

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 23 1987

date entered DEC 3 1987

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

1. Name

historic St. Joseph's Catholic Church

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Miller Street, N.E.

N/A not for publication

city, town Palm Bay

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 012

county Brevard

code 009

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Diocese of Orlando

street & number P.O. Box 1800

city, town Orlando

N/A vicinity of

state Florida 32802

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Brevard County Courthouse

street & number 400 South Street

city, town Titusville

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A

federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church is a one-story, wood frame, rectangular building found at the northeast intersection of Miller Street and Pollack Avenue in a residential section of Palm Bay, Florida. The church has a gable roof and stands on a low concrete wall foundation. It has board-and-batten siding on all of the major exterior wall surfaces, except for the gable of the main (east) facade which is covered with wood shingles.

There is a small wind at the rear (west) of the church. This section of the building dates from the same period as the main block of the structure and is slightly narrower, having been attached off-center to accommodate a small entrance stoop at the southwest corner of the building. The addition is also sheathed in board-and-batten and has a gable roof. Its ridge line, however, is lower than the one on the main block of the building.

The main facade of the church is three bays wide and has an entrance hood over the central entranceway. This hood has an open pitched roof and is supported by side brackets. Like the gable of the main roof, the hood has decorative truss beams in its center. Large carved brackets also support the eaves of the main roof along the side elevations of the building. The main entranceway stands at the top of a short flight of concrete steps which has a metal railing at each of the outer corners. The steps may be original, but the railings were added at a later date. The eight panel double doors are also from a later period, as a 1917 photograph of the church shows that the original doors had five panels.

The transom over the main entrance contains textured stained glass. All of the other windows in the building have clear textured glass, except for a small diamond-shaped pane in the upper sash which is stained. Each of the major windows has four lights in the lower sash and a mullioned upper sash which is arranged in a "Gothic arch" motif.

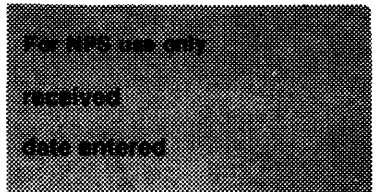
The north side of the main block of the church has nine bays of windows, while the south has eight windows and two doors. The fire escape and handicap access ramp are both recent additions. The rear wing has two bays of original windows on the north elevation and an original window and door bay on the south. The door, itself, and the stoop, however, are not original features.

The small bell tower that sits astride the peak of the main roof of the church, near the main facade, is composed of open post and trusswork, with a square base and a pavilion roof surmounted by a wooden cross. The tower contains the original bell purchased in 1914. The church has been traditionally painted white, except for the gable shingles, a portion of the bell tower, and the sill of the building which were originally painted a dark color, as is evidenced by the photograph taken in 1917.

Except for the chancel, which was covered with dark paneling in 1976, the sanctuary of the church is a large open space with pews flanking a wide central aisle. There are no side aisles. At the western end of the sanctuary is a low dias on which stand the altar and a lectern. The walls are plain, except for the bas-relief panels marking the Stations of the Cross. The coffered pressed metal

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is an original feature. From it hang ceiling fans and "Gothic" style light fixtures dating from a later period. All of the existing furnishing were installed decades after the church was built in 1914. The rear addition of the church contains the vestry and church office.

Contributing Resources: St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Non-Contributing: None

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ 1800-1899	___ commerce	X exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
X 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1914 **Builder/Architect** Frank Minehardt

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Joseph's Catholic Church is significant for (A) its association with the founding of the city of Palm Bay, Florida and the persons who were instrumental in establishing the Catholic community there. The building is also significant (C) for embodying the characteristics of the "Stick Style," a type of structure that finds its roots in the English Medieval building tradition as adapted to American tastes and native materials.

The city of Palm Bay had its beginnings in 1870 when John Tillman, J.B. Creech, and M.J. Culpepper formed the firm of Culpepper, Creech & Co. to purchase a 75 acre tract of land along the Indian River to develop as citrus groves. The company built a packing house at "Tillman's Wharf" (now Castaway Point) at the mouth of Turkey Creek. There the fruit was crated and loaded directly onto sailing craft and steamboats for the trip north. Later the packing house became the town's first school.¹

The three partners in the venture were all from Quitman, Georgia, and had been partners in a general merchandising concern. Tillman petitioned the United States Postal Service for a local post office, which was officially established on March 4, 1887, and the area became known as the Town of Tillman. The settlement, however, had only 40 residents and was not incorporated and had no elected officials. By the end of the century, Tillman and his partners had abandoned the citrus business and returned to Georgia.²

The townsite and groves were bought by the Florida Indian River Catholic Colony, a North Dakota corporation, which sought to establish a Catholic community in central Florida. On July 21, 1911, the state of Florida issued a permit to the corporation to do business in the state. The company ran advertisements in Midwestern newspapers and magazines promising "cheap land that would produce two crops a year." Real estate agents traveled through those sections of the Midwest where persons of German and Slavic ancestry were to be found, dispensing gifts of citrus and describing the riches that awaited those farmers who moved to the Sunshine State.³

By 1912, families from Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Oklahoma began arriving in the sleepy hamlet of Tillman, brought there by the Florida East Coast Railway which had been pushed down the east coast of the state during the 1880s and 90s. By 1914, approximately 100 families had joined the "colony." They purchased land at \$30 to \$40 an acre but found that the poorly drained, sandy soil did not respond well to the cultivation of vegetables or citrus. The new residents were also plagued by mosquitoes and unexpected freezes which destroyed the crops which they had hoped to ship to northern markets.⁴

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuations Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Melbourne East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 9 & 10, Block 15, Plat of Tillman

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 20, 1987

street & number R.A. Gray Building telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida 32301

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



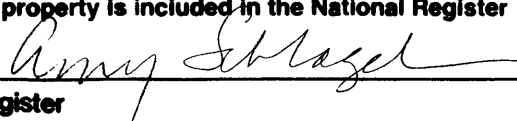
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

April 20, 1987

For NPS use only

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



date

12/3/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

When the new settlers of Tillman first began to arrive, Brevard County did not have a resident Catholic Priest. The spiritual needs of the county's isolated catholics were administered by priests who travelled the circuits of rural Florida, often covering great distances by horseback or boat. The first mass in Tillman was celebrated in 1913 in Joseph Slama's General Store by Father Gabriel Ruppert from Fort Pierce, Florida. The Indian River Catholic Colony Corporation had promised to build the community a church but had failed to do so. The citizens of the town, therefore, undertook to build the church with their own resources, under Father Gabriel's leadership.⁵

The lumber for the structure was purchased from the Union Sawmill, located just north of town, and labor was contributed by members of the parish. The designer of the church was said to be a man named Frank Minehardt about which no biographical information seems to be available. St. Joseph's Church was completed and dedicated in October, 1914, by Bishop Curley from St. Augustine. Following the dedication, 78 children received the sacrament of confirmation from Bishop Curley.⁶

St. Joseph's Church served not only the residents of Tillman, but also the citizens of nearby Melbourne and Eau Gallie as well. Worshipers arrived by boat and wagon, but the lack of roads made it impossible for many persons to attend services regularly. Some of the county's more distant residents contented themselves with coming to church only once a year, usually to celebrate mass on Christmas day.⁷

In 1923, the parishioners built a rectory as a residence for the priest on the northwest corner of Miller Street and Hickory Avenue. A year later, Father Patrick Bresnahan was appointed the first resident priest of St. Joseph's. The town of Tillman had remained unincorporated, and in 1924 its citizens decided to request approval of a charter of incorporation under the new name of the "Town of Palm Bay" from the state legislature. The charter was granted by the legislature during the regular session of 1925. The limits of the new town included all of the original town of Tillman, plus additional territory. Pending an election to be held the next year, a town commission and mayor were appointed by the citizens of Palm Bay. On December 16, 1925, the United States Post Office announced that the name of the local post office had been changed from Tillman to Palm Bay.⁸

Since St. Joseph's Church was constructed in 1914, the population of Palm Bay has grown from a few hundred persons to more than 31,000, but the small, wood frame church continues to serve the Catholics in the community. Architecturally, the church is unusual in its use of the Stick style, rather than the more familiar Gothic Revival, for ecclesiastical purposes. Both styles in the

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SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

United States are derived from the Medieval building tradition. The Stick style, however, is a native hybrid type that links the earlier Gothic Revival style with the later Queen Anne. The Stick style grew from the Picturesque Gothic ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing and flourished in house pattern books of the 1860s and '70s. Unlike Gothic Revival buildings, the Stick style stressed the wall surface itself as a decorative element rather than merely as a plane with the principal decorative detailing applied at the doors, windows, or cornices. Elaborate examples often display a wide and imaginative use of exterior siding, including half-timber motifs, horizontal and vertical bands, and shingles. Houses tend to have simple, boxy plans, although projecting bays and ells are not uncommon. Gabled and cross-gabled roofs are the most common type, and these usually have decorative trusses at the apex, like those found on the main roof and porch hood of St. Joseph's Church.

Other details of St. Joseph's typical of the Stick style are the carved brackets supporting the eaves of the roof and the "stickwork" of the small bell tower. The wall surfaces gain colorful texture by the use of board-and-batten on the major elevations and shingles in the gable. The use of board-and-batten, however, is more typical of Gothic Revival than the Stick style. Another allusion to the "Gothic" is the use of the pointed arch motif in the mullioned upper sashes of the building's windows.

The picturesque quality of the exterior of St. Joseph's Church does not carry over to the interior. The original floor, walls, and pressed metal ceiling survive, but the pews have been replaced and the chancel area was modified in 1976 to accommodate changes in church liturgy adopted by the Vatican. Despite the changes made to the interior of the structure and the construction of a fire escape and a handicap access ramp on the south elevation of the building, St. Joseph's remains a significant landmark because (1) of its unusual use of the Stick style for church architecture, (2) its association with the founding and settlement of Palm Bay (Tillman) by Catholic "colonists" from the Midwest, and (3) its distinction as being the oldest Catholic church in continuous use in Brevard County.

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SIGNIFICANCE--FOOTNOTES

1. Georgiana Kjerulff, Tales of Old Brevard, pp. 80-82; McKemy and Stone, The Melbourne Bicentennial Book, pp. 113-114; Brevard County Deed Records, Book 1, Pages 186-188.
2. *ibid.*; State of Florida, Incorporation Records, Book 3, Page 374.
3. Harold Bryant, Sr., Pioneering Knights, pp. 1-3; Kjerulff, pp. 80-82.
4. *ibid.*
5. Bryant, pp. 1-9.
6. *ibid.*; Brevard County Deed Records, Book 66, Page 137.
7. Kjerulff, pp. 80-82.
8. Bryant, p. 6.
9. Melbourne Times 16 December 1925; U.S., Postal Service, Florida Post Offices.

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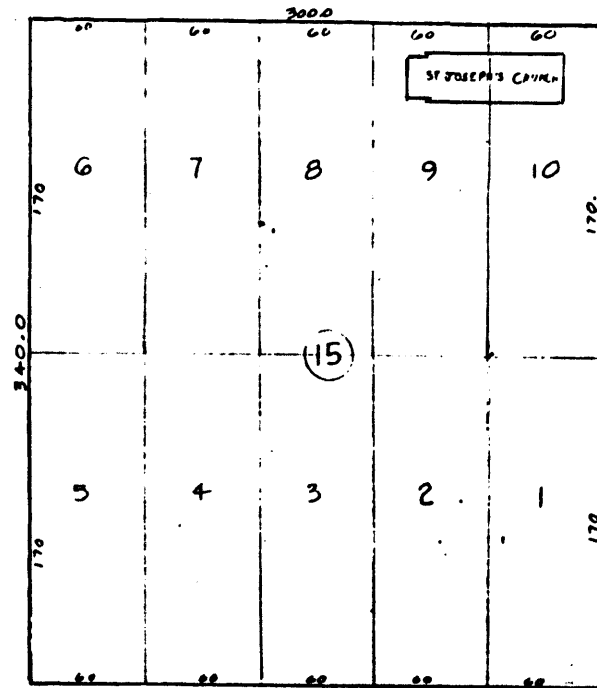
Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

1. Brevard County Deed Records, Book 1, Pages 186-188.
2. Brevard County Deed Records, Book 66, Page 137.
3. Bryant, Harold F., Sr. Pioneering Knights: A History of the Father Gabriel Council #3746 Knights of Columbus. Palm Bay: Dick's Printing, Inc., 1979.
4. Kjerulff, Georgiana. Tales of Old Brevard. Melbourne: Florida Institute of Technology, 1972.
5. McKemy, N.B. and Stone, E.M. The Melbourne Bicentennial Book. Melbourne: Brevard Graphics, 1976.
6. Melbourne Times 16 December 1925
7. State of Florida, Department of State, Incorporation Records, Book 3, Page 374.
8. U.S., Postal Service, Official Records, Washington, D.C., List of Post Offices in Florida, Tillman and Palm Bay.

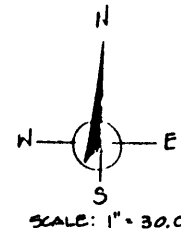
POLLAK AVE

LICHTY ST



ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH

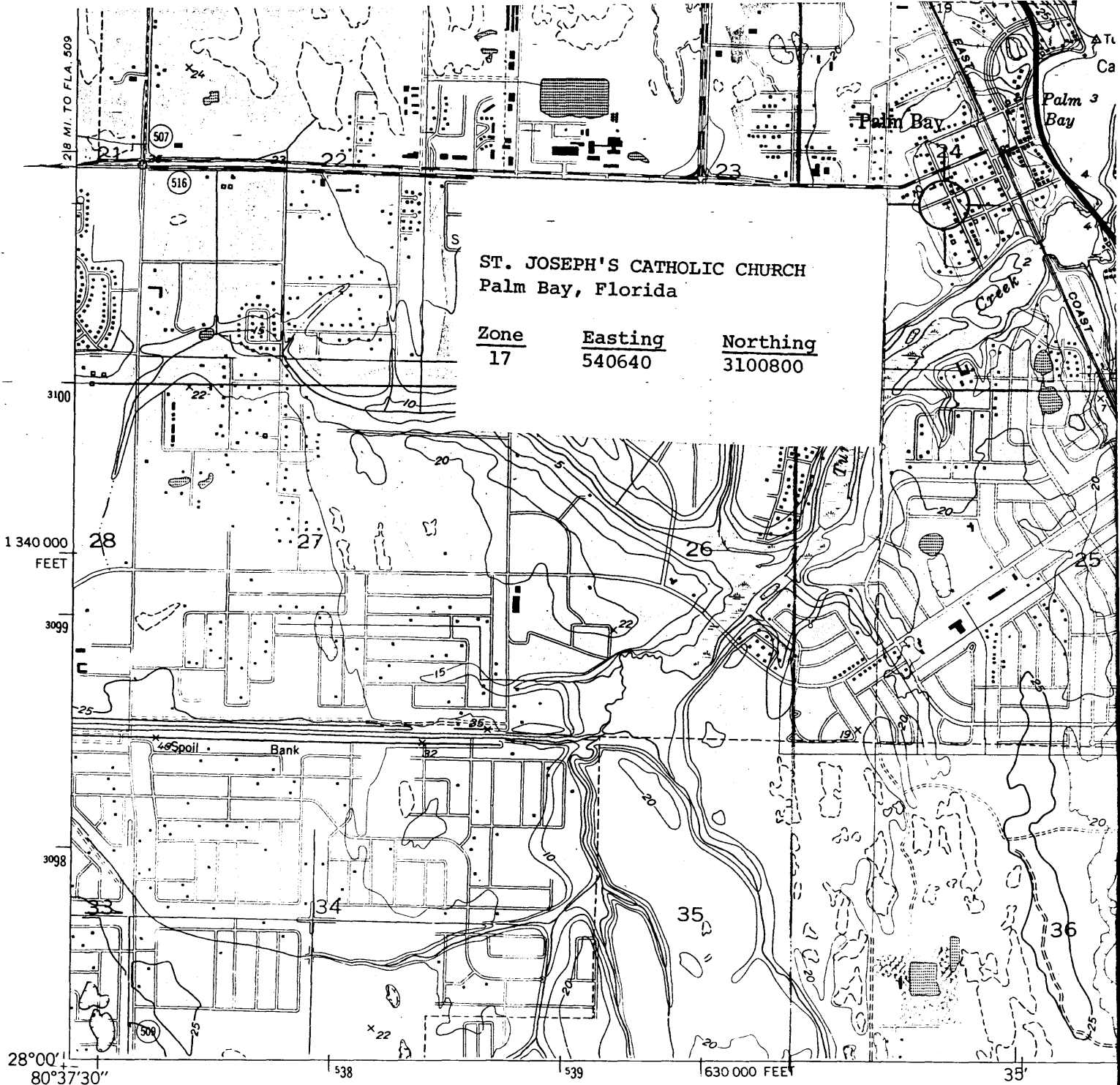
15



PLAT OF TILLMAN - BLOCK 15
 SW 1/4, SECTION 24 RANGE 37E
 ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPLEX
 PALM BAY, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

HICKORY ST

MILLER ST



ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
 Palm Bay, Florida

Zone	Easting	Northing
17	540640	3100800

28°00'
 80°37'30"

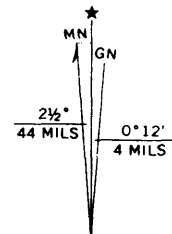
Mapped by the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USC&GS(C), USED(E) and
 Florida Geodetic Survey (F)

Culture and drainage in part compiled from
 aerial photographs taken 1947
 Topography by plane-table methods 1948. Field check 1949
 Hydrography from charts surveyed 1878 to 1939

Polyconic projection
 10,000-foot grid based on Florida coordinate system, east zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 17, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
 move the projection lines 29 meters south and
 21 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

Dashed land lines indicate approximate location

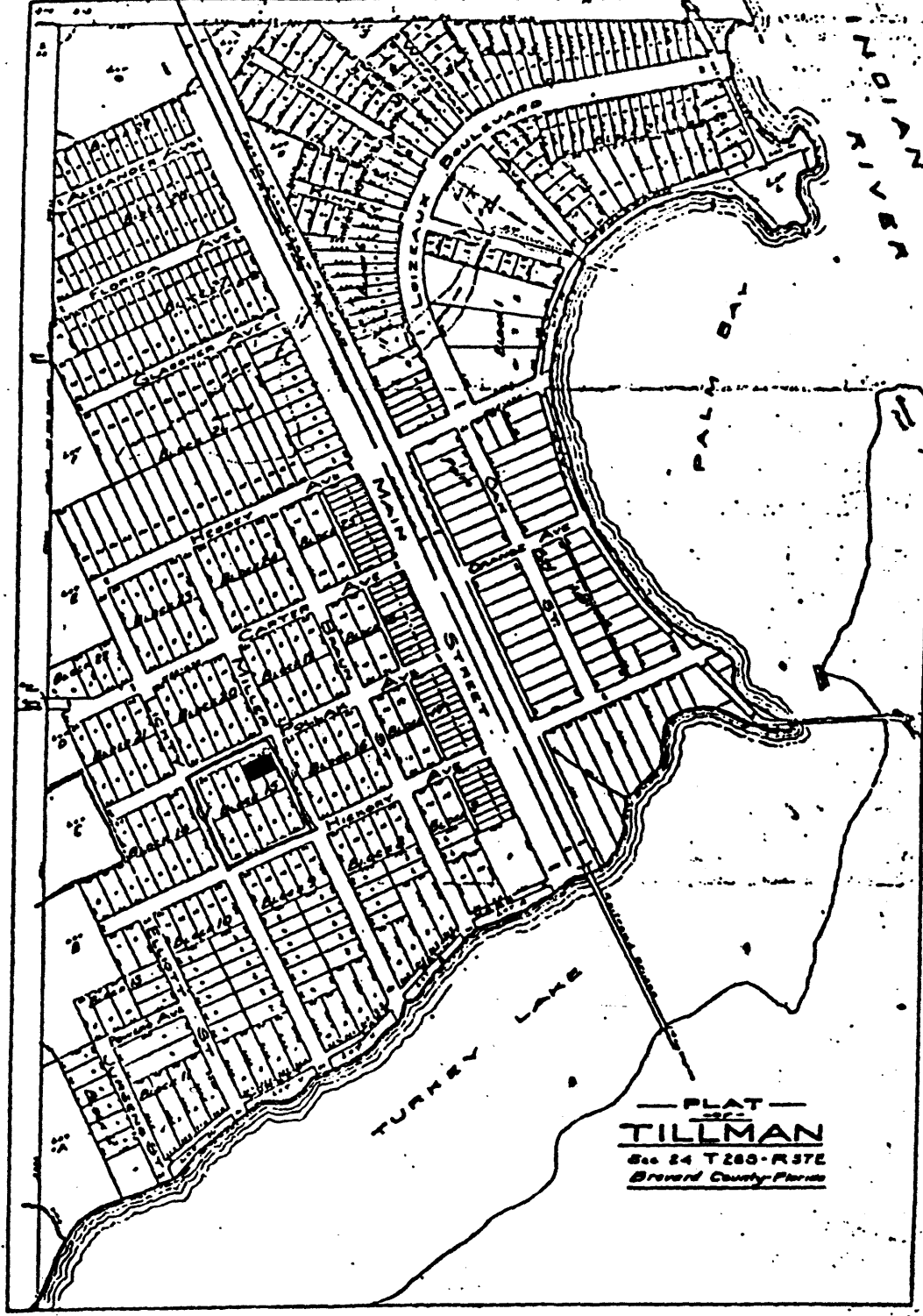


UTM GRID AND 1980 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey
 from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other source data
 This information not field checked. Map edited 1980

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

LLSMERE NW
 4839 1 NW



— PLAT —
TILLMAN
Sec 24 T28S-R37E
Brevard County Florida