

PH0503801

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 15 1977

DATE ENTERED JUL 7 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Sawyers Bar Catholic Church

AND/OR COMMON
St. Joseph's Catholic Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Klamath National Forest

CITY, TOWN
Sawyers Bar

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1

STATE
California

VICINITY OF

CODE
06

COUNTY
Siskiyou

CODE
093

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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
USDA--Forest Service, California, Region 5

STREET & NUMBER
630 Sansome Street

CITY, TOWN
San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE
California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Public Domain

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
USFS Site Reconnaissance No. 05-05-54-7

DATE
1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Klamath National Forest, Supervisor's Office

CITY, TOWN
1215 S. Main St., Yreka

STATE
California 96097

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Area: Elevation: 2160'

Geology: Parent Material: Pre-Cretaceous meta volcanic rocks consisting of greenstone and greenstone schist having meta sedimentary interbeds of chert, argillite and limestone.

Soil: Alluvial

Vegetation: Scattered throughout the area are conifers, consisting mainly of Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) and Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) forty to one-hundred years old, and hardwoods, consisting of oak (Quercus spp.) and madrone (Arbutus menziesii). The sparse understory consists of brush and grasses.

The Church: The Sawyers Bar Catholic Church was built in 1855 on a gentle southward sloping bench above the North Fork of the Salmon River. Later, the entire surrounding area was hydraulically mined, leaving the church and cemetery on a hill or knoll (ca. 1900). The top of the knoll is sloping 10-30%, just over one-half acre in area with a trapezium high at the southwest corner with its long axis oriented southwest (front) to northeast.

The church was built of locally whipsawed lumber by the Sawyers Bar residents under the direction of the priest. Parts have been rebuilt, replaced or repaired but it still retains its original appearance.

It is a wood-framed one story building with a medium gabled roof of hand-split shakes. The eaves project slightly. The church is 46'7½" x 21'8½" with a 6'6½" porch, steps approaching from the east.

It is 19 feet high from the top of the foundation to the ridge pole and is topped by a six-foot wooden cross located at the front. The cross is the only item which originally distinguished it from the other buildings in the community.

A rod has been added perpendicular to the ridge line at the level of the eaves through the center of the church to give strength to the building and keep the roof from spreading.

There are six windows, three on each side of the church which are the only means of lighting the interior. No other provisions for light were ever made. Each window is double sashed, double hung with 12 panes each sash. The window glass was originally painted white to simulate stained glass with a cross scratched into the center of each pane. Both the sash and the glass have been replaced; some of the original panes can be found in the Siskiyou County Museum and the church storeroom. *

* See Continuation Sheet.

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The front of the church has been replaced with local cedar planks of overlapping boards. The sides and rear of the church are of vertical board and batten design. The porch has been rebuilt at least twice. After the first rebuilding (ca. 1900) the porch and steps descended directly to the front with open wood railings. During the last renovation (ca. 1956) the porch and steps were put back as close to the original as possible with the steps descending to the east.

A concrete foundation was laid to replace the original wooden one (ca. 1956). There never has been a basement in the church.

The only entrance to the church is a double doorway in the front. Two plain doors have been added to protect the original ones which are very weathered. The church has always been kept locked, presently with a padlock. The former lock was of hand made cast iron about one foot square and two inches thick. The key was nine inches long and weighed about one-half pound. Both the original lock and key are missing (Burrelle, 1975).

As one enters through the double doors he looks directly to the chancel at the north end of the church. It measures 15 feet wide, 9 feet deep and is flanked by two small rooms 4' x 9'. "The room on the left facing the chancel was originally used as a sacristy but is now a storeroom. The other room on the right (contained a prie-dieu" (Van Norden 1950:3). It is presently used as a confessional. There is a window in each room but no doors into the chancel. Separating the chancel are eight pews and on the right are nine. The main room is lit by two windows on each side.

The altar is in excellent condition and is probably the best-preserved part of the church. It is said that the original priest built it himself (Van Norden, 1950:4). Hung over the altar is a painting of the crucifixion which was brought from Austria by the priest. The painting is about 7 feet high and 6 feet wide. The painter is unknown but the name "Knibbe" was discovered on the canvas (Feustal, 1950:2). The lower two inches of the canvas (containing the name) was cut off to fit it into its present frame (O'Brian, 1951).

The interior walls were bare but about 1900 they were covered with white sailcloth to relieve the rough interior and conserve heat. The cloth was replaced during the 1950's renovation. During the 1940's the stove which provided heat was removed because of its deteriorated condition. The wood-burning stove was never replaced. At the rear of the church was a lean-to which served as living quarters for the priest. It has since been removed (date unknown).

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The Graveyard: To the east and northeast of the church is located the graveyard. The graves date back to 1850. The cemetery is still in use with the last burial in 1974. Small fences around the family plots are in disrepair and some of the old hand carbed headslabs have been removed by vandals.

The six remaining carved wood head slabs (in 1930 there were 14) have been removed and placed in storage in the church. They were carbed by the first priest. Those in storage are very weathered and most of the wording carbed on them is illegible, but the designs are plainly obvious. The headslabs are 4-6 feet in height and about 18" wide. They have been carbed on both sides. None of the wood headslabs remain in the cemetery.

About half of the visible graves have tombstones or plaques; the remainder are unmarked.

Originally, there was a wooden fence surrounding the church and cemetery but this deteriorated so badly that it was removed (date unknown). The church and cemetery are under special use permit from the Forest Service (3/10/53).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

After gold was discovered in California at Sutters Mill in 1848, the miners spread out seeking gold. In 1850 gold was discovered on the North Fork of the Salmon River (Rosborough, 1950) in what was Klamath County (now Siskiyou County, California). The miners formed the town of Bestville located 1/2 mile west of the present day Sawyers Bar.

In 1853 Father Florian Schwenninger, a Benedictine monk, came into the Salmon River country to administer the rites of the Catholic Church to the local miners (Walsh, 1946:263), persuading them to build a church at Bestville. In 1855 the construction of the church was started and in 1857 Mass was said for the first time (Delaney, 1920:1).

When gold was discovered under the town of Bestville the population moved to Sawyers Bar 1/2 mile to the east. The church remained.

In 1868 Father Florian died and the parish of Saint Joseph's became a mission church of Yreka (Walsh, 1946:269).

"Some 40 years later..., the people along the North Fork (of the Salmon River), regarding the church as a Gold Rush shrine and a monument to the beloved Padre of Paradise Flat (as the area surrounding the church became known), became aroused by hydraulic operators, who began turning their monitors on the unmined earth in the vicinity of the church. They...had cut a deep channel in the back of (what was considered) the church property.

"The mining company offered to move the Church and its graveyard to any other location on the river and, as well, pay royalties on the profits for the privilege of mining the church ground. The people (of Sawyers Bar) refused... (talking) of lynching the first man to turn a monitor on the ground beneath the church." (O'Brien, May 4, 1951)

Through the years it has always been the local residents who looked after the church with little help from the Diocese. A small box for donations was kept on the last pew in the church. The money was used for upkeep and repairs (Burrelle, 1975). The church and cemetery have been kept up as well as possible and only completely rehabilitated once in 1957 (ibid.) to bring it as near as possible to its original condition.

From the time the church first opened, those of all creeds attended it but the services have always been Catholic. The attendance has frequently overflowed out into the Church yard with only one quarter being able to crowd inside (Delaney, 1920:1). Services are still held, though less frequently than in the past. They are presently held on the first and third Sundays during the summer

* See Continuation Sheet.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Burrelle, Carl Personal Communication; Jan. 24, 1975, at Forks of Salmon, California 96031. Performed the major part of the 1957 restoration.
- Delaney, Richard Oldest Church in Northern Calif., unpub. manuscript. 1920. In, Siskiyou Co. Museum file, Yreka, California.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.59
 UTM REFERENCES

4571-950					
A	1,0	48186,0,0	4,57,20,0,0	B	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C				D	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning fractional portion of Mineral Lot #40 in Sec. 29, T40N, R11W, MDM, at corner #8 of Lot #40 bears S 3° 03' 52" E 164.21', then S 7° 00' W 267.98', then 39° 30' E 164.0', then 54° 15' W 110.80 ft, then S 71° 25' W 250.95 ft. to centerline of County Road, then N 44° 42' W 78.77 ft. along centerline of County Rd., then 58° 29' W 152.69 ft., then 68° 06' W 265.68 ft. along centerline of County Road, then 59° 20' W 40.05 ft. along centerline of County Road, then N 30° 43' E 74.41 ft., then 62° 29' E 223.01 ft., then
 (See Continuation Sheet)

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: P. Allan Bier
 ORGANIZATION: USDA Forest Service, Klamath National Forest
 STREET & NUMBER: Salmon River Ranger District
 CITY OR TOWN: Sawyers Bar
 DATE: March 12, 1975
 TELEPHONE: 916 Toll 4600
 STATE: California 96027

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

Robert Meads
 JUL 26 1977
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE: *Tom G. Smith* Director of Recreation
 DATE: 7-8-77

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Charles Delaney* COLS
 DATE: 7-7-78
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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months.

Henry L. Walsh, S.J., says, "I have come to the conclusion that this modest little house of worship that still graces the heights of Paradise Flat is the most valuable relic still left to us of the pioneer missionary era of the Catholic Church in Northern California. It is the oldest in point of time and retains more of its original form than any of the former century." (1948).

The painting of the crucifixion was examined by artist T.B. O'Connor in about 1926. He said, "The exquisite coloring and mainly the strict attention to facial details of this picture indicate the touch of a feminine hand, presumably a nun of South Austria or Northern Italy of the 18th Century. With the exception of the arm and hand of Mary Magdalene and the hands of St. Ann indicated above the mother of Jesus, the figures are to perfect scale. The picture is priceless and should be better preserved." (Western Sentinel, 1928)

The Curator of the Siskiyou County Museum, Christine Sellman, states:

"This church has served the area since its construction, and is the oldest standing Catholic Church in Superior California. The church still serves the entire community--both Catholic and Protestant--as services are held at regular intervals, even though there is no resident pastor.

"St. Joseph's Church is important to the historic record as it is one of the few remaining examples of rural 1850's California architecture. It is also a direct link to the past as it is still a living facility, in use for the past 120 years. The majority of similar buildings have either been destroyed by fire, time or other natural elements, or have been abandoned to the past. The Sawyers Bar Church... (is) among the oldest remaining public structures in the vicinity. It has withstood the destructive forces of hydraulic mining and local fires, and is in little danger of being a victim of urban development.

"It is one excellent example of an important facet of life in Gold Rush California." (1975)

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- Feustal, Glen
1950 Catholic Church at Sawyers, unpub. Ms. on file Univ. of San Francisco, John B. McGloin, S.J.
- Fitzgerald, Arlene J.
1965 "The Little Padre of Paradise Flat", in The West, April 1965, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 18.
- O'Brien, Robert
1951 San Francisco Chronicle, May 4, 1951. "Riptides: Siskiyou County Notebook--The Padre's Painting".
- Rosborough, Alex J.
1950 Letter to A.G. Feustel, May 31, 1950. On file, Siskiyou County Museum, Yreka, California.
- Sellman, Christine
1975 Letter of significance of the Church at Sawyers Bar from the Siskiyou County Museum, to P. Allan Bier, Sawyers Bar, California. On file, U.S. Forest Service District Office, Sawyers Bar, California.
- Van Norden, Rudolph W.
1950 The Catholic Church at Sawyers Bar, Siskiyou County, California. Unpub. Ms. from files of: John B. McGloin, S.J., Professor of History, University of San Francisco, California 94117.
- Walsh, Henry L., S.J.
1946 Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails: The Story of Pioneer Priests of Northern California. University of Santa Clara Press.
-
1948 Letter to unknown newspaper in Sacramento, June 21, 1948. On file, Siskiyou County Museum, Yreka, California.
-
- 1928 Plaque placed on Church, no title to article, copied from the Western Sentinel of Etna, Siskiyou County, California, October 12, 1928. On file, Siskiyou County Museum, Yreka, California.

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... S 59° 40' E 722.54 ft. to the True Point of Beginning and containing 6.41 acres, more or less.

Note: The verbal description is from the Special Use Permit issued to The Sacramento Diocese, St. Joseph's Church, Sawyers Bar, by the Forest Service. The document is dated July 22, 1954. The total acreage in the Use Permit is 6.41 acres. The property being considered for Nomination to the National Register contains 0.59 acre -- the actual plot of land the church and cemetery occupy.