

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

For HCRS use only

received

OCT 16 1980

date entered

NOV 12 1980

1. Name

historic St. Joseph's Catholic Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Off Ok 31 _____ not for publication

city, town Krebs _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 003

state Oklahoma _____ code 40 _____ county Pittsburg _____ code 121

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name St. Joseph's Catholic Church

street & number Box 621

city, town Krebs _____ vicinity of _____ state Oklahoma

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Clerk

street & number Pittsburg County Courthouse

city, town McAlester _____ state Oklahoma

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City _____ state Oklahoma

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Joseph's Catholic Church is of red brick construction and of eclectic style. The campanile contains the original bell, cast in 1886.

The tower, set in the center, serves to crown the entrance, a feature common to rural churches of the area. A few elements suggest romanesque influence--the tower, the arcaded opening, the small wheel window and the other arched windows around the facade. The front is organized by the arcaded elements--three stacked one on top of each other, with one window to each side.

The exterior remains virtually unaltered from its original state, but the interior was extensively remodeled in 1965 to conform to the liturgical changes occasioned by Vatican II. Originally, the altar was quite ornate and gilded, while large paintings decorated the walls. In the process of remodeling the altar was given a more subdued appearance, the paintings were removed and stored, the interior walls were painted ivory, and the embossed ceiling painted white. The original stained glass windows are still in place, however. They depict various religious scenes, and several are inscribed in the native languages of their donors. The park-like setting is spacious and pleasing.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Ethnic

Specific dates 1886, 1903

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St Joseph's Catholic Church of Krebs is the oldest church in the Eastern Oklahoma Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, founded three years before Oklahoma Territory was opened to white settlement. It also became the spiritual focus of the many southeastern European immigrants who settled in the Krebs area. During the height of the coal mining era, Pittsburg County represented a veritable mosaic of a dozen different nationalities. In 1910, 3,367 of its inhabitants--7.1% of the population--had been born abroad. The cominant ethnic group in Krebs were the Italians, but there were also hundreds of Irish, Slovaks, Lithuanians, Mexicans, and Poles. A large propotion were Catholic: Pittsburg County had 5,500 Catholics in 1916, the heaviest concentratiön in the state.

A Frenchman, Dom Isidore Robot, O.S.B., Prefect Apostolic of Indian Territory, planned the church, and a group of Irish, Italian, and German pioneers established the original wooden structure on the site in 1886. Nearby they also provided a school and a residence for the Sisters of Mercy who became its teachers. The Benedictine priests who served St. Joseph's in its early years founded other churches and missions in the area. After the original church was destroyed by fire, the present edifice was completed in 1903.

With a membership of about 400, St. Joseph's stands as a monument not only to the pioneer Catholic missionaries in Oklahoma but also to the thousands of European immigrants who settled Pittsburg County, made its coal mines productive, and through their sacrificial offerings created and perpetuated this church.

9. Major Bibliographical References

McAlester News-Capital, July 18, 1976, section C.
Brown, K. L., 'A History of the Italians in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma', MA Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1965, pg. 53-56.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Under 1 acre
Quadrangle name Krebs, Ok Quadrangle scale 7.5'

UMT References

A	1 5	2 5 1 7 4 0	3 8 6 8 7 1 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 4 and 5 of Block 138, N. and W. addition, Krebs

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas Hale, Supervised by Dr. Annetta L. Cheek

organization Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey date March, 1979

street & number Oklahoma State University telephone (405) 624-5678

city or town Stillwater state Oklahoma

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title SHPO date 10/3/80

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] date 1/10/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration