bank of the Gallinas which, because of its favorable situation, soon became an important stopping place on the Santa Fe Trail. On August 15, 1846 U.S. troops under Brigadier-General Stephen Watts Kearny, following the famous trade route, marched into Las Vegas. From the roof-top of the Alcalde's residence on the plaza, now the Dice Apartments, Kearny officially proclaimed U.S. sovereignty over the region. In 1861 during the short lived Confederate invasion of New Mexico, Las Vegas served briefly as the Territorial Capitol when Texas troops occupied Santa Fe. As the 19th century progressed, the town entered a period of population growth and commercial prosperity which accelerated with the coming of the Atchison, Topeka and

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

San Miguel County Records, County Clerk's Records, Deed Book #6, San Miguel County Courthouse, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
 Annin, John A. "Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas, New Mexico," unpublished ms. from the Collections of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1/5 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	4,7,9	5,1,0	3,9	3,8	2,3,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the west side of Chavez Street which is also the southeast corner of the church property, and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of approximately 175' along the south boundary of the church property which is marked by a fence; thence in a northerly direction along the west boundary of the church property for a distance of approximately 50'; thence in an easterly direction for a distance of approximately 50'; thence in a southerly direction for a distance of approximately 175' along the east boundary of the church property to the southeast corner of the church property.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 4)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John O. Baxter, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

August 2, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

(505) 827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

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

Thomas W. Mel

TITLE *State Historic Preservation Officer*

DATE *8-2-78*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles A. ...

DATE *11-17-78*

ATTEST:

Manuela ...

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *11-17-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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out of proportion with the structure's design, but exhibits some interesting flourishes in the intricate carpentry of the woodwork. The bell, which weighs over 800 lbs. was manufactured in Troy, New York and was transported by wagon train from the railhead at Granada, Colorado. During the 1880s it was moved for a short time to the new Presbyterian Church erected in East Las Vegas but the tower in that structure was not capable of supporting the bell's great weight and it was returned to its original location.

Access to the belfry is provided by a flight of steep stairs rising from the north end of a narrow vestibule in the rear of the church. Two small doors open from the vestibule into the cavernous 55' long nave which is now devoid of furnishings except for a simple wooden pulpit. The pews were recently given by the congregation to another Las Vegas institution, the New Mexico State Hospital. Composed of brown tongue and groove boards, the high ceiling contrasts with the light blue plastered walls which have a 3' band of wainscoting at their base. Covered with common fir flooring, also painted brown, the room's floor is elevated 1' at the west end to form the chancel. The west end of the building is occupied by two classrooms, 34'x25' and 13'x25', originally used by both the congregation Sunday school and the mission school next door, which have been repartitioned recently to serve as dormitories and apartments. In the 1970 rehabilitation, a small addition was put on west of the classrooms which serves as a workshop. Although the congregation is sometimes hard pressed to provide adequate funding for maintenance, the old church remains in use and its condition is good.

#8

Santa Fe Railroad in 1879. To the dismay of merchants doing business on the plaza, the tracks and depot were established across the Gallinas a mile east of the original town. A whole new community, predominantly Anglo in character, sprang up around the station and rail sidings causing a shift in economic and social activity which resulted in ill feelings persisting for many years.

Presbyterian missionary activity in Las Vegas began October 24, 1869 when the Reverend John A. Annin, his wife and young son stepped down from the westbound stage at the Exchange Hotel to conclude an exhausting journey from New York via St. Louis and Topeka. A graduate of both Princeton College and Princeton Theological Seminary, Annin had served in various pastorates in the East before seeking a new challenge in missionary work, first in Minnesota and then in New Mexico. His call to Las Vegas was supported and subsidized by the Santa Fe Auxillary

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Association, a women's missionary group based in Auburn, New York, which provided Annin with encouragement and travel expenses. Soon after his arrival, the new pastor was greeted by the town's leading Protestant, José Ynes Perea, the scion of one of the Territory's most prominent Hispanic families. Because educational opportunities were limited in New Mexico, Perea's father had sent him East for his schooling where he had been exposed to Protestant doctrine and converted to Presbyterianism. After traveling widely as a young man, he had eventually settled in Las Vegas where he operated a mercantile establishment and a large sheep ranch on the vast plains east of the town along the Canadian River.

In March, 1870 Annin organized the Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas with a congregation of twenty-one members. José Ynes Perea was elected "ruling-elder" of the new group. At first, services were held in a hall near the southeast corner of the plaza belonging to German-Jewish merchant May Hays. Believing that education was the key to the eventual success of his mission, Annin also started a school during the same month with an opening enrollment of four pupils which included the pastor's son, William. Before classes were terminated the following August, however, seventeen students had attended for various lengths of time. One year later the new congregation purchased from George Chavez and his wife María Marta López for \$2,250.00 a 175'x158' lot with a large adobe house on its north side. Annin's growing school was established in the house and arrangements were made to erect a new church building. The structure was completed and ready for use in 1873 but, characteristically, Rev. Annin postponed its dedication for four years until all debts were paid.

During the 1870s Annin traveled on horseback over a wide area around Las Vegas carrying the Presbyterian gospel to the Hispanic people of the countryside. Although hampered by his meager knowledge of Spanish, his early efforts met with success, but in 1874 the situation changed. In the summer of that year a delegation of the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus established themselves in Las Vegas. One of their main objectives was to combat the heretical influence of John Annin and his growing Protestant Church. Fluent in Spanish and popular with the townspeople, it was not long before the Jesuits were able to recapture a large portion of Annin's congregation and return most of his students to their traditional faith. The Jesuits also encouraged a boycott of Perea's store which caused considerable economic hardship for the town's leading convert. Some fifteen years later, Annin described the Jesuits and their "Counter Reformation" thus, "Learned and eloquent they were . . . They came to Las Vegas and almost entirely broke up my work." By 1880, both Annin and Perea had become discouraged and left Las Vegas. The latter

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had been ordained as a Presbyterian minister, married a mission teacher from Pennsylvania and began to work among the Indians of the Pueblo of Jémez in central New Mexico.

Annin's first replacement Rev. Josiah McLain remained only a few weeks and was succeeded by Rev. John C. Eastman who came to Las Vegas from Greenville, Ohio in June. Eastman decided to concentrate his activities among the Anglo population of the burgeoning community of East Las Vegas across the Gallinas. The congregation authorized construction of a new church on Douglas Avenue which was dedicated October 16, 1881 with appropriate ceremonies. The move divided Las Vegas Presbyterians on ethnic lines, however, creating a schism which continued for eighty years. At the old location the school was maintained intermittently until 1896 when it was moved to Albuquerque and was incorporated into Menaul School, an institution which has continued to the present. In 1884 a Spanish speaking congregation was established in the old church building under the leadership of bilingual John Whitlock who was extremely active in missionary activity in the Hispanic villages of the area. It was not until 1960 that the two Presbyterian groups came together again selecting the newer building in East Las Vegas as their headquarters.

Although services are seldom held in the old church building since the reunification of the congregation, the property has continued to play an important role in Las Vegas. The school building next door was first remodeled and later replaced by a new structure which now houses the Robert G. Plagge Memorial Center, an institution devoted to the care and treatment of alcoholism. The Sunday school rooms in the rear of the church have been repartitioned and now provide a haven for transients and battered wives and children. Despite financial problems characteristic of many church organizations today the pastor and congregation of the Las Vegas Presbyterian Church are convinced that the old mission building will continue not only as an historic landmark but as a center of significant activity in the community.

#9

Bunting, Bainbridge. Early Architecture in New Mexico. Albuquerque, 1976.
Callon, Milton W. Las Vegas, New Mexico. . The Town that Wouldn't Gamble. Las Vegas, 1962.
Jenkins, Myra Ellen and Albert H. Schroeder. A Brief History of New Mexico. Albuquerque, 1974.
Owens, Sister M. Lilliana. Jesuit Beginnings in New Mexico, 1867-1882. El Paso, 1950.
Rendon, Gabino. Hand on My Shoulder. Edith Agnew, ed., New York, 1953.
Schufle, J. A. Preparing the Way, History of the First 100 Years of Las Vegas Presbyterian Church. Las Vegas, 1970.

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approximately 175' following a line midway between the church and the Rehabilitation Center to the north to its intersection with the west side of Chavez Street; thence to the point of beginning.