

PH0504661

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 26 1977

DATE ENTERED

MAR 8 1978

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  
 AND/OR COMMON

Holy Child Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Tijeras

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE  
35

COUNTY

Bernalillo

CODE

001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

New Mexico State Highway Department

STREET & NUMBER

Box #1149

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

July 15, 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

New Mexico State Planning Office, 505 Don Gaspar

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Originally constructed circa 1912 as the Roman Catholic chapel for the central New Mexico village of Tijeras, Holy Child Church is an irregularly shaped, pitched-roof building made of adobe and stone. Located in Tijeras Cañon, known in early Spanish records as the Cañon de Carnué, the village is 16 miles east of Albuquerque on Interstate Highway 40 which follows a traditional route between the Rio Grande Valley and the plains of eastern New Mexico. Now nearing completion near Tijeras the four-lane highway dominates the village and constricts the cañon which divides the Sandia Mountains on the north from the Manzanos to the south.

Surrounded by junipers, locusts and chamiso, which characterize the cañon vegetation, the church stands behind the village post office on a narrow strip of land between the Interstate on the north and a frontage road to the south. After the route of the new highway was determined, the church property was acquired by the New Mexico Highway Department as part of the necessary right-of-way and a much larger church was erected one half mile east of the old one. A subsequent change of plans made the acquisition superfluous for highway purposes and now the Tijeras community is actively engaged in a program to maintain and restore the chapel.

Erected on a foundation of irregularly shaped native stone, the nucleus of the church is a simple 20'x30' structure with 2' thick walls made of adobe brick now covered with a layer of white painted hard plaster. Although the church is only about 65 years old, the irregular planes in both the interior and exterior wall surfaces, the result of traditional materials and craftsmanship, give the appearance of a much older building. Four stone and concrete steps flanked by segments of a sandstone retaining wall lead to a small terrace at the south end of the building in front of the main entrance which is composed of double wood paneled doors. The gable end over the entrance is covered with cedar shingles. Made of corrugated aluminum sheeting, the roof is embellished by a cupola at the south end of the ridge which formerly housed the church bell, recently moved to the new church. A 3' high cross has been erected at the apex of the cupola which is topped by cedar shingles and sided with the same aluminum material which protects the roof. Two double hung windows with four over four lights have been placed in both the east and west facades. All the sash is badly deteriorated.

In New Mexico Hispanic communities it is traditional for secular church activities such as building maintenance to be entrusted to an elected official known as the mayordomo. In 1940 this responsibility at Holy Child Church was assumed by Tomas Gonzales who began a program to enlarge the original building. The first addition, a 15' adobe extension roughly in the form of a semi-circle, extended the north end of the church and provided a new sanctuary. When this work was completed, a small 10' square sacristy made of local sandstone was added on the east, thus forming a sort of tee. Also painted white, it is entered by a small half-glass door on the south and is lighted by two sliding windows in the north and south walls. The rough boards which compose the ceiling are laid on top of vigas (beams) made of peeled logs cut in the nearby mountains.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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

The building known as Holy Child Church, an excellent example of a New Mexico Hispanic village chapel, has served the small mountain community of Tijeras intermittently for over sixty years. Until recent times the isolation of most early New Mexico settlements, the difficulties of travel and the importance of Roman Catholic ceremonies in Spanish culture, made the church the traditional center of community activities. Today the original chain of hamlets along the cañon extending from Primera Agua on the east to Carnué on the west have become satellites of the Albuquerque metropolitan area and have almost lost their identity. Although a few houses and barns constructed in traditional styles remain, the church with its greater importance is now recognized by the present descendants of the original residents as having added significance in recalling the area's Hispanic heritage.

Archeological evidence demonstrates that Tijeras Cañon was utilized by pre-historic Indians as early as 8,000 to 9,000 years ago and that permanent occupation by Pueblo Indian peoples took place between 1000-1100 AD and was maintained until about 1450. During the 17th and 18th centuries the cañon was frequently used as a campground by marauding bands of Apaches making their way into the Rio Grande Valley to raid the Pueblos and, later, Spanish settlements located there. Shortly before his death in 1704 General Diego de Vargas, Governor of New Mexico, gathered a punitive force at Bernalillo which attempted to recover livestock stolen by Apaches from Spaniards Fernando Durán y Cháves and Miguel García. The expedition marched south 4 leagues (about 12 miles) where a company of Pueblo Indian scouts was sent forth to reconnoiter "the watering place of Carnué" where, after a brief skirmish, the Apaches retreated from the area leaving the stolen stock, most of which had been killed.

The first attempt at permanent Spanish settlement in the region was made February 6, 1763 when New Mexico Governor Tomás Véles Cachupín authorized a land grant of four square leagues in the cañon to a group of 19 landless settlers. Designated as San Miguel de Laredo but commonly known as San Miguel de Carnué, the new community was laid out in the traditional Spanish defensive plan with the house lots clustered around a central plaza. Unrelenting Apache pressure forced the abandonment of this early settlement, however, and in 1771 Governor Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta annulled the original grant and ordered that all structures "be leveled to the ground." Three years later a request for a regrant in the cañon was rejected by Mendinueta because of the continuing Apache danger.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bernalillo County Records, Bernalillo County Courthouse, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Deed Records - Books, 35, 40, 42, 48, 110, 694.

Abert, Lt. J. W. Report of his Examination of New Mexico, in the Years 1846-47. Albuquerque, 1962.

Bennett, James A. "A Dragoon in New Mexico, 1850-1856," Clinton E. (See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3.25 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	3	3	7	3	2	9	0	3	8	8	2	5	6	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

John Baxter, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

September 15, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico 87503

**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

*Thomas W. Merlau*

TITLE

*State Historic Preservation Officer*

DATE

*9-16-77*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*W. Merlau*  
*Charles [Signature]*

DATE *3-8-78*  
MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*3-8-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE #1

#7

Except for a large brown wooden wardrobe for vestments in the sacristy the church interior is presently unfurnished. The floor is covered with linoleum patterned with large squares alternating green and gray which contrasts with the white plastered walls and unpainted sheetrock ceiling. Four simple wooden shelves formerly used to display statues of various saints are attached to the wall in the 1940 sanctuary which is floored with plywood and elevated 12" above the rest of the interior. Illumination is provided by four hanging electrical fixtures enclosed in large modern plastic globes. During its last years of use the building was heated with a gas furnace which has been recently removed.

Although the general condition of the building is good, there are at present large exterior cracks in the plaster where the walls and foundation join. Because there are no corresponding defects inside, it is believed that these are merely superficial results of occasional accumulations of moisture from melting snow, but this opinion must be confirmed before other elements of the restoration plan can be put into effect. These include the replacement of the deteriorated woodwork surrounding the doors and windows, refinishing the original wood floor under the present linoleum and the installation of a traditional wood burning heater. The light fixtures which are incongruous with the proposed restoration are to be replaced and the landscaping is to be improved by planting additional flowers and shrubs on the small terrace before the entrance. With the implementation of this plan the people of Tijeras hope that their church, for many years the most important building in the village, can be preserved.

#8

Almost 45 years passed before changing conditions led to a new attempt to colonize the Carnué area. In October, 1818 Governor Facundo Melgares was petitioned by a number of Albuquerque residents for a new grant to the same area and, although no immediate action was taken on this request, on January 23, 1819 a group of 27 petitioners led by Juan Ignacio Tafoya were awarded the grant. This time two settlements were made because of the large number of applicants, one on the original site of San Miguel de Carnué and a second several miles northeast at the present village of San Antonio. After placing the settlers in possession, the alcalde mayor of Albuquerque, Josef Mariano de la Peña, described the boundaries of the entire grant including both plazas as extending "from the entrance of the Cañon de San Miguel de Carnué to La Tijera, the width of the Cañon from west to east....," the first official mention of "La Tijera" as a place name. Although licenses for chapels in both plazas were issued by the Bishop of Durango in 1823, no church buildings were erected at either location until the 1830s.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 2)

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ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE #2

Exactly when the present village of Tijeras became a separate community is not clear but soon after U.S. occupation of New Mexico in 1846 a place named "Tegera" appeared on the first map of the area made by Lieutenants J.W. Abert and W. G. Peck, U.S. Topographical Engineers, on orders from Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny, commander of U.S. forces in New Mexico. During the first years after the U.S. takeover, the trail through Tijeras Cañon was sometimes used by California-bound "49ers," crossing New Mexico from eastern points via Santa Fe and the San Pedro placer mines headed for the Rio Grande and a junction with the well-known route across southern New Mexico and Arizona. The cañon was also used by military parties traveling from Albuquerque to southeastern New Mexico garrisons such as Fort Stanton. In testimony given in 1885 before the Surveyor General regarding land titles at Tijeras, Henry Carpenter, one of the first Anglos to establish himself in the area, stated that in the 1850s the village had a population of 100 families.

During the Civil War the cañon, still referred to in official dispatches as "Cañon de Carnué," was the scene of considerable marching and counter-marching in the spring of 1862 by units of both armies. Following the Confederate victory at Valverde on February 20-21 in the Rio Grande Valley, a Southern contingent under Lt. Col. W. R. Scurry passed through the cañon proceeding towards the Galisteo Basin while another column marched north from Albuquerque to capture Santa Fe. On March 26-28 the combined forces were defeated by Union troops at Glorieta Pass east of the capital forcing the Confederate withdrawal from New Mexico. Meanwhile Union troops under Col. Edward R. S. Canby, contained at Fort Craig since the Valverde battle, moved north to Albuquerque but avoided a confrontation with retreating Southern forces by withdrawing eastward into the cañon under the cover of darkness. There Canby was reinforced by both regulars and Colorado volunteers who were marching south. The united army then bombarded the Confederates at Peralta and continued to harass the retreating column as it moved down the Rio Grande towards El Paso.

Although Roman Catholic services were held at chapels in the cañon settlements such as San Miguel de Carnué, San Antonio and San Antonito beginning in the 1830s and continuing through the rest of the 19th century, it was not until the early 1900s that the church acquired property at Tijeras. In February, 1906 Rev. Camilo M. Capilupi, S. J. purchased a 4-acre tract from Juan Gutierrez and his wife Juanita Samora de Gutierrez for \$340.00. Capilupi in turn immediately sold most of the land to Mrs. Jessie Keleher of Albuquerque, retaining only that portion containing a four-room adobe house, a stable and corral which was probably used by priests traveling from Albuquerque to conduct services at cañon villages.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

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#8

Six years later Mrs. Keleher deeded her part to A. M. Mandelari, S.J., pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church in Albuquerque, and on this site the Tijeras Holy Child Church was erected.

In April, 1930 title to the property reverted to Mrs. Keleher by means of a quitclaim deed from the Most Reverend A. T. Daeger, O.F.M., Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, although the reasons for discontinuing use of the building are unclear. The transaction was unknown to the villagers, however, who refurbished the empty church building circa 1935. Five years later Tomas Gonzales was elected mayordomo by the Tijeras church members and it was under his direction that the present sanctuary and sacristy were added. It was not until 1963 that the property was returned to the archdiocese by Margaret Keleher, a daughter of Mrs. Jessie Keleher. The building is now owned by the New Mexico State Highway Department but due to the concern of the residents to preserve it, highway officials have expressed a willingness to lease it to the Village of Tijeras for \$1.00 a year.

#9

Brooks and Frank D. Reeve, eds., New Mexico Historical Review. Vol. 22, No. 2, April, 1947.

Chamberlain, Willian H. (Diary of) "From Lewisburg, Pa. to California in 1849," Lansing B. Bloom, ed., New Mexico Historical Review. Vol. 20, No. 2, April, 1945.

Heyman, Max F. Jr. Prudent Soldier, A Biography of Major General E.R.S. Canby. Glendale, 1959.

Jenkins, Myra Ellen. Impact Statement to L. G. Boles, State Highway Engineer, May, 1972.

