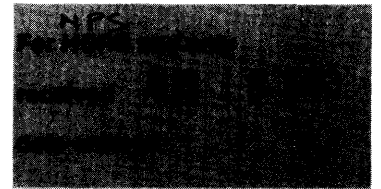


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



**1. Name**

historic Saint Mary's Academy Historic District

and/or common (also known as St. Mary Magdalen's Academy, St. Mary's Center)

**2. Location**

street & number 1813 N. Alabama Street not for publication

city, town Silver City N/A vicinity of congressional district #2

state New Mexico code 35 county Grant code 017

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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 type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: birth center

**4. Owner of Property**

name Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas (Sister Bette Moslander, President)

street & number Nazareth Motherhouse, 215 Court Street.

city, town Concordia N/A vicinity of state Kansas 66901

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office, Grant County Courthouse

street & number Cooper Street

city, town Silver City state New Mexico 88061

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Grant County Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date March, 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Silver City Museum

city, town Silver City state New Mexico

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	date Auditorium building moved in from Santa Rita, N.M. in 1930.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> varied		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Saint Mary's Academy occupies a tract of approximately 24 acres near the northwest city limits of Silver City, extending west of Alabama Street. Buildings in the complex are arranged along terraces, with a deep set-back from the street now well filled-in with vegetation. Construction of the school buildings reflects a variety of styles but typically includes stepped parapets and decorative brickwork. The R.W. Jackson house and servants' quarters, the oldest buildings in the complex, are elaborate and imaginative interpretations of hipped-box construction. The chapel reflects traditional styling, and commands a dominating position from its central location in the cluster of buildings. The campus gradually rises in elevation to the west. The integrity of the structures is well-preserved.

See continuation sheet.

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When Aubrey F. Lee, a wealthy young tubercular patient from Baltimore, Md., constructed his Mission-style residence in the newly-platted Warren Place addition north of Silver City in 1906, it was one of the first residences to be built in that end of town. The house, which was designed by Mr. Lee, attracted much attention for its unusual design features. The building was constructed of adobe (a very unusual choice of material at that time for someone who could obviously afford brick) around an open courtyard 40'x50' surrounded by porches which were glassed-in and steam-heated in the wintertime. An arched front entrance opened onto the courtyard. Lee succumbed to tuberculosis in 1908, and the home was apparently rented out for several years until Lee's widow, who had remarried, sold the house to the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1918. It was to form the basis of St. Mary's Academy in its early years.

In 1910 Rufus W. Jackson and his family, of Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee, constructed an imposing brick residence one door north of the Lee residence from plans drawn by contractor Hugh S. Gilbert. Gilbert, who also did the construction, was one of the foremost builders in the Silver City area from 1905 through the mid-1920's, and did much to popularize locally the hipped-box style of architecture, this house being one of his finest examples. Impressive for its size, materials, and details, the property was also notable for its brick servants' quarters located just behind the house. A description published in the Silver City Independent Sept. 27, 1910, mentioned the large porch which ran the full length of the house; the reception hall furnished in hardwood with oak floors and mahogany beam ceilings; the two bedrooms with maple floors and mahogany and white maple trim; the dining room with its five-foot quarter-sawed oak panelled wainscoting and large bay window with north exposure; the large tiled bath, linen closet and butler's pantry; the second floor which contained large hall, two bedrooms, a bath, billiard hall, storage rooms, closets and sleeping porches; and the fact that the whole house was heated with steam, had a basement 18'x45', and had six telephones. This was definitely not typical of the average Silver City home of its time.

Upon acquisition of the Lee and Jackson properties in 1918, the Sisters of St. Joseph immediately had a great deal of stabilization work done on the Lee residence, and had constructed next door to it a square pressed brick residence which was to house the Spiritual Director of the institution, Monsignor William Wright. This house, which was built by H.S. Gilbert, was designed to harmonize with the Mission-style features of the Lee residence. In 1919, a boys' dorm was constructed, the former Jackson servants' quarters were remodeled into a dining room for 75 pupils, and a steam heating plant was constructed to furnish heat to the complex. At some point between 1918 and the end of 1922 several other buildings were added to the campus - a brick school building on the south end of the campus; two frame utility buildings, one of which was the laundry; and a small adobe classroom building which was located behind the Lee home and which later burned.

After the Lee residence was destroyed by fire in December, 1922, the chapel-convent building was constructed on the same site by El Paso contractor J.E. Morgan in the fall of 1923. A T-shaped building of red pressed brick, the chapel forms the central leg of the structure with the two convent wings on either side. Also constructed in 1923 were the two hipped-roof wings at either end of the boys' dormitory building.

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In 1930, a large rectangular, clapboarded, hipped-roof building was moved in from the nearby mining camp of Santa Rita, N.M., and placed on the campus just northwest of the Jackson house, for use by the school as an auditorium. Dating from the 1920's or earlier, the building is in keeping with the time period of the other buildings on campus, and while not architecturally outstanding, it does not detract from the appearance of the others. The one building which is obviously a later addition is the stuccoed school building, built on the upper level of the complex around the 1950's.

Additions have been made to several of the buildings. The former servants' quarters of the Jackson house had a brick addition added to its south side in the early 1940's. The addition, which extended its front facade, was so skillfully woven into the brickwork that there is no clear line of demarcation in the wall where the original building stops and the addition begins. The roofline was extended, with a shed dormer, whose front is an extension of the front brick wall, rising in the center of the new section, echoing the dormers in the original part. The round-topped raised segmental arches used in the original facade are duplicated in the window opening in the new section. The design of the addition creates a balanced, if asymmetrical, appearance and is not readily detectable as an addition.

The music building, just south of the servants' quarters, began its life as a narrow rectangular hip-roofed building with attached frame front porch. Judging from its general style and some of its details, this was probably originally part of the Jackson property, perhaps housing for some of the higher-ranking servants (the 1918 newspaper account of the sale of the Jackson property to the Sisters said only that the property consisted of the house, servants' quarters, and a brick garage). During the summer of 1946 an east wing, facing the front of the campus, was added to the building. The addition actually made the structure more in keeping with the other buildings on campus, through its construction with a flat roof with capped, stepped parapet (as seen in all the other school structures), the windows having arched-top lintels and segmental arches (as were present in the original part of this building). None of these details were contemporary 1940's building styles; the conscious effort was one of coordination with the existing styles of the place.

The Jackson House has also had a few alterations - a very sympathetic brick addition was added to the rear sometime after 1930, and the roofline extended back over it, with several dormer windows added; and a former glassed-in porch on the southeast corner is now enclosed with only one window. As with the other buildings, the modifications are not readily visible, and have not destroyed the original fabric of the house.

One small alteration which has occurred in recent years to several of the buildings is that the upper sections of some of the brick parapets have been removed in the course of repair. The parapets on the school building, priest's house, and the boys' dorm had unusually tall raised sections, particularly the priest's house, which had a cross in raised brickwork on the front of its parapet over the entrance. The brickwork in these apparently became unstable after over fifty years of New Mexico winds, and the upper

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portions were removed. The difference is only obvious when comparing the buildings with their earlier appearance in old photographs; in each case a logical break-off point was found so that the appearance of the buildings was not radically altered. This would probably be restorable without great difficulty.

Structural problems in recent years led to the construction of a rock apron around the lower perimeter of the school building. Slightly flared for buttressing, the rockwork gives the general appearance that a rock foundation would, not uncommon on this type of building. All of the structures on campus have suffered to some extent from general deterioration, especially with cracks in the brickwork. Due to the lack of funds that has been a particular problem in the past twenty years of the center's history, major structural repairs have not been possible.

The Jackson place had its own well, drilled in 1912, and the Lee place probably did also. An overhead sprinkler system was used in the 1920's for irrigating the vegetable garden, and obviously water was in abundance, for in 1924 the school had constructed a swimming pool (the first "real" swimming pool in the area), which served for many years as the public pool as well as for student use. (It is now used as a water-storage tank.) Landscaping on the properties was no doubt started by the original owners but was mainly the accomplishment of the Sisters - a 1922 photograph shows as small shrubs the tall trees which now almost hide the campus buildings from the street, lining the circle drives and paths which link the structures. The area between Alabama Street and the first level of buildings is particularly well-developed. A rock wall encloses the property along its front exposure, and rock walls are also used for terracing along the upper levels. An interesting stone cellar, possible dating back to the Jackson house days, is dug into the hillside behind the old servants' quarters, with stone approaches and facing. Incorporated into the landscaping are religious statues and a fluted cast-iron lamp post, mounted on concrete pedestals and linked with pathways and plantings, and a stone fountain.

Buildings which may be considered significant to the district are:

1. Rufus W. Jackson house, built 1910. The Jackson house is of a hipped box design, one and one-half stories with basement, built of pressed brick on a cut limestone foundation. The bellcast hipped roof is covered in asphalt shingles with metal Mission tile over its ridges, with talon-type caps on the ends. The Mission tile is also used on the numerous dormer windows. Windows on the ground floor are casement, arranged in pairs with fixed transom lights (some of which have diamond muntins). Windows on the upper storey are double-hung, with diamond muntins in the upper sash. Sills and lintels are concrete. The front door is oak, with oak framing, and has sidelights and a diamond-muntin transom. Interior features have been described earlier in this section. In addition to the bay window on the north side mentioned in this description, there are two south-exposure bay windows. The front porch, which extends the width of the building, has grooved wood tapered columns, arranged in pairs on concrete-capped brick pedestals. There is no balustrade, but the underside of the porch is enclosed with lattice. A wide (4-window) hipped dormer in the center front of the building has a shallow porch,

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with tapered square wood columns and a balustrade. A cross is now mounted on the crest of this dormer. A very sympathetic brick addition has been added to the rear (west end) of the original structure, and takes in space formerly occupied by sleeping porches. This was added sometime after 1930. The interior of the building is still much as described in the 1910 newspaper account. H.S. Gilbert was designer-builder of this house.

2. R.W. Jackson servants' quarters, built 1910. A brick hipped-box structure with gabled south wing added in the 1940's and a shed-roofed frame addition on the rear, this building, like the main house, is one and one-half stories and has metal Mission tile covering roof seams. The original part of the roof has hipped dormers, with a shed dormer on the addition. The front exposure has distinctive arched openings for door and windows, with fanlights and raised segmental arches. Windows are casement and double-hung.

3. Priest's House, built 1918. This house was one of the first buildings added to the complex after the Academy was opened. Built of a yellow pressed brick, it was designed to complement the Lee residence which stood next door and burned in late 1922; this accounts for its slightly different appearance from the other buildings in the group. The house has a flat roof with capped, stepped parapet, with a brick front porch under the main roof, having arched openings. Double-hung windows feature multiple arrangements in front, with continuous brick sills. Arched-top casement windows are also used. The front door is mahogany with leaded lights. This house was built by H.S. Gilbert.

4. Chapel and convent. Built in 1922 by El Paso contractor J.E. Morgan after the Lee residence, which stood on this site, burned, this brick building was constructed in a T-shaped formation, with the chapel in the center and the convent occupying the back wings. Roffs are gabled and hipped, with a small louvered cupola near the back end of the chapel roof. Windows are double-hung, those in the chapel having stained glass; the side windows of the chapel have Gothic arches with keystones. The front entrance of the chapel is surmounted by a stained glass transom and capped lintel, and a recessed round-arched niche with statue. Brick buttresses, with concrete caps, line the sides of the chapel.

Buildings which may be considered contributing to the district are:

5. School building, built between 1918-1922. This is a one-storey brick structure with flat roof and stepped parapet, with raised decorative brickwork. Windows are double-hung, in multiple arrangements. Double-leaf doors have a multi-light transom. A large brick addition, in the same style as the original building, has been added to the rear end, and a rock apron, added to reinforce the walls, now surrounds the lower perimeter of the building.

6. Boys' dormitory, built 1919 by builder Phil Hornbuckle. A one-storey brick building with a modified H-shaped configuration with back extension, this structure has a flat roof with stepped parapet in its central section, a flat roof on the

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rear addition, and hipped roofs on the north and south wings, which were added in 1923. Windows are double-hung with tandem arrangement. The south section has some rock reinforcing around the lower edges of the walls. The interior of this building is at the time of this writing undergoing modification for use as a birth center.

7. Music building, built before 1923 (probably ca. 1910). Built in two sections, the back (original) portion of this one-storey brick building has hipped roof, the crest of which is covered with round metal Mission tile, and the front portion, constructed in 1946, has flat roof with capped, stepped parapet. Double-hung windows have rounded lintels and segmental arches.

8. Heating plant, probably built 1919. The lower two-thirds of this structure are built of cast concrete, with the upper portion brick. The roof is gabled, with bracketed purlins and exposed rafters. Windows are six-light wood, sliding type. There are two wide vertical-board doors with six-light windows inset, with cross-bracing in the lower part of the doors. Built to house the central steam-heating plant for the school complex, this building shows an unusual attention to design for so utilitarian a structure.

9. Pumphouse and laundry, built before 1923. The old pumphouse, which may be original to the R.W. Jackson residence, is a very small brick structure which at one time had a large metal water tank connected. This abuts the building used as a laundry by the school, a clapboarded, hipped-roof structure which has a brick addition on one side.

10. Utility building, built before 1923. This clapboarded hipped-roof building was constructed to house a large piece of machinery, probably part of the pumping system, and is very similar in design to the laundry building. Both of these structures resemble old sanatorium tent-cottages of the type that were in use in the Silver City area in the early 1900's. This type of building had frame siding on the lower portion of the walls, and the upper portion would be left open, with canvas curtains. The two structures mentioned here have a tongue-and-groove siding on the upper parts of their walls, above the clapboarding.

11. Auditorium, moved onto site in 1930, reportedly from Santa Rita, N.M. This building is placed in such close proximity to the Jackson house that it might be considered an addition to it. It is a clapboard, hipped-roof building of very plain design, with double-hung windows and simple panel door. It is set in such a location that it is hardly noticeable from either the street or the rest of the campus.

Buildings which may be considered neutral to the proposed district are:

12. School building, constructed ca. 1950's. This is a flat-roofed stuccoed building with steel casement windows. The only exterior ornamentation consists of raised stucco banding. This building is plainly from a different era than the other buildings in the complex.

13. Brick garage, date unknown. This shed-roofed brick building has wood doors which do not appear to be original, and is in deteriorated condition.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1910, 1918–1923      **Builder/Architect** H.S. Gilbert, J.E. Morgan, others

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The architectural resources of Saint Mary's Academy are significant both for including one of the finest, largest, and best-preserved 1910-era private residences in the Silver City area, rich in detailing; and for its complex of school-related buildings, typical of post-World War I educational and religious facilities. Time appears to have stood still on this well-landscaped campus, where only one major structure has been added since the early 1920's, and where remodelings to the original buildings have been minimal and extremely sensitive. The Academy is also significant as the one tangible raminder of early parochial education in Grant County, with a legacy going back to the early 1880's.

See continuation sheet.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Acquinas, Sister Thomas, "St. Mary's Academy History," - unpublished, 1944. Saint Mary's Center collection.  
 Thomas, Sister M. Evangeline, Footprints on the Frontier, The Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1948. See continuation sheet.....

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 7

Quadrangle name Silver City, N.M. quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	2	7	5	4	4	2	0	3	6	3	0	5	0	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing							

B 

1	2	7	5	4	5	8	0	3	6	3	0	5	0	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing							

C 

1	2	7	5	4	4	2	0	3	6	3	0	3	0	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing							

D 

1	2	7	5	4	5	8	0	3	6	3	0	3	0	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Commencing at a point on the west side of Alabama Street, approximately 170' north of the north edge of Hill Street, thence proceeding west along the south fenceline of the St. Mary's Center grounds for a distance of 440'; thence north for a distance of approx. 620' to the north fenceline... See continuation sheet...

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan M. Berry, Assistant Director

organization Silver City Museum date August 1981

street & number 312 W. Broadway telephone (505) 538-5921

city or town Silver City state New Mexico 88061

# 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 State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-9-83

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

[Signature] date 9/15/83  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

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As would be expected in a predominately Roman Catholic state, parochial schools have played a vital role in the educational history of New Mexico. Upon his arrival in Santa Fe in 1851, Bishop Lamy decided that the overall position of the Catholic Church could best be served by a vigorous and progressive educational program. At his urging many religious organizations established parochial primary schools and academies in various parts of the territory. By recruiting from the church abroad they were able to staff schools with dedicated and qualified personnel.

In 1881, the Saint Vincent Parish of Silver City, then comprising the whole of Grant County, became the pastorate of the Reverent Peter Bourgade. He later became the Bishop of the Tucson Diocese, and when he died in 1908 he was the Archbishop of Santa Fe. Farther Bourgade brought to his parish in 1883 several Sisters of Mercy, members of an order whose main mission was to care for the poor and sick and educate the young. With his assistance, the Sisters (originally from Ireland and more recently from Mesilla, N.M.) established their Motherhouse and opened a school, the Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes. An imposing three-storey school building was constructed on a block of ground in downtown Silver City acquired by Father Bourgade, with the financial assistance of much of the community. In 1887, the Sisters opened a charity hospital in Silver City using space donated by a wealthy supporter. The Sisters' Hospital, as it was known, became a corporation in 1891, under the name of St. Joseph's Hospital, and land with a building on it was acquired for the hospital on the western outskirts of town. In 1902 the name was changed to St. Joseph's Sanatorium, and a new wing was built to the hospital complex to be devoted entirely to the treatment of tubercular patients.

The Sisters of Mercy continued to operate both school and hospital until 1915, when Silver City, which had previously been part of the Tucson Diocese, was made part of the newly-organized El Paso Diocese, which comprised an area of 62,394 square miles, including sections of Texas surrounding El Paso and several counties in southern New Mexico. The Sisters of Mercy at this time sold their holdings to a group of newly-arrived Sisters of St. Joseph from Tipton, Indiana, under the leadership of Sister Mary Magdalen Thomas, superior, and returned to their Motherhouse in Tucson. Sister Mary Magdalen, along with Sister Mary Aloysia, Sister Mary Gabriel, Sister Presentation, and Sister Mary Sylvester, filed articles of incorporation as the Sisters of St. Joseph of Silver City in August, 1915, and were formally separated from their Motherhouse.

Mother Magdalen continued to operate the sanatorium for three years while teaching school in the Lourdes Academy building, until financial hardships determined that the sanatorium be sold into private hands. In March, 1918, the Sisters purchased the Lee residence, a ten-room Mission-style adobe house which had been built for its wealthy healthseeker owner (since deceased), Aubrey F. Lee, in 1906. In December, 1918, the Sisters sold their former Academy building to the Grant County Charity Hospital Association. Saint Mary Magdalen's Academy was opened in the Lee house early in 1918, and in December of that year the neighboring home of Rufus W. Jackson had been purchased for the Academy by Monsignor William Wright, Spiritual Director of the Academy. Later all land west and now included in St. Mary's Academy property was purchased by Monsignor Wright and presented to the Sisters. To finance these purchases and

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the construction that followed, the Sisters took out a number of mortgages, leaving them in a deep state of indebtedness.

Billed at first as a "select boarding school for young ladies and girls," Saint Mary's Academy began accepting boys from five to twelve years of age in 1919, following the construction of a boys' dormitory. A new dining room (in the former servants' quarters of the Jackson house) and steam heating plant were also added to the facility that year. Other amenities included a large garden with poultry yard and dairy, which furnished most of the food for the institution. A 1922 brochure entitled "A Trip Through St. Mary's Academy" described this setting: "The spacious well ventilated dormitories with most modern sanitary improvements, the delicately hand-decorated walls of the young ladies' reception room and study hall, their highly polished oak floors, elegant furnishings, easy chairs and feather cushions, the magnificent and elaborate electrical installations of the entire building in addition to the advantage of an extensive library of inviting and best literary selections of most prominent ancient and modern writers -- all present an aspect or reflect more the appointment or luxuries of an artistically and comfortably fitted up home than that of what might be conceived of the regular boarding school." The Academy's letterhead touted, along with "Excellent Location," "Private Rooms," and "Spacious Campus and Tennis Courts," its "Special Training for Backward Pupils."

By the end of 1922, a number of buildings had been added to the campus. Then, in the early morning hours of December 16, 1922, the Lee house, where the Sisters and most of the students were living, was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the personal belongings of the occupants, the school's library, and two pianos were destroyed. The loss of the building was apparently covered by insurance, and in May 1923 tentative plans were announced for the construction of a new administration building, to cost an estimated \$40,000. The Silver City Enterprise of May 11, 1923, in announcing the plans, said, "The decision to rebuild hinges in a measure on conditions now developing but if the ultimate conclusion is in the affirmative it will constitute a splendid addition to the semi-public institutions of Silver City." The proposed administration building was not built - as an aside, it appears that plans for this building were drawn up by Trost & Trost, El Paso, Texas, architects. An undated front elevation of a building for St. Mary's Academy in Silver City is pictured in the Trost & Trost collection of the El Paso Public Library, showing a structure which was never built. However, in the fall of 1923 a chapel and convent building was constructed (its designer is not known) by contractor J.E. Morgan of El Paso, at a much more modest cost (as reported on the city building permit) of \$9,000, on the site of the burned building.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Silver City remained a small group. In the 1922 brochure quoted earlier, there appears a special appeal from Bishop Anthony J. Shuler of El Paso, to promote the Novitiate program at the Academy. This enthusiastic drive appeared to be aimed at the beau monde and produced scanty results for the academy. However, in 1923, a group of postulants arrived from Ireland, increasing the number of Sisters to twenty-one, but a year later eight nuns departed.

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By 1925, Mother Magdalen Thomas realized an affiliation with some other community of Sisters of St. Joseph was necessary for survival, and she wrote to the Sisters in Concordia, Kansas, asking if an arrangement could be made for the amalgamation of her small group with their larger and well-established community. After visits by Mother Magdalen to the Concordia Motherhouse and by Bishop Fief and Mother Mary Rose Waller of Kansas to Silver City, the Silver City Community was unanimously accepted by secret ballot vote. The trustees of the Concordia order assumed the \$93,000 debt of the Silver City group, and authorized the paying off of these notes and bills. On February 24, 1926 the first group of Sisters left for the Southwest. Sister Innocentia Brennan was chosen Superior and Mother Magdalen became her assistant. The property in Silver City known as St. Mary's Academy was officially deeded to the Concordia Community on March 10, 1928.

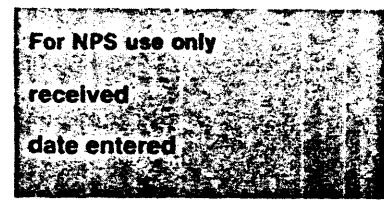
The Academy continued in operation until 1965, when the institution was changed to St. Mary's Inter-Parochial School, a private day school. This was closed in 1980 after proving financially impossible to keep in operation. The group of buildings is now officially known as St. Mary's Center, and different uses may be found for the structures. At the time of this writing, a birthing center is being organized to occupy one of the buildings.

Rufus W. Jackson, a wealthy Tennessean, came to Silver City with his family about 1909 in the hopes that the climate might benefit his wife's health, bringing along a group of servants. In 1910 he purchased land in the Warren Place addition in the extreme northwest end of Silver City, which at that time was outside the city limits, one door north of the large new Mission-style home of A.F. Lee. Hugh S. Gilbert, local builder, served as architect and contractor for the home built on the Jackson's property, which was definitely a mansion by Silver City standards and the only house in town with a servants' quarters of any size. Both interior and exterior were elaborately detailed, with high-quality materials utilized in construction - cut stone, pressed brick, and plentiful and varied hardwoods. An important consideration in a healthseeker's home, windows and porches were numerous. (Silver City by 1910 had become something of a Mecca for consumptives - tubercular patients - because of its warm climate, high altitude, and relatively dry and unpolluted air; at that particular time, the Silver City area was actively being publicized by the Chamber of Commerce and the numerous sanatoria in the area for its health-giving attributes). The Jackson family returned to Tennessee about 1915, and after renting the house out for several years, finally sold it to Saint Mary's Academy, who utilized it as a girls' dormitory.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
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9. continued...

"A Trip Through St. Mary's Academy," Printers of the Catholic Publishing Co., Santa Fe, N.M., 1922. St. Mary's Center collection.

Silver City Enterprise, 1883-1923.

Silver City Independent, 1906-1923.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1930, collection of Silver City Museum.

Building permits, Town of Silver City, 1917-1923, collection of Silver City Museum.

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

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

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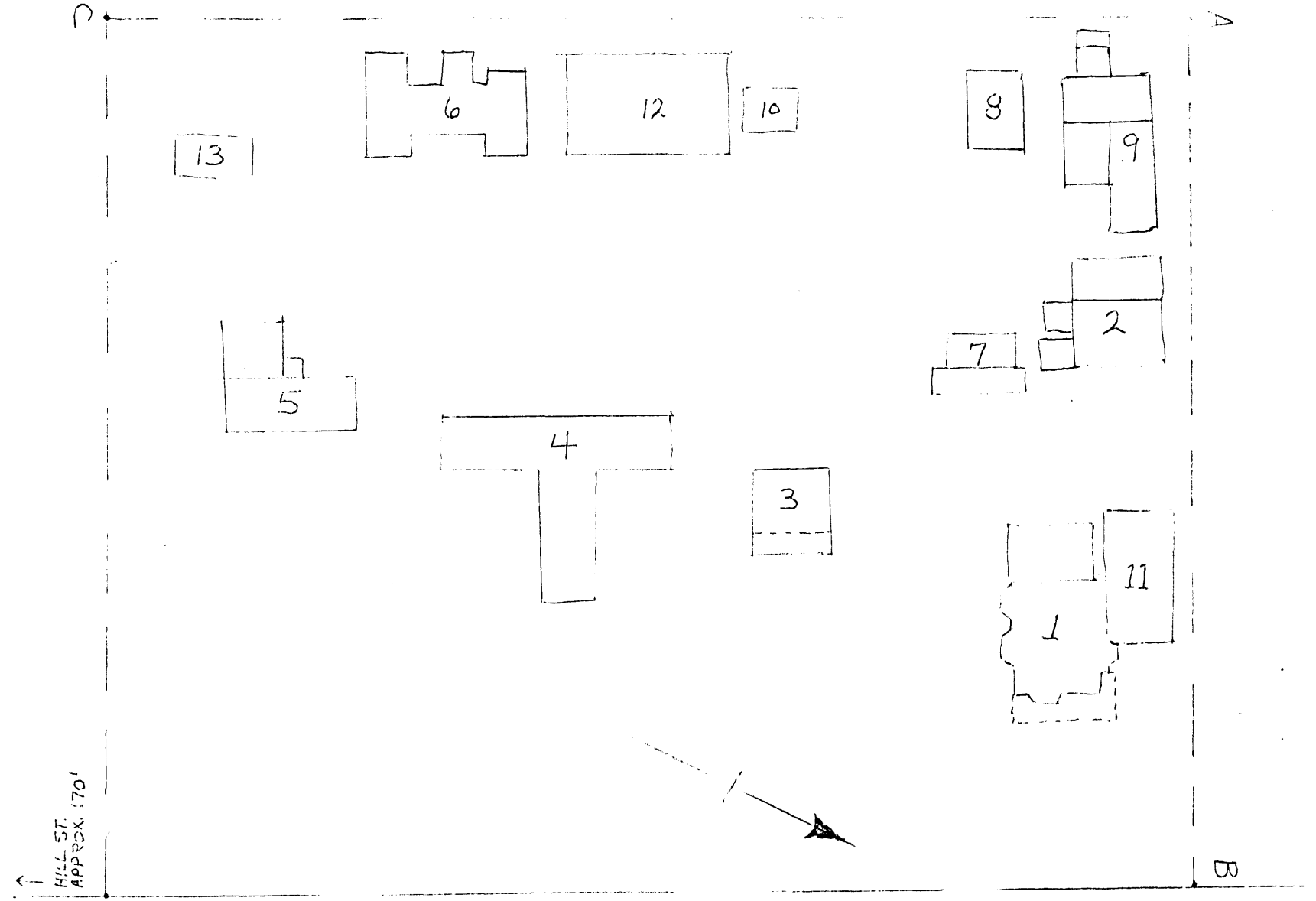
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10. continued

.....of the St. Mary's Academy grounds; thence east along said fenceline for a distance of 440'; thence south for a distance of 620' to the point of beginning. The designated area takes in the entire front exposure of the property and includes all of the major structures and the landscaped area between the street and the first level of buildings. Other property included on the complex (not included within the proposed district area) is undeveloped vacant land, with the exception of an adobe shed and the old swimming pool.

# SAINT MARY'S ACADEMY HISTORIC DISTRICT



ALABAMA

SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

NOT TO SCALE