

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR 3 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic All Saint's Church/~~The Dodge Memorial~~

and/or common The Oracle Union Church

2. Location

street & number ^{AZ} Highway 77 N/A not for publication

city, town Oracle N/A vicinity of

state Arizona code 04 county Pinal code 021

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Oracle Union Church

street & number "Old" Highway #77

city, town Oracle N/A vicinity of state Arizona

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pinal County Courthouse Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Florence state Arizona

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resources of Oracle, Phase I has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August, 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Arizona SHPO

city, town Phoenix state Arizona

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

SUMMARY/CONTEXT

Oracle Union Church, built in 1901, is a small, vernacular, one story stone building generally characterized by coursed rubble construction, gabled parapets stopped against a steep gable roof, and a combination of Gothic Revival and Mission Revival elements. The church is sited facing north on Highway 77 (the old Mt. Lemmon Road) in Oracle, a sparsely settled, unincorporated ranching and mining community located in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, Arizona. From its beginnings in the late 19th Century, Oracle became the center of ranching and mining activities which evolved in this region of the San Pedro River valley.

Secondary economic activities developed at the turn of the century in the form of guest ranches and tuberculosis sanatoria which catered to many affluent easterners. Although the resident population has grown moderately since World War II, the sparsely settled core of the town is little changed from its historic appearance.

EXTERIOR

A flight of 13 concrete steps leads from the road up to the level of the church. The steps are framed by low rubble walls capped with concrete. Two posts of the same material terminate the walls and support an entrance gate handcrafted of wood in the form of a Gothic arch. The arch is detailed with a trefoil-shaped cut out.

The primary (north) elevation establishes the building's architectural character. Gothic Revival elements include the arched entry and door offset to the east and an arched stained glass window (picturing The Nativity) centrally positioned on the wall. A gabled hood with a king post truss and brackets surmounts the entry. A small bell tower, reminiscent of Mission Revival architecture, is positioned above the frontispiece. The heavily textured coursed rubble parapet flares outward on each side creating a buttressed effect.

The east and west elevations are virtually identical in appearance. Each is constructed of coursed rubble punctuated by three openings. Fenestration on the west wall consists of symmetrically placed steel casement windows. The center window is a tripartite unit featuring a stained glass panel in the center. This is framed by paired units on the north and south. Fenestration on the east is also symmetrical, but a wood door is located in place of the south window.

The rear of the church is detailed with a large oculus window infilled with stained glass (picturing Hoffman's Christ in Gethsemane). This is framed by two rubble buttresses built perpendicular to the rear wall. Narrow vertical window openings are positioned to the east and west. The angle of the parapet parallels that of the asbestos-shingled roof. The rear wall is stuccoed.

INTERIOR

The interior of Oracle Union Church is a single volume with an exposed cathedral ceiling composed of rafters overlain with tongue-and-groove sheathing. Tie rods connecting the east and west walls span the interior. All wall surfaces are plastered, and the floor is of wood. The interior is furnished with its original wood pews and a simple altar on the south. A large Estey organ (1929) is positioned against the rear (north) wall. Two Spanish triptychs and other memorials complete the interior appointments. The stained glass windows stand out as the dominant interior element.

(See Continuation Sheet)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1901 **Builder/Architect** Jesus Osoma, Stonemason; Architect- Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Oracle Union Church displays architectural significance as a unique local example of vernacular architecture which reflects stylistic trends popular in Arizona during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Oracle Union Church also possesses historic significance for its association with individuals important in the establishment and early development of Oracle.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

The small community of Oracle, nestled in the northwestern foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains 35 miles north of Tucson, Arizona, evolved initially as the center of a mining and cattle ranching area in the early 1880's. The late 1800's also saw the genesis of the southwest's reputation as a dry climate haven for tuberculosis sufferers and other health seekers. In southern Arizona, Tucson evolved as a major center of this health industry. Oracle, located at a cooler 4500 feet in elevation, quickly capitalized upon its proximity to Tucson. From the early 1880's until World War II, the small town catered not only to Tucsonians and other Arizona residents, but also to well-to-do easterners and Europeans.

By the late 1890's the need for a community gathering place serving both religious and secular functions was realized. Mr. and Mrs. E.S. Dodge, owners of the Acadia Ranch (N.R. 3/84) in Oracle, donated the land, and an architect was hired to design the building. (At the time of this writing, the architect is unknown. Further research may establish that N.E. Plummer, an architect practicing in southeast Arizona and whose name appears in the early church documents, offered his services to design the structure.) Mrs. Dodge and other women organized the fund-raising which consisted of bake sales, clothes mending and laundering, and other activities.

Their efforts were acknowledged in the newspapers of the day. The Phoenix Republican reported that: "Oracle is to have a Church. The movement was begun sometime ago and was spontaneous on the part of the people of Oracle. Subscriptions were volunteered and the movement went right along all right until almost enough money was subscribed to build the Church.

"Persons who spent some time at Oracle sent money from their Eastern homes, glad to show their substantial appreciation of the place which had given them renewed health. The society which will control the Church is non-sectarian, made up of people of that settlement and all who come from the East to make up the life of that popular health resort."¹ Rock for the building was quarried locally by Mr. Dodge and Mexican ranch hands, and lumber was offered at a discount by a Tucson lumber yard. Jesus Osoma, a Tucson stone-mason, constructed the walls for a fee of \$2.50 per day.

The furnishings for the Church were the result of many donations. Mrs. Lavinia Steward (benefactor of the 1916 Steward Observatory in Tucson) donated the original windows (replaced in 1928). A Mr. & Mrs. Ben Ray donated the pews and kneeling benches. Mr. & Mrs. John Estill, major local merchants, donated the oak organ. The hymnals were donated in the name of the Estill Children.

1. Phoenix Republican, November 12, 1900.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less/acre

Quadrangle name Oracle

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	2	5	2	2	0	2	5	3	6	0	7	8	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

East 100 feet of Block 23 and 1/2 street adjoining on East and South, Oracle Townsite.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Perreault, Historian/Registrar, with information provided by Frances Sherlock (member of Oracle Union Church)

organization Arizona State Historic Preservation Office date March 1984

street & number 1688 West Adams telephone (602) 255-4174

city or town Phoenix state Arizona 85007

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 *Dorva J. Schuber*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 28, 1984

For NPS use only

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

for Melvyn Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 5/3/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

INTEGRITY

Oracle Union Church has been well maintained over the years and appears to be in sound condition. Deteriorating conditions in the 1940's led to repairs to the floor, roof, and heating and electrical system. The rear buttresses were added in 1949 - 50. The original north-south windows were replaced in 1928 by the present stained glass units (donated by Authoress Elizabeth Lambert Wood). Those on the east and west were also added later (donated by the William W. Hugget family), but the date is not known at the time of this writing. The exterior masonry walls are in good repair, and the distinguishing original characteristics of the structure remain intact.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 2

According to M. M. Denton, a minister who held the first service, "The building was not designed for a parish church exclusively, but rather as a sort of community house, reading room, etc. to be used for secular purposes during the week, yet offering a fit place for divine worship on Sundays. The architecture was of a sufficiently ecclesiastical nature to remind the passersby on the neighboring trail of the Heavenly Father, so apt to be forgotten by these dwellers in the wilderness." ²

From its construction in 1901 to the present, the Oracle Union Church has continued to serve these varied functions.

ARCHITECTURE

Oracle Union Church possesses architectural significance as a unique local example of both a type and style of construction. Although essentially vernacular in nature, it does reflect major stylistic trends popular in Arizona at the turn of the century. Constructed during the late Victorian period, the church employs the Gothic Revival as its primary reference. The bell tower is also a major feature and is indicative of the Mission Revival Style, first popularized nationwide after the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago due to the Mission Revival design of the California building.

In a statewide context, both the Gothic Revival and the Mission Revival were applied to ecclesiastical structures during this period. Within a local context, the Oracle Union Church is the only structure exhibiting elements of these styles. These are combined successfully with its vernacular qualities to produce an important architectural resource. As a type of construction, it is the only example of coursed rubble masonry identified in a historic/architectural resource survey of Oracle's historic core.

ASSOCIATION

The significance of Oracle Union Church is enhanced by its associations with individuals who were directly involved with the establishment of Oracle and its early development. Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Dodge, owners of the Acadia Ranch complex, operated a large guest ranch which dominated Oracle's early tourism industry. The ranch later expanded its clientele to include tuberculosis sufferers. Mrs. Lavinia Steward is noted for her philanthropic endeavors which included the establishment of Steward Observatory in Tucson and a tuberculosis sanitorium in Oracle. John Estill operated Oracle's only mercantile establishment for many years, catering to the region's miners and ranchers. The maintenance work on the building in the late 1940's was sponsored by William B. Trowbridge, who had owned the Acadia Ranch from 1923 to 1943. Trowbridge was a son of the senior member of the Versilage Company, one of Wall Street's oldest banking houses, and a grandson of the President of the Second National Bank of New York. His association attests to the continuing involvement of wealthy easterners in the daily life of Oracle.

2. "Arizona Church History Highlights". The Episcopalian, February 1976.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
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Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

Page 3

The combined involvement of these personages through the years and the continuing community spirit evidenced by its congregation make the Oracle Union Church a true symbol of the historic ideals of community and cooperation.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
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Continuation sheet 4

Item number 9

Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wood, Elizabeth Lambert, Arizona Hoof Trails, Metropolitan Printing Company, 1956.

Phoenix Republican, November 12, 1900.

The Episcopalian, February, 1976.

Arizona Church Record, Vol. 44, No. 11, February, 1976.

Oral Interviews:

Omega Williamson (1982-1983)
Clara Berry (1982-1983)
Elna Huggett (1982-1983)
Eleanor Ramsey (1982-1983)

Correspondence:

Letter from E. S. Dodge to Edith Kitt, January 17, 1921
Letter from Paul K. Dayton to Church Members, November 24, 1948

ORACLE UNION CHURCH
ORACLE, ARIZONA

U.T.M. REFERENCES
ZONE 12 E522025 N3607800

