

283

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Mc Cabe Memorial Church

other names/site number Playa de Ponce Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 835 Eugenio Maria de Hostos Avenue

☐ not for publication

city or town Ponce

☒ vicinity

state Puerto Rico code PR county Ponce code 113 zip code 00731

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Aida Belen Rivera Ruiz

Signature of certifying official/Title

26 February 2008
Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
 - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
 - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain):

Edson H. Beall 4.11.08

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

1
0
0
0
1

Noncontributing

0 buildings
0 sites
0 structures
0 objects
0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious facility _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious facility _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman _____

Neo Gothic elements _____

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete _____

walls concrete _____

roof wood; corrugated metal _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(See Continuation Sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(See Continuation Sheets)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1908

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Antonin Nechodoma

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See Continuation Sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(See continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government (Archivo Histórico de Ponce)
- ☒ University (UPR, Rio Piedras. Colección Puertorriqueña)
- ☒ Other (Archivo Histórico de la Iglesia Metodista)

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 19 751950 1989920
2 _____

Zone Easting Northing
3 _____
4 _____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is historically associated with the lot # 412-051-584-04 as registered at the Puerto Rico Register of Property.

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheets.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Juan Llanes Santos/ SHPO

organization Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

date February 26, 2008

street & number PO Box 9066581

telephone 787-721-3737

city or town San Juan

state PR

zip code 00906-6581

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Mc Cabe Memorial Church

street & number 835 Eugenio Maria de Hostos Avenue

telephone 787-842-2757

city or town Ponce

state PR

zip code 00731

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Fig. 1 The Mc Cabe Memorial Church.



The Methodist **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is located at 835 Eugenio Maria de Hostos Avenue, in the Playa Ward, in the municipality of Ponce (**Fig. 1**). The church, built in 1908, is a one story, mostly rectangular plan, with a bell tower to the side of the main building. Foundations, walls and floor are of reinforced concrete. The exterior walls of the building and the tower have an attractive and unusual texture caused by the use of imitation stone blocks, of rock-faced style.¹ The high pitched roof, originally of wood shingles, consists of corrugated metal zinc over wood planks. Its projecting eaves protect and cover the lateral walls and the six double stained glass windows they feature.

Fig. 2



Both east and west facades have stained glass rosettes that create an optic game of light inside. Originally, the west façade had a glass louvered rose window.² The east façade, toward the street, still has the original rosette. The entrance, right through the bell tower, is off-centered from the main volume and covered by a projecting wooden canopy (**Fig. 2**). Once past the double wooden doors, crowned with a transom, one enters an eight by fourteen-foot vestibule. The floor in the vestibule, as in the entire church, is covered with terrazzo.

¹ Steven J. Phillips. *Old House Dictionary. An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture, 1600 – 1940*. Pp. 53. Beginning in the 1870s, concrete blocks were molded to imitate stone.

² The original louver was vandalized in the 1990s and replaced with the present stained glass rosette.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
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Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Once past the vestibule, which serves as a transition space, the layout opens into a simple and single thirty-one by forty-seven-foot nave.³ The arrangement of the wooden benches creates the image of a central nave and two side aisles. There are seventeen mahogany wooden benches, of which, three are originals from 1908. The other fourteen are made in the same style, but have a carved cross on the side, to distinguish them from the originals. The apse culminates the spatial sequence of the building. It is at a higher floor level than the rest of the church, reflecting its privilege position (**Fig. 3**).

At the opposite end of the apse, there is a circular choir area with a concrete built-in bench space. It has an eight-foot radius. Originally, it was planned as part of an area designated as "Sunday school". It is currently used for musical instruments and sound equipment (**Fig. 4**).

³ Contrary to the catholic parish churches, the **McCabe Memorial**'s façade does not reflect its interior distribution. Actually, there could be an intentional purpose to differentiate, not only the exterior, but also the interior, from the appearance of local catholic churches, as part of an ideological posture. The catholic churches have a hierarchical distribution of the spatial arrangement, reflecting the liturgical separation between the clergy and the regular congregation, while the Protestants churches, as part of their Reform tradition, use the interior space to create a more "equal" and intimate relation between the clergy, the practitioners, and their respective relation with the "divinity".

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Fig. 5



The ceiling is divided in three equal sections (**Fig. 5**). Each section is composed of an equal set of a post, common rafters and scissors braces.⁴ The rafters and the scissor braces are bolted down together and connected by iron rods. All common rafters and the scissors braces are interconnected through four longitudinal beams. Due to the lack of tie-beams, the entire weight of the ceiling is distributed upon the concrete walls.

⁴ With the exception of the frontal scissors braces (the closest to the apse), all the wooden beams in the ceiling are from the original construction.

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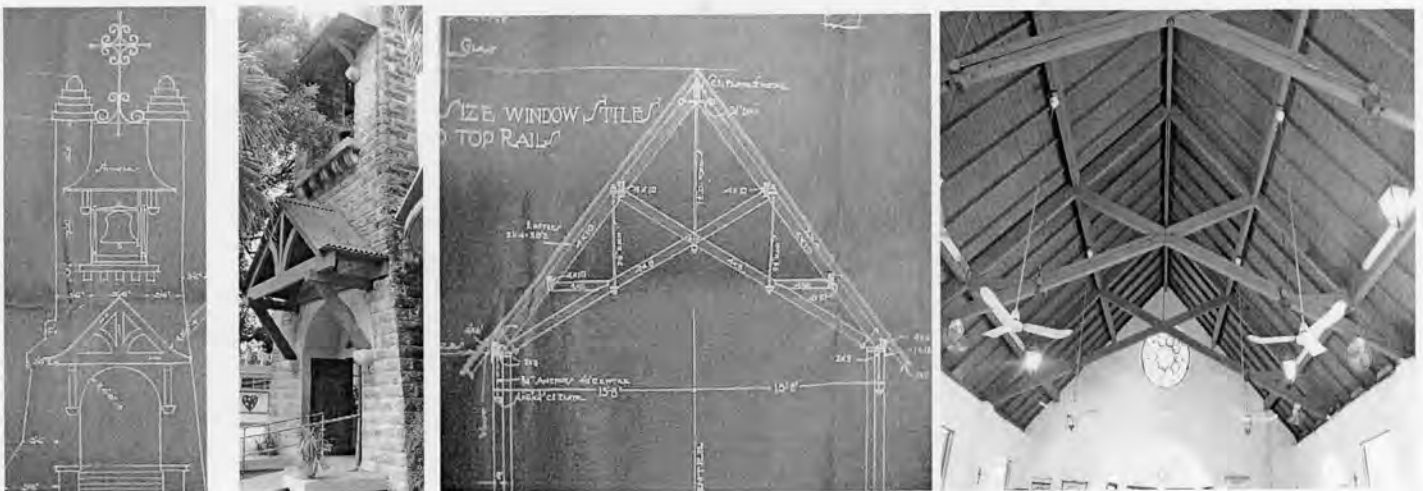
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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** was designed by Antonín Nechodoma, one of the most influential architects in Puerto Rico during the early decades of the twentieth century. The church is his first documented work in the island. The architect described it as an "architectural gem".⁵ The construction followed Nechodoma's plan extremely closely; a visible fact until present time (**Fig. 6**).

Fig. 6 Nechodoma's blueprints and the present building.



⁵ Antonín Nechodoma. "Recent Work by Antonín Nechodoma". *Architects and Builders Magazine, Devoted to the Interest of Architecture, Building and Engineering*. New York: Williams Constock. October 1908 – September 1909, vol. X.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Its peculiar characteristics and architectural features, designed within the Craftsman style, with some Neo Gothic elements, were promptly exalted. For almost one hundred years, the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** has kept a high level of integrity in design, location, volume, materials, and most of all, feeling.

The Architect

Fig. 7. Antonín Nechodoma



Antonín Nechodoma was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1877 (**Fig 6**).⁶ His family moved to the United States in 1887. As a youngster, Nechodoma worked in Chicago as a general contractor. His experience in the Windy City, including being hired in an architecture firm, led Nechodoma to learn as much as he could about construction and architecture trades.

By 1904, Nechodoma moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where he met his future business partner, contractor Frank B. Hatch. Residing in Puerto Rico by 1905, both Hatch and Nechodoma started a very successful business. Hatch would get the clients and Nechodoma would design their projects. Hatch's contracting company would eventually build the property.

During his first years in Puerto Rico, Nechodoma's production was large and eclectic, characterized by an array of styles and types: from the cottage and bungalow, to the use of the Gothic Revival, Mission Style and the Classical Revival elements. After 1913, the Prairie Style (popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright) would take preeminence in Nechodoma's production. The architect not only introduced the Prairie Style into the local scene, but is also the first and only architect to adapt the style to the Puerto Rican climate. In 1928, Nechodoma's prolific work was abruptly halted by his tragic death in a car accident. Although some of his most representative work has been lost (demolished), the remaining works, such as the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church**, represent Nechodoma's artistic vitality.⁷

⁶ On Nechodoma's biography and work see: Enrique Vivoni Farage, Editor. Antonín Nechodoma: umbral para una nueva arquitectura caribeña. 1989. Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. See also: Thomas S. Marvel, Antonín Nechodoma architect, 1877 – 1928. The Prairie School in the Caribbean. Gainesville: Florida University Press, 1994.

⁷ Some of Nechodoma's remaining works have been already included in the National Register of Historic Places: the 1907 Mission Style United Methodist Church (included in 1987); the 1908 Gothic Revival Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes (included in 1984) and the 1920 Prairie Style Casa Roig (included in 1977).

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of social history as the property represents and is associated with the establishment of the Protestant movement within the local context during the early 20th century. The Church represents the insertion of the Methodist ideals and concepts within the social network of a solidly recognized Catholic society. It is also associated with the religious openness promoted by the change of regime in the island after the Hispanic American War of 1898 and the establishment of the separation of State and Church initiated by the Foraker Act of 1900. The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is also significant under Criterion C, as the property was designed by Antonín Nechodoma, a very important and influential architect in the first decades of the twentieth century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is located in the city of Ponce, in a ward called "la Playa" or "la Marina". A very significant relation developed within the traditional center of Ponce and this ward during the 19th century. During the first decades of the 19th century, Ponce was just another small community surviving by subsistence agriculture, cattle raising and the usual maritime contraband with foreigners. This situation changed dramatically after the 1820's.

Three major social and political events promoted the rapid development of the city. One of them was the significant arrival of French citizens, escaping the Haitian Revolution (1792 – 1804). The French entrepreneurs came with their capital, slaves and commercial connections and promptly got involved in the sugar cane production. The second event was the numerous arrivals of landlords and merchants from Latin America (especially from Venezuela) promoted by the break-down of the Spanish Empire when most of the countries in Central and South America gained their independence from Spain during the 1810s – 1820s. The third important factor was the implementation of the Royal Decree of 1815, which authorized the entrance in Puerto Rico of any foreigner coming from a politically friendly country, as long as they converted into the Catholic faith and oriented their commercial efforts toward the agriculture. These events changed Ponce's character substantially.⁸

⁸ Francisco A. Scarano. Puerto Rico. Cinco siglos de historia. México: McGraw-Hill / Interamericana Editores, S.A. de C.V. 2000. Pp. 407-490.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

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The city's population increased rapidly. By the year 1818, Ponce had around 8,000 inhabitants; it increased to 16,970 by 1836 and to 33,514 by 1876.⁹ The population growth promoted and demanded urban development. In 1818, Ponce consisted of a few inhabited streets around the city square, with a large cattle area to the north and a large rural ward (El Quemado) to the south. But by 1836, Ponce had twenty-nine streets fully urbanized around the town square and seven streets well developed and populated in, the by then important ward, of La Playa (also referred to as *La Marina*). By 1897 (just prior to the United States occupation), Ponce was a flourishing and dynamic city with twenty kilometers of streets in the urban core, thirty-eight public buildings, four education centers, three hospitals, seven locations for public beneficence, a large number of industries and commercial firms, and a great number of exquisite residences that reflected the high standing of Ponce's bourgeoisies.¹⁰ The old immigrant families and the old Creole families created a tight bond through marriage, commercial and political arrangements, facilitating the formation of strong local "national" bourgeoisie.

By the end of the 19th century, Ponce had become, economically and culturally, "the alternate capital" of the island. Ponce's challenge to San Juan was reflected in its political postures, its disregard of official policies coming from San Juan and even materialized through the management of the urban arrangement and use of the civic spaces. The power of Ponce's upper class projected in many different ways, one of the most visible being, its habitat representation. While in San Juan the official Neocolonial style imparted a continuous and monotonous view of the city, Ponce developed a rich variety of architectural production. While San Juan's neocolonial facades represented the official city with his pro-status-quo project, Ponce's diversified architectural facades created an individualist and nationalist discourse.¹¹ It's not strange then that the most important statesman of the time, Luis Muñoz Rivera, by the close of the 19th century, referred to Ponce "*as the most Puerto Rican city of Puerto Rico*".

Ponce's high standing among the other cities was the usual comment of both the casual and the official visitors that arrived after the Spanish American War. The description provided by US Army Lt. William H. Armstrong (commissioned to prepare a topographical research of the island between 1900 -1910) reflected Ponce's preeminence:

⁹ Luis Díaz Hernández. *Apuntes sobre los orígenes de Ponce*. Horizontes, No. 45, Octubre 1979. Pp. 37

¹⁰ Neysa Rodríguez Deynes. *Breviario sobre la historia de Ponce y sus principales lugares de interés*. Gobierno Municipal de Ponce, 1991.

¹¹ Ángel G. Quintero Rivera. *Patricios y plebeyos: burgueses, hacendados, artesanos y obreros. Las relaciones de clase en el Puerto Rico de cambio de siglo*. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1988, Pp. 23 – 98.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Ponce is the largest and the best city on the island. The citizens as a whole are the best on the island. Many of them being college bred men and women. The aristocracy of Puerto Rico is in Ponce. The best homes are about the plaza and on the street leading to the Playa.¹²

Ponce's power was based on the control established by its bourgeoisie (landlords and merchants, foreigners and locals) over the commercial agriculture (sugar, coffee, tobacco, molasses, cattle) of the entire southern region. Even the agro-production from the upper mountain region found its international outlet through Ponce's commercial houses and its port. The heart of Ponce's economic control was actually located at the Marina (la Playa ward). While the town core was the preferred location for the exquisite residences and the grandiose social buildings, la Playa was the preferred location for the massive construction of commercial buildings, stores and warehouses. The Marina port became more important to the national economy than San Juan's (**Fig. 8**). By 1890, it was exporting 33.2 % of the national production; compared with 21.2 % exported from San Juan.¹³



Fig. 8 Partial view of Ponce's port, 1893.¹⁴

¹² Cited in Anibal Sepúlveda Rivera, Puerto Rico Urbano. Atlas histórico de la ciudad puertorriqueña. Volumen 3. Carimar, 2004, Pp. 311.

¹³ Gobierno de Puerto Rico. Estadística general de comercio exterior o balanzas mercantiles. 1895

¹⁴ Museo Histórico de Ponce. Colección fotográfica Juan Gilet, 1893.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Fig. 9. Ponce's urban center and la Marina ward, 1913.



The two-mile stretch from the town square directly to the Marina became known as the Camino Real (Royal Road) and it was considered a First Class Road by the 1830s.¹⁵ From being just a swampy area in 1818, la Playa became the center of Ponce's commercial activity. Every important commercial firm had their offices and warehouses at la Marina. La Playa became the first recipient of every innovative means of communication and transportation. The first telephone lines laid-out in Ponce in 1880 were between the town center and La Marina; the first stretch of the vapor locomotive running through Ponce was from the town square to La Marina; in 1902 the first rail system installed for the new electric trolley followed the Camino Real from the town core to Ponce Playa.¹⁶

By the time Eduardo Newman Gandía's landmark work was published in 1913, Ponce Playa was a dynamic neighborhood with a self-sustained urban development: a population of 5,169 distributed through a residential area dominated by wooden houses, sugar cane farms, churches (the 1882 Virgen del Carmen Catholic Church and the 1908 **Mc Cabe Methodist Church**) schools, hospitals, a cemetery and local industries that promoted the formation of a strong artisan and industrial workers class, besides the agricultural, fisheries and port related hand-labor (**Fig. 9**). The vital importance of La Marina explains why it was targeted as an early site for the missionary work of the new Protestants churches that came to Puerto Rico, immediately after the Spanish American War in 1898.

¹⁵ The section of this road that runs through la Playa it's known today as Eugenio María de Hostos Avenue. This is where the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is located.

¹⁶ Eduardo Newman Gandía. Verdadera y auténtica historia de la ciudad de Ponce. 1913.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

The Mc Cabe Memorial Church

The Protestants missionaries followed the footprints on the United States soldiers, right after the Treaty of Paris was ratified and Puerto Rico was ceded to the American government. Boat loads of land speculators, adventurers, social researchers, photographers, teachers and religious representatives came to the new acquisition in the Caribbean. Just before the physical occupation of Puerto Rico the Protestants factions had divided the island among themselves. Anticipating the United States' victory over Spain, on June 20, 1898, the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church called for a meeting among the main Protestants sections to unify the efforts and to properly divide the work load in the new territories of Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico.¹⁷

By March 1899, eight months after the occupation, executives from the Methodists, Episcopalians, the Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationals, Disciples of Christ, among others, got together in New York to establish the procedures, boundaries and rules in the "evangelical occupation" of Puerto Rico. (Fig. 10)



Fig. 10 Final arrangement of the evangelical division, 18

¹⁷ The Missionary Review of the World, XII (January, 1899): 53; XII: pp. 377-78. "Plans for Cuba and Puerto Rico".

¹⁸ Samuel Silva Gotay, Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico, 1898 - 1930, Hacia una historia del protestantismo evangélico en Puerto Rico, Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997. pp. 113. The letters mean: B = Baptists; M = Methodists; P = Presbyterian; E = Episcopal; C = Congregational; L = Lutheran, etc.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
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That the Baptists and Methodists claimed the major urban centers was a reflection, not only of their negotiation skills, but of their strength. Their powerful position became even stronger when the Civil Government was established, after almost two years of military rule. The 1900 Foraker Act created a local civil administration, controlled by the US Congress and the President, with the three republican branches (although not too clearly separated). The Foraker Act also established the total separation of State and Church, quickly eroding four hundred years of absolutist power of the Catholic Church.¹⁹

Through Reverend A. B. Rudd, the Baptist Church made its entrance in Ponce early in April 1899. By November, the First Baptist Church was officially established in Ponce. Their church, located in the town traditional center, was finished by 1902.²⁰ It would take the Baptists another twenty years to set foot in La Marina, but not the Methodists.

In 1899, the first representatives of the Methodist Church arrived in Puerto Rico. By 1900, under the guidance of Rev. Charles W. Dress, the first congregation was established in San Juan, in House 21 at Cruz Street.²¹ For the next few years, Methodists missionaries started to arrive and were designated to certain specific locations. The first Methodist service at the Marina was conducted on May 7, 1903, by Reverend Edward Erret Wilson, who arrived in Ponce from Canada on April 26, 1903. For the next five years, the Methodists services were conducted at a house located at Padre Noel Avenue (main road in la Playa ward).²² By 1905, Rev. Wilson was replaced by Rev. Alexander H. Leo, under whose guidance the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** was built.²³

The church lot was acquired on March 31, 1906 thanks to a donation of four hundred dollars done by Bishop Charles Mc Cabe.²⁴ Between 1905 -1906, the Methodist Church made an arrangement with Frank B. Hatch, an American contractor residing in Puerto Rico since 1905, to build a series of churches for them. Hatch, born in Ohio and son of a Methodist preacher had recently relocated to Puerto Rico from Florida and had just begun a soon-to-be profitable partnership with architect Antonín Nechodoma. Through this connection, Nechodoma received the assignment to design, at

¹⁹ María Dolores Luque de Sánchez. La ocupación norteamericana y la ley Foraker, 1898-1904. Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1980.

²⁰ Luis Fortuño Janeiro. Álbum histórico de Ponce. Pp. 183.

²¹ Today, House 21 in Cruz Street is call **Edificio Patio Español**, included in the NRHP.

²² El Pescador. Centenario. Cien años de presencia y servicio. 1903-2003. Edición especial, mayo 2003.

²³ Rev. Edward Erret Wilson was transferred to preside the Methodist congregation of Ponce urban center. It was under his pastorship that the United Methodist Church at Villa Street was built. The church was included in the NRHP.

²⁴ Registro de la Propiedad de Puerto Rico. Sección primera de Ponce. Finca Numero 27,480. Inscrita al Folio 131, del Toma 1011 de Ponce.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

least, three churches for the Methodist Council. Nechodoma's first documented building in Puerto Rico was, precisely, the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church**.²⁵

The church construction began in 1907. It was finished by 1908, with a final cost of \$4,500.²⁶ The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church**, which the locals baptized as Playa de Ponce Methodist Church, immediately became an architectural landmark in the area. Its privilege location, facing the Camino Real, gave the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** an immediate exposure to all the frequent users of the busy road. While being located near the town square was a brand of high status in Ponce's urban core, immediate access to the Camino Real created an equal status in la Marina.

Nechodoma recognized the value of his own work when he expressed "This is a gem of architectural beauty".²⁷ Its singular style and its peculiar rock-faced stone blocks construction gave the little church an enormous and unique esthetic attraction. The 1910 Census shows that most of the residential houses in La Playa were made out of wood and palm thatch. Living conditions for the more than 5,000 Playa's inhabitants were very harsh (**Fig 11**). The commercial offices and the warehouses at the Marina, of rubble and bricks, were practically the only solid constructions in this the area (**Fig 12**).²⁸

Fig. 11 A housing area at la Playa, 1910.



Fig. 12 Commercial warehouses at la Marina, 1893.



²⁵ Thomas S. Marvel. Antonín Nechodoma, Architect, 1877-1928: The Prairie School in the Caribbean. Gainesville: University press of Florida, 1994. pp. 27.

²⁶ Archivo Histórico de la Iglesia Metodista. Expediente de la Iglesia Mc Cabe Memorial. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico.

²⁷ Op. Cit. Pp. 29.

²⁸ United States Census Bureau. Government Printing Office. Washington D.C. 1910.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

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The previous facts made the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** even more attractive, as probably the only building of reinforced concrete in the entire sector for many years. This can be corroborated, once again, by William Armstrong's 1910 observations:

Ponce Playa is the sea port of Ponce located on the coast two miles from the city. It is reached by a first class macadam road from the city. On the Playa are the custom and a number of low wholesale houses. There are hundreds of shacks and a few fair wooden houses. Both rail roads extend to the Playa but no passengers are carried on the steam road. There is good telephone and telegraph connection. The sanitary conditions at the Playa are filthy especially around the shacks. **The best building in the Playa is the Methodist chapel (Fig 13).**²⁹



Fig. 13 **Mc Cabe Memorial Church**, 1910ca.³⁰

Quickly, the local population became emotionally attached to the church. This attachment was strongly demonstrated when in 1928 part of the church was damaged by the San Felipe hurricane. The locals, guided by the Catholic Parrish Priest, Gonzalo Noel, organized to help the **Mc Cabe Memorial** with monetary assistance and volunteer work.

²⁹ Anibal Sepúlveda Rivera. Puerto Rico Urbano...pp. 314 (the bold is ours).

³⁰ Ibid.

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Through the years, regardless of religious preference, the local population has embraced the Methodist church as one of their icons, and has always been willing to support it in its endeavors, taking the church's problems and accomplishments as their own. Without concerns of religious orientation, the locals send their children to the **McCabe Memorial** school, inaugurated in 1946. At that time, the teaching facility was known as the *Robinson Methodist School*. Later, the name was changed, in honor of a local teacher and religious leader, to *Rev. Julia Torres School*. In 1960, the Reverend Julia Torres, born in La Playa, became the first woman in Puerto Rico to be ordained as a Methodist Minister. Rev. Torres directed both the Church and the school for almost twelve years.

The **McCabe Memorial Church** embodies the wide historic process of the establishment of the protestants factions in Puerto Rico; defying the monopolistic control of the Catholic Church established during Spanish colonial times. It embodies the ideological penetration of the American values within a Hispanic culture. It also represents the introduction of the republican's postulates of separation of State and Church, early in the 20th century, when the opposite was the Puerto Rican reality. The church is also associated with an important master in our early 20th century architecture, Antonín Nechodoma. Through one hundred years, the **McCabe Memorial Church** has kept a high level of integrity of volume, symmetry, location, materials and appearance (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14. The **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** through the years (from left): 1910, 1930 and 2007.



But, in the end, the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church** is important to everyone in La Playa, not because of all these significant and complex factors, but because no one can conceive the area without it. The church current pastor, Reverend Yolanda Correa, said it best: "When the old bell in this church tolls, is not only for the Methodists. It tolls for everyone in la Playa".

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National Park Service**

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

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**United States Department of the Interior
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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

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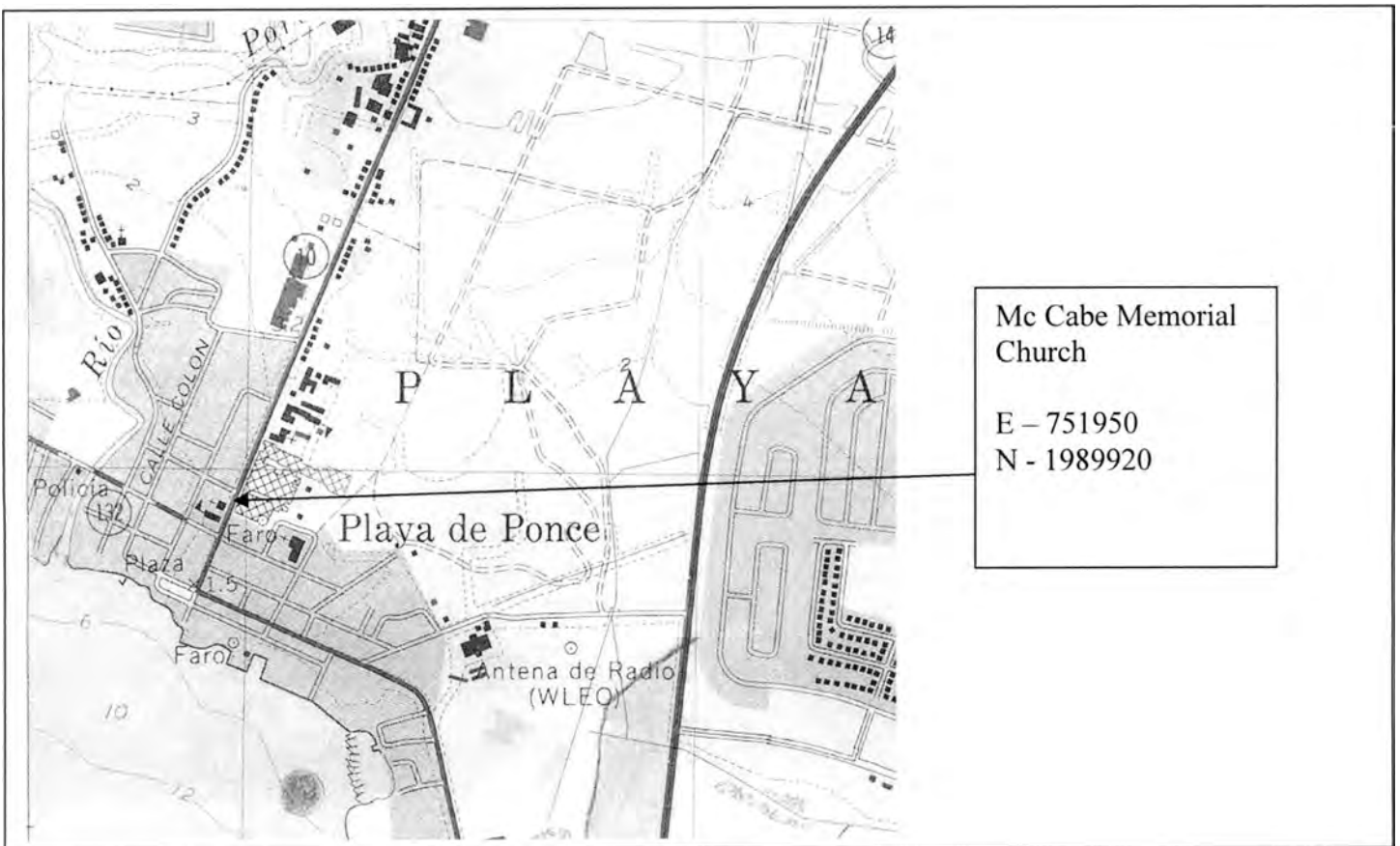
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Mc Cabe Memorial Church
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Geographical Data



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Mc Cabe Memorial Church

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PUERTO RICO, Ponce

DATE RECEIVED: 2/27/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/17/08
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/01/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/11/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000283

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 4.11.08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



IGLESIA
METODISTA UNIDA

DOMINGO
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM
CULTOS
A LAS 10:00 AM
Y 7:00 PM

10:00 AM
7:00 PM
REV. TOL. M. D. C. M.

FAVOR DEJAR
A LOS NIÑOS EN EL
PORTON

ENTRADA
DE
ESTUDIANTES









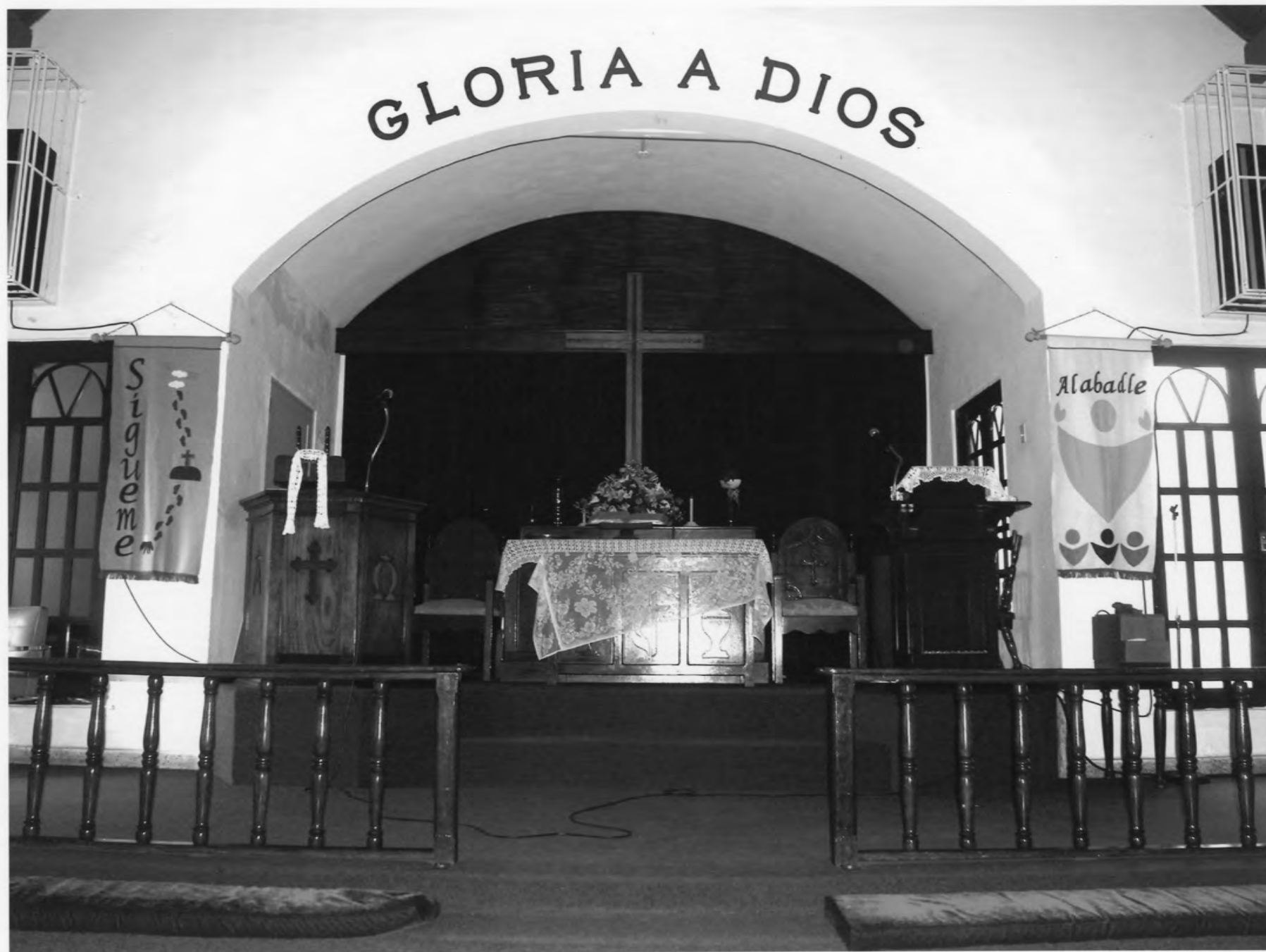












Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1941. Field checked 1942 Revised from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1970

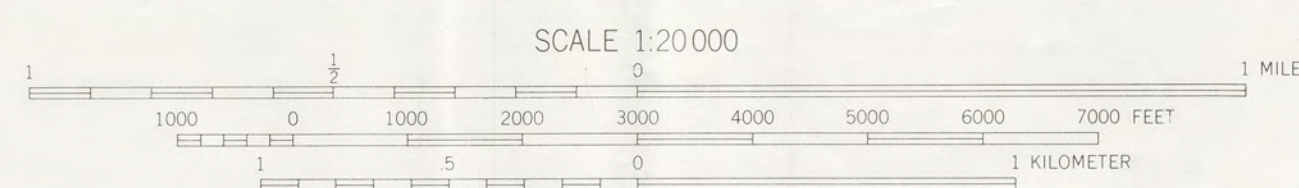
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 902 (1970), 926 and 927 (1968). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.

Polyconic projection. Puerto Rico Datum, 1940 adjustment
2000-meter grid ticks based on Puerto Rico coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19

Barrio and municipality boundaries by the Puerto Rico Planning Board
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Kilometric reference distances shown in red

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1982

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 METERS
DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-METER CONTOURS
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 1-METER CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.3 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS, SAN JUAN, P. R. 00910
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Church	Insular Route

PLAYA DE PONCE, P. R.
N1752.5-W6630/7.5

00069

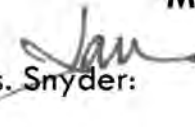
1970
PHOTOREVISED 1982
DMA 1222 II SE-SERIES E88



February 26, 2008

Ms. Janet Snyder Matthews, Ph.D.
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" Eye Street, N.W. , 8th floor
Washington, D. C. 20005

**SUBMISSION: MC CABE MEMORIAL CHURCH
MUNICIPALITY OF PONCE**


Dear Ms. Snyder:

We are pleased to submit for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places the nomination of the **Mc Cabe Memorial Church**, located in the Municipality of Ponce, Puerto Rico.

If you should have any questions on the nomination, please contact Arch. Berenice Sueiro, ALT, Conservation Manager.

Sincerely,



Aida Belén Rivera Ruiz, Archaeologist
State Historic Preservation Officer

ABR/BRS/JLS/jvr

Enclosures

*I look forward to
seeing you next week
at the NCSHPO meeting!*