



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

**NRIS Reference Number:** SG 100000820

**Date Approved:** 4-3-17

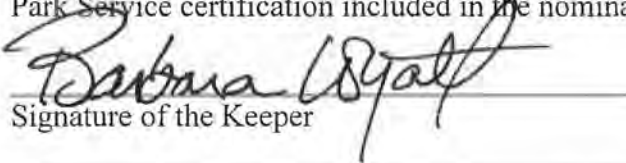
**Nomination Name:** Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

**County:** Denver

**State:** Colorado

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The National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form is approved, subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

4-3-17  
Date of Action

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### Amended Items in Nomination

**Section 5, Category.** The category of the property should be a district. It is more than an acre in size and multiple resources

**Section 5, Number of Resources:** The following should be the tabulation of resources: 3 buildings (church with attached annex, office annex, and rectory; garage; and parish hall), contributing site (the garden), and a contributing structure (the parking lot).

**Section 5, Total number of Resources:** The total of contributing resources is 4 (church with additions, parking lot, garden, garage) and the total noncontributing resources are 1 (parish hall).

**Section 7:** The Parish Hall is a noncontributing building; the fence and fence posts are noncontributing features (built 1977). The parking lot remains a contributing structure.

**Section 8:** References to the church as a Traditional Cultural Place are removed from the nomination, but the history and significance of the church is marked by the loyalty of Italian immigrants and their descendants. The period of significance is changed to 1904 to 1967 (from 1904 to the present), reflecting its on-going significance under Criterion A.

**Section 8:** The following statement regarding the architectural significance Our Lady of Mount Carmel as an example of the Romanesque Revival is added as an explanation of the application of Criterion C:

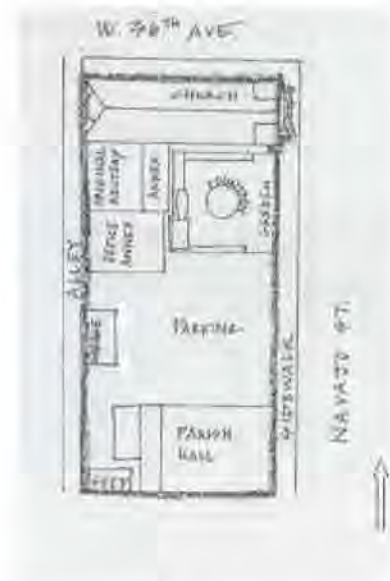
Our Lady of Mount Carmel exhibits the character-defining features outlined in History Colorado's architectural lexicon in association with the Romanesque Revival style, including semicircular arches for window and door openings, corbelling, compound arches, square towers, and use of contrasting colors. Several examples of the Romanesque Revival style exist in Denver, including St. Peter's Episcopal Church (5DV.51.2, NRIS 85002932, contributing to the Baker Historic District), Central Presbyterian Church (5DV.112, NRIS 74000565), St. Elizabeth's Church (5DV.128, NRIS 69000043), Holy Rosary Church and School (5DV.349, State Register), St. Thomas Theological Seminary (5DV.729, NRIS 89001007), South Broadway Christian Church (5DV.730, Denver local landmark), First Congregational Church (5DV.2681, NRIS 87002011), Bethel the Church of God (5DV.5742, State Register), Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church (5DV.349, NRIS 04000262), and Park Hill United Methodist Church (5DV.9152, State Register). However, of these, only Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Holy Rosary feature dual towers. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is only one of two surveyed examples of the work of architect Frederick W. Paroth, the others being Annunciation Church (5DV.3287, NRIS 90000869) and Sacred Heart Orphanage in Pueblo (5PE.569, NRIS 89000038).

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### Notification and Distribution

National Register property file

Nominating Authority, without nomination attachment



Sketch map (not to scale)  
N.B. Darkest line represents nomination boundary.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

56-820

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

Other names/site number: Mount Carmel Italian Catholic Church, 5DV.4204

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 3517-3549 Navajo Street

City or town: Denver State: CO County: Denver

Not For Publication:  n/a

Vicinity:  n/a

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     x statewide     local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A     B     x C     D

<u>Melanie DSHPO</u>	<u>2/13/17</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>State Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado  
County and State

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

4-3-17  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal





## **Narrative Description**

The parish complex occupies approximately 1.2 acres, more than half of the north part of the long block along Navajo Street between 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> avenues in the City of Denver. The church sits to the north at the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Its rectory and annex form an ell in which the landscaped contemplative garden is located. Across a paved parking lot, also used for cultural and social events, is the parish hall, marking the southern boundary of the complex. The surrounding neighborhood, comprising Denver's historic Little Italy and also known as Highlands, is rapidly changing as original, modest, one-story residences are demolished for construction of multi-story contemporary condominiums and private residences. This is evident on the southern end of the block where the church is located and across 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Navajo Street from the church. However, the complex comprising the church and its associated resources nonetheless dominate its block over multiple parcels. The bell towers remain dominant over the entire neighborhood and are visible from other parts of the city.

### **Church and Rectory (1899-1904, 1965 office annex addition, contributing building) (Photos 1-12)**

The two-and-a-half-story symmetrical red and cream-colored brick church façade is dominated by twin square towers with copper domes surmounted by white crosses (Photo 1). The 59' x 100' rectangular building features an asphalt-shingle, front-gable roof surmounting a triple-arched entrance with a central statuary niche and large rose window above. The rose window is reminiscent of an eight-petalled flower and is surrounded by cream-colored brick. The central niche, flanked by two compass-head windows accented with cream-colored brick voussoirs above a cream-colored brick string course, prominently features a white marble statue of Our Lady of Carmel housed in a Roman arch flanked by simple pilasters with capitals. The niche is accented in white, in contrast to the cream and red of the rest of the façade, with a painted blue background for the statue.

The central Roman-arch entrance is slightly larger than those flanking, which are divided from each other with simple pilasters with capitals. Each features archivolt of compound arches. The main entrance or façade faces east, as is traditional in the Catholic faith, with the high altar thus at the west. The façade brick is laid in common bond. The gable end features a large-scale dog-tooth pattern, also known as nebule molding, and a central arched vent with a cream-colored voussoir and underlying cream-colored brick string course.

On the Navajo Street façade, the church is elevated on a tall brick plinth acting as a watertable. On the 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue side, the plinth is rusticated granite, disappearing gradually as the site slopes sharply upward to the west. The main entrance to the building is via a double flight of granite stairs with a simple, open metal railing with a diamond pattern at intervals. The stair previously was accessible from three sides, but the central portion was walled, creating a low planter featuring two shrubs (see below, Photos H16, H17).

Each tower is divided into four levels, featuring on each side, from the bottom, a round-arch stained-glass window with a compound cream voussoir, a roundel window with cream-colored detailing and oversized voussoirs, a larger round-arch stained-glass window, and a round-arched

vent. Each level is divided by a prominent cream-colored string course or cornice. The simplified bipartite or lancet division of the two round-arched windows is echoed in the mullion pattern of the recent installation of exterior storm windows to protect the stained glass. The lower round-arched window is flanked by brick pilasters and the larger upper window is in a brick arch with decorative compound capitals. The plan profile for the uppermost level of the tower is octagonal rather than square, taking the shape of a square with beveled corners.

In addition to the tower, the north side of the church (along 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue) features five tall round-arched stained-glass windows with compound cream-colored voussoirs and simple pilaster capitals. Each bay is divided by a projecting pilaster with a stylized, simple capital just below the roof level. Each pilaster features a tall indent that further animates the façade. The storm windows feature the simplified lancet configuration. The fifth window is partially truncated on the north side to accommodate a solid, flush double pedestrian door. The south, or garden, side of the church features four large stained-glass windows, with the fourth partially truncated to accommodate the 1965 office addition to the rectory.

Surmounted by a gable with large-scale dog-tooth molding, a sixth bay on the north side corresponds to the vestry behind the high altar and a second story above. The upper story features a large compound round arch with cream-colored brick archivolt featuring a tripartite window configuration. The central window is one-over-one, double-hung vinyl, whereas the flanking two have fixed upper lights and non-historic vinyl sliders at bottom. The first story is entered from the street by a flush-panel pedestrian door with a metal grille, accessed by a short concrete stair with open metal railing featuring crosses. This door is flanked by two one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows.

The granite cornerstone at the east corner of the north side, is surrounded by egg-and-dart molding and reads: "ITALIAN/MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH/ERECTED 1899/Rv M. LEPORE, Pastor" (Photo 4).

Character-defining features of the Romanesque Revival style include the semicircular Roman-arched openings, archivolt of compound arches, dominant twin square towers, and the use of contrasting color.

The 1000-pound bell, known as Maria del Caramelina, in the south tower rings even today: "Former city councilman Ernie Marranzino, whose family has lived in the house behind the church since the 1890s, calls Maria the 'heartbeat' of North Denver. 'That bell regulates life here the way church bells did in the old country.'"<sup>1</sup> A catwalk extends from the south tower to behind the front gable on the main façade.

The western, rear, or alley, side of the building features refined, random, ashlar-stone masonry, a chimney featuring a blonde-brick cross, and eight one-over-one, double-hung wood windows evenly distributed over the two stories.

### Interior (Photos H4, H5, H6, H7)

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<sup>1</sup> "Servite priests serve Denver's Italians," *The Denver Catholic Register* (17 Dec 1986).



The visitor first enters a simple vestibule, in turn accessing the sanctuary via two double doors with single lights featuring the logo of the Servite Fathers (Photo 11). Hanging in the vestibule is a hammer from the original construction found atop the rear side of the main altar during Holy Week in 1979 (Photo 12). The small room from which the tower belfry is accessed to the south also houses a statue of the Pieta.

Due to its affiliation with the Order of Servants of Mary, Mount Carmel was not subject to the direction laid out under the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which concluded in 1965. So-called Vatican II resulted in simplification of the aesthetics in both the ceremony and trappings of the church and Mass, including the diminished use of clerical regalia and changes to liturgical art and song. The altar had already been redecorated in 1964, the main change to which since has been the removal of the altar rail and of the decorative wall behind the altar.

Throughout Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Catholic iconography in the form of fresco and statuary are used to represent aspects of the faith.<sup>2</sup> These depictions include the Pelican, Infant Jesus of Prague, Jesus, Jesus Resurrected, Lamb of God, Mary with the baby Jesus, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Seven Holy Founders of the Servants of Mary (St. Alexius, St. Amideus, St. Bonajuncta, St. Bonifilius, St. Uguccio, St. Manettus, St. Sosteneus), St. Anne, St. Cecilia, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Jude Thaddeus, St. Juliana Falconieri, St. Lucia, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Peregrinus (Laziosi), St. Philippus B. (Benizi), St. Rocco, and St. Therese of Lisieux.

The interior space is dominated by a monumental barrel vault of white plaster divided into bays by dark wood ribs with painted crosses. Each bay features painted fresco medallions depicting saints (Photos 5, 9).<sup>3</sup> The bay divisions are further emphasized by thin metal cross bars with circular motifs at center that span the nave for stability. The rose window of the east façade shines above the second-story choir. Historic wood pews are divided into four columns by a main access and two side aisles. Stations of the Cross are placed along the side aisles between the stained glass windows. The stained glass depicts largely abstract geometric and floral patterns in the Tiffany style (Photo 10). Each window honors the Italian family that gifted it to the church. The only religious imagery in the stained glass appears in the roundel at top.

The main altar, housed in a monumental round-arched alcove with a half-domed ceiling, is flanked by two smaller altars housed in smaller round-arched niches (see Photos 6 and 8). This configuration echoes that of the main entrance on the exterior. The three arches, as well as the bays of the barrel-vaulted roof, feature circa-1910 electric lighting to emphasize these forms.

The half-dome behind the main altar was originally coffered, but now contains fresco paintings and gold leaf depicting Our Lady of Mount Carmel standing on clouds and flanked by two angels. There are five religious statues occupying the niches of the main altar, with the largest, at center, of Mary, the Sorrowful Mother, flanked to her right by the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St.

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<sup>2</sup> Detailed in Dominique Lillo, *Sacred Treasures of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church* (n.d.), on file with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Denver.

<sup>3</sup> These 180 medallions form the complete library of the teachings of the Catholic Church and were commissioned by Father Julius Porcellini and completed by a young artist of the parish, Angelo della Maggiora in 1933. These were dedicated June 26, 1934. The full program is described in *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* [75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book] (Hackensack, NJ: Custombook, Inc., 1975) 22.

Joseph with the baby Jesus. To her left stands St. John the Baptist with a staff and St. Anthony of Padua with a child. Some marble statuary was imported from Italy.

A new church organ was dedicated in 1956.<sup>4</sup>

***Rectory and Office Annex (1904, 1965 addition) (Photos 2, 16, H3, H9)***

The Rectory is attached to the church at its southwestern end. The two-story, red-brick Rectory's eastern and southern sides feature one-over-one, double-hung vinyl windows on the second story, two on the east and three on the south. The two windows on the eastern side are housed within segmental arched lintels. A third, small, second-story, fixed, compass-head wood window has been partially truncated by the addition described below. Both the eastern and southern sides feature low pedimented parapets featuring centered round modillions in cream-colored brick and featuring stars. The corners of the building are articulated with prominent squared corners edged in cream-colored brick.

The Rectory received an addition, serving as an office annex, in 1965 (Photo 16). The common-bond red-brick addition wraps around the first story of the Rectory on its eastern and southern sides. The east-facing façade of the office annex addition houses two stories, with the first floor partially below grade. The addition features an asphalt-shingle shed roof that meets the original Rectory building just below its second-story windows. The 1965 addition's second story features nine evenly spaced one-over-one, double-hung wood windows across the east-facing façade, with a tenth slightly smaller in size. The addition attaches to the church at its southwestern end, partially covering one of the large stained glass windows. Near the meeting of the two buildings (at the ell), the east-facing façade features a single pedestrian entry door with one light to the north and two sliding aluminum windows on the lower level to the south. The door features a corrugated-metal, shed-roofed awning with metal scrollwork. To the far south of the east-facing façade, double doors with large single lights and a single plate-glass window with a metal grille form the main entry to the office annex. The entrance is further emphasized by a simple entablature delineated in cream-colored brick. A June 1992 photograph on file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation depicts a sign above the double doors reading "Lowry Federal Credit Union" in this entablature. This space now reads "Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Office/3549 Navajo St."

The south side of the office annex features a wrap-around of the simple entablature described above and three evenly spaced windows, with the two to the east being fixed picture windows and that to the west being a sliding window of the same size. All three windows are covered with metal grilles. The site slopes up to the west as is visible from the foundation. Above this single-story portion of the office annex addition, a rooftop seating area with a white metal grille fence extends across part of the southern and western sides. The south side of the original Rectory is visible behind (described above).

The interior of the office annex has an acoustical tile ceiling and finishes and features dating to the late 1970s or early 1980s.

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<sup>4</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 26.

## Alterations

### *Office Annex*

An unattributed typewritten manuscript on file with History Colorado dates beginning construction of the new office annex as May 15, 1965. The entry door to the northeast of the office annex received its awning roof at an unknown date. A wood lattice fence surrounding the small second-story seating area above the office annex to the south has been removed and replaced with vertical metal grille fencing.

### *Garden/Site*

A photograph published on December 17, 1904 in *The Daily News* shows a one-story, front-gabled chapel occupying the current location of the garden. The building featured an oculus window above the at-grade central entrance with flanking double-hung windows. There appears to be some articulation on either side of the entrance of alternating bands of masonry. It is presumed that this is the temporary building erected in December 1898.<sup>5</sup> This early photograph also depicts a rear bell cupola on the newly dedicated church that is no longer extant; it was removed prior to 1975.

### *Church*

Based on a comparison of photographs from 1950 and the 1970s, the angled entrance at street level, created by flanking entrance stairs, originally was a continuous flight of stairs with simple pipe railings. As reconfigured, the low planter at street level once featured a statue of St. Anthony Pucci, O.S.M., now replaced with two evergreen shrubs. Father Alphonse M. Monta, O.S.M., Prior General from Rome, blessed the statue on August 31, 1963 (Photo H8).<sup>6</sup> Wall sconces at the main entrance have also been changed. A star once depicted in the uppermost flat niche in the apex of the gable is no longer apparent.

An unattributed typewritten manuscript on file with History Colorado documents completion of a fundraising drive on November 27, 1964, followed by completion of an unspecified church restoration on May 16, 1965. On the interior, the high altar rail has been removed. After 1975, the decorative wall covering was removed from the niches of the high altar and two flanking altars.

In 1986, the church's twin towers were rebuilt and restored. Work was undertaken to prevent potential danger to pedestrians. Plexiglass panels until recently protected the stained glass from the exterior. These have been replaced with new, clear-glass exterior panels with mullions that echo the stained glass configuration. The church was recently reroofed (in-kind replacement of asphalt shingle) at the parish's expense.

## **Parking lot (ca. 1899, contributing site)(Photo 19)**

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<sup>5</sup> Christine A. DeRose, "Inside 'Little Italy': Italian Immigrants in Denver," *The Colorado Magazine* 54.3 (1977): 286. See also: "Celebration of Feast at New North Side Church—Mt. Carmel Congregation's Temporary Structure Completed," *Denver Times* (9 Dec 1898).

<sup>6</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 63.

The functional asphalt parking lot has been used as the site of parking for carriages and automobiles since construction of the church and dates to the prior church building on the same site (burned in 1899). This space is also used during processions and other feast-day celebrations for the various social functions of the parish several times a year. Along Navajo Street the parking lot features a non-historic metal fence with vertical rails, whereas the rear (alley) side to the west features a simple chain-link fence. The date of its paving is not known.

### **Garden (1965, contributing site) (Photos 13-15, H10)**

The garden contained in the ell of the church and office building is surrounded on all four sides by a fence of stone masonry piers with ball finials and spans of metal fencing. This fence replaced a chain-link fence by 1975. Per an unattributed typewritten manuscript on file with History Colorado, July 25, 1965 saw a “procession in honor of our Lady of Mt. Carmel and dedication and blessing of the shrine and the stations of Our Sorrowful Mother in front of the rectory.” This source accounts for the date of the installation and more formal development of this meditation and contemplative space, although it existed prior to this date.

To the west is a parabolic-arch niche of dark green-glazed rowlock and common-bond brick housing a white marble statue of the Pieta raised on an altar-like plinth. Flanked by two bronze laurel wreaths, a bronze plaque fronts the plinth honoring the parish’s twenty-two World War II dead. On either side of the niche are short flanking walls featuring plaques honoring additional parish veterans. This memorial installation sits upon a brick terrace accessed by one step.

To the southeast is a white plaster cross elevated on a few large boulders with a statue of the Sorrowful Mother and multiple pink, red, orange, and white roses. Spaced around the garden’s perimeter are small, gabled, rowlock-laid, white-glazed brick panels featuring metal relief sculptures of the Stations of the Cross. The sandstone cap on the panels are echoed by sandstone planter stands just in front of each panel. Each panel features a small fixture that down lights the station. At the garden’s center is a small fountain with a blue lining surrounded by roses. The remainder of the fenced garden is lush lawn, with the exception of a gravel perimeter with a few conically shaped evergreen shrubs.

### Alterations

A large evergreen tree also grew at the corner of the south tower, but was removed in approximately 1994. The tree was featured in the 1994 centennial commemorative logo (Photo H18).

### **Parish Hall (ca. 1902, remodeled 1970-1974, contributing building) (Photos 18-19, H11)**

At the far southern end of the church complex, the Parish Hall is across the parking lot from the church and acts as a bookend to the complex. Mount Carmel’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative book recounts the following history of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society:

According to some of Mt. Carmel’s oldtimers, long before the church was built the society met in a building that had contained a privately owned dry goods store and shoe repair shop

with rented apartments on the second floor. The dry goods department moved out and Mancinelli's first grocery store came into being. Then as membership in the society increased the first floor of the building was made into one large hall and eventually the entire building was purchased for exclusive use by the Society. It was leased out for weddings, showers, wakes and other purposes until 1967. It was then purchased by the parish and used as a gym. In 1970, remodeling began.<sup>7</sup>

The building exterior is stuccoed. The north side of the building faces the church across the parking lot. It features a single pedestrian entrance with a solid metal door with a single light. There are three small windows on the first floor, two of which are boarded up except for window air conditioning units. The upper story features three sets of paired windows and one single window. The windows feature exterior metal grilles. All are two-over-two, horizontal-light, double-hung aluminum windows. The building features two shed-roofed rear additions, the first of which is two stories with a single barred window on the lower level. The single-story second addition is the kitchen, constructed in the early 1990s. The stepped roof of the main building is visible from this side.

To the south, the Parish Hall shares a common wall with the Dr. Lucy residence, above which are visible five double-hung windows. The main Navajo Street façade, facing east, features stone veneer up to the first of two string courses, pierced only by a solid, flush, double-door entrance (the door at right features a single square light) and an additional single flush pedestrian entrance with a metal grille to the north. There are four double-hung windows in the second story. The stepped-brick parapet is visible above the simple cornice with dentil molding.

### Alterations

The street façade of the social hall, as evidenced in a 1922 unattributed photograph (see Photo H11), is a two-part brick commercial block with a slightly overhanging cornice with dentil molding and corner finials. The symmetrical façade was punctuated at center by a two-story, iron projecting balcony entered via two exterior, second-story, single-light doors surmounted by transoms. The other four upper story windows were one-over-one, single-hung wood windows. These windows featured lighter-colored, staggered brick surrounds and a single string course. Meanwhile, the commercial first story featured six bays, with the second and fifth bays acting as store entrances. The store to the left was the New York Market Grocery. The bays were divided by pediments accented by alternating dark and light brick and possibly stone. The pediments supported a simple entablature. The bays featured large transoms and either double doors or single pedestrian doors and a shop front window. All doors appear to have been single-light uppers with paneled lowers and the windows were one-over-one double-hung, likely over knee walls. The bays are slightly recessed behind the pediments. Photo H12, dated July 1920, shows that the north side of the building originally featured painted advertisements.

Dedicated on December 15, 1974, the building interior was remodeled beginning in 1970 through the volunteer efforts of the Men's Club (Photo H13). All the changes testify to the ongoing use of part or all of this building as a Parish Hall since the construction of the new

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<sup>7</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 54.

church in 1904. The building has been a center for cultural and social activities of the parish for well over one hundred years.

### **Garage (ca. 1950s, contributing building)(Photo 17)**

The flat-roofed, single-story garage features four garage-door openings and is laid in common-bond red brick. A single flush panel pedestrian door is on the north side. The exact date of construction of this building is not known, although parishioners indicate it was built by Father LoCascio in the 1950s.

### Integrity

Overall, the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and complex retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association, setting, feeling, and location. Although the Parish Hall has undergone substantial exterior modifications, the building's function as a key cultural and social gathering space has continued since before 1920. Its remodeling circa 1975 is evidence of its continued value and use to the parish's social life; ultimately, its exterior main façade renovations may prove reversible. As such, the Parish Hall retains sufficient integrity to reflect its significance in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage. The Church has received minor exterior alterations in the configuration of the main entry stair and the additional covering to protect the stained glass from the elements. The Rectory received its historic office annex in 1965, more than 50 years ago. The associated memorial and contemplative garden was installed at the same time.

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## **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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
ETHNIC HERITAGE/European  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1904-1965 (Architecture)  
1904-present (Ethnic Heritage/European, Social History)

**Significant Dates**

1904  
1965

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

Euro-American  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

PAROTH, Frederick William  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, and its associated offices, parish hall, formal garden, and plaza gathering space, together are significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture and Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage: European. The state level of significance is justified under Criterion A as the only national Italian church in the state of Colorado. Further, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church exhibits long-standing and ongoing traditional cultural significance to the state’s Italian-American community, and specifically to Denver’s Little Italy, for its enduring, multi-generational traditions and heritage transplanted directly from Italy. These cultural and social traditions relate to the Catholic tradition, with its strong roots and relationship to Italian culture, but also in many ways transcend religion. With construction beginning in 1899 and the building dedicated in 1904, the Romanesque Revival-style church has served continuously as a social and cultural center of Denver and Colorado’s prominent Italian-American community.

The period of significance for Architecture is 1904-1965, the date of the church’s completion, through the 1965 construction of the office annex and memorial garden. The property is locally significant as a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style. The period of significance for the



church's enduring Social History and Ethnic Heritage is 1904 to present.<sup>8</sup> The property meets National Register Criterion Consideration A regarding religious properties as a property that exhibits architectural significance as a good local example of the Romanesque Revival and significance in the areas of social history and Italian-American ethnic heritage.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

*Please note from the outset that the foundational research that supports this nomination is credited to History Colorado Senior Curator Alisa Zahller (DiGiacomo), published in her work, Italy in Colorado: Family Histories from Denver and Beyond (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2008). This publication accompanied an "Italians of Denver" exhibit, opening in 2007 at the Colorado Historical Society (now History Colorado). The History Colorado Mount Carmel Church Collection was also key to development of the narrative included in this nomination.*

## **Historic Context**

### ***North Denver's Little Italy***

Nationally, the influx of Italian immigrants was at its highest between 1880 and 1914. Beginning in the 1870s, Italian-Americans settled the South Platte River bottoms, engaging in farming the rich soil and creating an ad hoc community known as "the jungles."<sup>9</sup> Initially attending Sacred Heart of Mary (Sacred Heart Catholic Church) at 2760 Larimer Street (5DV.5993, Denver local landmark 1973), Denver's oldest still-used church, alongside the Irish immigrant community, by the 1880s the Italian community began to move to North Denver, attending the Irish parish of St. Patrick's Church at 3325 Pecos Street (5DV.109, National Register 14 Nov 1979, NRIS 79000593, Denver local landmark).

The first known Italian to come to Colorado was Friar Marco da Nizza, a Franciscan monk who traveled with Coronado and explored the region. The monk came to the area in 1539. In more recent times, Italians began to immigrate to Colorado (which became a state in 1876), as early as the 1850s, but it was in the 1880s that the first large waves of Italians came to work on the railroads or in the mines. At this time, members of Italian-based Catholic religious orders also came to the state, including the Jesuits, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the Sisters of Loretto. By 1910, there were 40,000 people of Italian descent in Colorado.<sup>10</sup>

Another historian, Christine A. DeRose described: "The first Italians arrived in Denver in 1872 and settled along the river bottoms of the South Platte River."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In keeping with the approach taken in the St. Augustine Catholic Church and Cemetery National Register of Historic Places nomination (Natchez, Louisiana, NRIS 14000679).

<sup>9</sup> Miscellaneous clippings, on file with History Colorado, Denver.

<sup>10</sup> Diane Wray, "Morrato Block," Colorado State Register of Historic Properties nomination (Nov 1999): 10, on file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado, Denver.

<sup>11</sup> DeRose 277-8.

The area comprising Little Italy historically is now known as Highlands. It comprised the area between Broadway and Zuni Street and 46<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues. Settlement in this ethnic enclave was largely self-organized, but also spoke to historic discrimination experienced by the Italian-American community early in Colorado's history: "Public intolerance toward the Italian population was harsh, particularly during economic recessions. Arriving in Denver to work on the railroad and in the mines, the Italians were poorly paid, given menial jobs, and often subjected to layoffs when cheaper labor was available."<sup>12</sup> The neighborhood acted as an active enclave of mutual support and enduring tradition:

That sector of North Denver really was an Italian village, a Little Italy. Presenting a united front against the prejudices of the Anglos, the Irish, the Germans, they clung to old country ways. They had laughter and music—and hard work. The women baked their luscious loaves of bread in outside globular ovens, and they roamed the many vacant lots picking succulent dandelion leaves for salads. The men who had come from the agricultural south of Italy tended their vegetable gardens in the Platte river bottoms or on the many undeveloped areas of the city.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of inhabitants originated in southern Italy, specifically Potenza, Napoli, Genoa, and Calabria, as well as the more northern city of Milan.

The Italian-American community was instrumental in the campaign to make Colorado the first state to establish the Columbus Day holiday in 1906.<sup>14</sup> Often facing prejudice and discrimination, the community championed honoring Christopher Columbus as a means of better integrating into American society. Angelo Noce, founder of Colorado's Italian newspaper, *La Stella*, appealed to Hispanic State Senator Casimiro Barela to sponsor the bill. By 1911, fourteen other states joined in naming the holiday. By 1922, Italians constituted 22 per cent of Colorado's population.<sup>15</sup>

By 1930, the parish served a population of 3000 Italian Americans, or the fourth largest ethnic group in the city.<sup>16</sup> That number remained the same as of 1994.<sup>17</sup> However, Mount Carmel was and remains the center of the Italian-American community, albeit amidst a rapidly changing neighborhood facing serious development pressures. This despite demographic changes in the immediate post-war period:

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<sup>12</sup> DeRose 283.

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Eloise Wiberg, *Rediscovering Northwest Denver: Its History, Its People, Its Landmarks* (Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1995): 42.

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see Lakshmi Gandhi, "How Columbus Sailed Into U.S. History, Thanks to Italians," Code Switch: Race and Identity; Remixed (14 Oct 2013) <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/10/14/232120128/how-columbus-sailed-into-u-s-history-thanks-to-italians> (accessed 1 Sep 2016).

<sup>15</sup> "Paying tribute to early Italians," *Denver Post* (24 Apr 2007, updated 7 May 2016), <http://www.denverpost.com/2007/04/24/paying-tribute-to-early-italians/> (accessed 1 Sep 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Noel 337-338.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Romano, "Italian pilgrims will find familiar place in Denver," undated clipping on file with History Colorado.

After World War II, Denver's flourishing Italian community spread out into the north metro suburbs in Adams, Boulder, and Jefferson counties. Servite priests established new Italian-oriented parishes, continuing the work begun at Mt. Carmel, at Assumption Church in Welby, Our Lady Mother of the Church in Commerce City, and Holy Trinity Church and School in Westminster. As many Italian families moved into these new parishes, enrollments dropped at both Mt. Carmel High School and Grade School.<sup>18</sup>

The neighborhood around the church itself has seen an increasingly Hispanic or Latino demographic, but, as of 1994, according to Father Ramacciotti, 95 per cent of parishioners were still Italian by birth or marriage.<sup>19</sup> The recent closure of Patsy's, a continuously operating Italian restaurant for 95 years formerly known as the Italian Village, is indicative of the rapidly changing neighborhood:

Half the block is now high-rise condos, but it was once the heart of North Denver's "Little Italy." Patsy's is just up the street from Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which started in 1894 as a small frame church for Italian immigrants. The founders of Patsy's, Mike and Maggie [Aiello], were married there in 1896.<sup>20</sup>

There are fewer and fewer surviving historic Italian-American landmarks in Denver and in Colorado, and thus fewer places for the community to return to gather. Listed properties include: Stranges Grocery (5ME.4147) in Grand Junction (National Register, March 2013); Morrato Block (5DV.6966) in Denver (Colorado State Register of Historic Properties, March 2000); Little Rome (5HN.593, National Register, August 1999); Ginacci House (National Register, February 1986); Hanigan-Canino Terrace (5DV.2682, National Register, November 1987); Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church (5LA.5906, State Register, August 2008) and the Pueblo Christopher Columbus Monument (5PE.3162, National Register August 2011). Of these, Hanigan-Canino Terrace apartments are within the Little Italy neighborhood on the south side of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Navajo Street. None of the properties listed to date act as a social and cultural gathering focus of continued use on the same scale as Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

### ***Italian-American Traditional Cultural Place***

The Italian-American population centered at Mount Carmel is a relatively isolated and close-knit community that, as a result, has retained its traditions over several generations and continues to do so strongly today. This is evidenced, in part, by the fact that the parish has received several requests for study and interviews from Italy, where Mount Carmel is considered a time capsule of the 1890-1920 period of transplanted Italian traditions, some of which no longer thrive even in the mother country. In 2014, three Italian documentary journalists, Paolo Battaglia, Daniela Garutti, and Giulia Frigieri, visited Mount Carmel on a tour of sixteen American cities focusing on these traditions, presented as a foil to the rapidly changing landscape of Europe at present.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Noel 338.

<sup>19</sup> Romano.

<sup>20</sup> Colleen O'Connor, "Patsy's Inn closes after 95 years of Italian cuisine in Denver," *Denver Post* (23 Aug 2016).

<sup>21</sup> *Italian American Country: Finding Italy in Smalltown USA*. Anniversary Books. Prospectus on file with History Colorado, Denver. See also [www.anniversarybooks.it/en/Italian-american-country-crowdfunding/](http://www.anniversarybooks.it/en/Italian-american-country-crowdfunding/) (accessed 7 Nov 2016). A documentary is under production.

The parish was included in an exhibit, “THE DREAM...per non dimenticare: La diaspora del popolo Italiano negli Stati Uniti d’America nel XX secolo,” organized by Dominic Candeloro of Chicago that focused on Italian emigration. The exhibit traveled to the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome in 2005, where parishioner Alisa DiGiacomo presented “Italians in Colorado.”<sup>22</sup> An excerpt from the exhibit catalogue reads:

The churches, attended exclusively by Italians, are usually named after the patron saints of their villages of origin, from Saint Rocco to Saint Joseph. The famous patron saints’ feast-day celebrations have been immortalized by many films but also captured in photographs, once again destined to perpetuate the group image but also to cultivate the memory in those who have remained in Italy, who will see the feast-day of their own village reflected in those photographs (...) Italian minorities have maintained a strong sense of identity in the States as in no other country, as is clearly shown by the way they manifest themselves individually or collectively on every occasion provided by society life.<sup>23</sup>

Mount Carmel has been considered the national or mother church for the Italian-American Catholic community statewide, both culturally and religiously, since its founding.

Mt. Carmel is a unique parish. Here, first, second, third, and even fourth generations of families are parishioners, so it almost seems that the parish is a maze of interrelated people whose lives have all been closely associated.<sup>24</sup>

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary church publication further described how the parish’s historic role as an ethnic enclave functioned:

One of the reasons for the rise of national parishes was that church leaders during the early years of the Twentieth Century rejected the idea of hasty “Americanization” of the foreigner and chose instead gradual assimilation into a “melting pot with an extremely low flame.” Church leaders, considering the newcomer’s language and culture essential for the preservation of his faith, were reluctant to encourage rapid “Americanization” lest the immigrant be lost to the Church (...) National Parishes, foreign language schools, the work of foreign priests and religious orders were the most significant factors influencing the Catholic immigrant during the early years of this century. Proof of this at our own doorstep was the rise of St. Patrick’s for the Irish people of this area; St. Joseph’s for the Polish people; Holy Rosary for the Slovenian people; and Mt. Carmel for the Italians. All had schools (...) The North Denver Italian community prospered because of healthy social systems like Mt. Carmel Parish, its schools, and the various Italian societies which are vital to community stability. The Community also survived because it served purposes for various groups: a temporary resting place for those who merely wanted and needed time to learn the rules of our society before moving on; a safe harbor for those who either chose to maintain an Italian identity or felt rejected by the dominant American society; a home to Italian-Americans who would not or could not decide between

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Aldo G. Ricci, Superintendent of the Italian State Archives, in Meo Carbone, *The Dream...per non dimenticare: Documenti Arte Immagini* (2005) 12-13.

<sup>24</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 53.

attachment to parents and acceptance in American society; and in addition, this neighborhood provided the opportunity to maintain a particular life-style without interference. It is a miniature Europe.<sup>25</sup>

In 1944 alone, Mount Carmel hosted over 45,000 people at Communion.<sup>26</sup> The exhibit catalogue further contextualizes that there were approximately 300 Italian saint processions in the United States in 2005, of which Mount Carmel is the preeminent Colorado example (see Photo H14):

While the number of festivals has declined from 3000 in the 1920s, the strong survival of 300 into the Twenty First Century [sic] is still clear testament to the strength of Italian religiosity and ethnicity. These festivals also remind us that the lives of immigrants and their descendants consisted of much more than the deprivation and alienation that are the hallmark of the migration process.<sup>27</sup>

### **Church Construction and Rebuilding**

Founded in 1891 by Michele Notary (see below) and Giacomo Di Giacomo, the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society was the precursor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and operated through 1977. The organization assisted Rev. Mariano Felice Lepore, who began at Saint Patrick's, to buy land for construction of the church. Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini worked to support Lepore, who was the first to invite this later-named saint to Colorado (see below). Father Lepore hailed from the province of Avellino and founded the local Denver Italian *La Nazione* newspaper.<sup>28</sup> The society met, beginning with its founding, in the Mancinelli's dry goods store and shoe repair shop that it later acquired. The church itself purchased the building for its parish hall in 1967, the function that it continues to serve.

Father Lepore, through the support of the Mount Carmel Society, purchased seven lots on which initially there was only a wood-frame church with a canvas roof. On Palm Sunday, March 18, 1894, Bishop Matz dedicated Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Born in France and multilingual, including in Italian, Matz expanded the Colorado church greatly between 1889-1917, his tenure as Bishop of Denver, building, in particular, a number of ethnic parishes to support large immigrant minorities: "He dedicated dozens of Catholic schools, thirty-four new parishes, a successful seminary, a grand cathedral, and a spacious cemetery that serves the diocese to this day."<sup>29</sup>

The frame church was later covered with brick veneer and consisted of a small worship space. This first building burned, likely the result of arson, on August 17, 1898 (see Photo H1).<sup>30</sup> According to historian Thomas J. Noel,

The Mt. Carmel Society immediately began planning a grand new church. A rival Italian group, the St. Rocco Society, also entered what became a bitter race to construct a new

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<sup>25</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 65.

<sup>26</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 25.

<sup>27</sup> Dominic Candeloro, Executive Director, American Italian Historical Association, in Carbone 50.

<sup>28</sup> Zahller 114.

<sup>29</sup> Noel 47.

<sup>30</sup> *The Denver Times* (17 Aug 1898).

Italian national church. Bishop Matz, caught in the middle of another of the lively ethnic squabbles of the early Denver Church, refused to consecrate the Chapel of Saint Rocco or send a priest there.<sup>31</sup>

The Saint Rocco faction explicitly did not support Father Lepore, who was a controversial figure:

Two lots and \$2,000 in cash were raised yesterday afternoon by Italians who are not satisfied with Father Lepore of the Italian Catholic church for the purpose of erecting a new church to be free from his control. The Italians opposed to their present priest met at a hall on Nineteenth, between Palmer avenue and Platte street and proceeded without discord to raise funds and organize a society. It is called the Italian Catholic Church Association of Denver.<sup>32</sup>

In turn,

On 15 June 1899 an injunction was brought against him [Lepore] by the San Rocco Society saying that it had raised \$1,200 to help build the church and that the priest failed in his contract because he built the church out of wood instead of stone. The society demanded the return of its money. On 22 July 1899 Lepore was condemned by several Italian societies for immorality, failure to be a good priest, and influencing Italians in political elections.<sup>33</sup>

Bishop Matz ultimately issued an order seeking to halt the division. Society of San Rocco executive committee member Frank Damascio was vocal in his outrage against the Bishop's order: "We do not care what Bishop Matz may order. He cannot bind us to give money to Lepore, and he cannot keep us from having the church we want, which we would never have if we had to depend on Lepore."<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, the Chapel of Saint Rocco was built nearby (see below), but never rivaled Our Lady of Mount Carmel as the de facto Italian national church of Colorado. The division was later healed.

Damascio, an experienced stonemason, served as the architect of San Rocco Chapel at the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Osage Street (Photo H19). As researched by Zahller (DiGiacomo), Damascio (d. 1922) emigrated to Trinidad, Colorado from Italy in 1878. He acted as contractor and sculptor on local buildings before moving to Denver in 1890, where he worked on the sites of the Brown Palace Hotel (5DV.110, National Register-listed 28 Apr 1970, NRIS 70000157) in 1892 and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (5DV.111, National Register-listed 3 Mar 1975, NRIS 75000506) in 1902, among other prominent buildings. The San Rocco Chapel was dedicated as the Mount Carmel Parish School in 1908 and demolished in 1955.

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<sup>31</sup> Noel 337.

<sup>32</sup> "Italians will build another Catholic Church," unattributed clipping, on file with History Colorado, Denver; "Potenza Italians Organize," *The Denver Republican* (2 Oct 1899); "Statement from the Bishop," *Rocky Mountain News* (1 Oct 1899); "Bishop Matz to be Ignored," *Rocky Mountain News* (2 Oct 1899).

<sup>33</sup> DeRose 286.

<sup>34</sup> "Bishop's Order Meets Derision: Italian Colony Excited Because Bishop Matz Sides With Father Lepore," *The Denver Republican* (3 Oct 1899).

Hundreds celebrated the dedication of the second Our Lady of Mount Carmel church with a procession from 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the corner of West 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Palmer (now Navajo Street) on December 18, 1904 (see Photo H2). Bishop of Denver Nicholas C. Matz presided, escorted by the Italian societies and Mr. Pasquale Corte, Italian Consul of Colorado.<sup>35</sup> The San Rocco, Italian Knights of St. John, St. Anthony, Mount Carmel, Children of Mary, Forests, and Victor Emanuel societies all participated. Solemn High Mass followed.

The completion of the church was described in *The Daily News* on December 17, 1904: “About \$8,500 has been expended in improving the edifice, which is now in the best of condition, having been redecorated and equipped with modern heating and lighting.” The new building sparked a renewal in the community:

Once the works of the church’s building were completed, the Fathers doubled their efforts to give a real moral life to the parish. Until that time few hundreds only attended, regularly, Mass every Sunday; less than three hundred were the Holy Communion distributed yearly, outside the Easter time; the evening services were neglected; there was not one parish society. To meet this gloomy situation, the Fathers, especially Fr. Piccoli, provided many mission courses, instituted sodalities for children with monthly Communion, thus setting an example of church-going for the parents. Slowly, slowly, the Sunday attendance and the reception of the Holy Sacraments increased sensibly. During the last few years [prior to 1944], the yearly Communion ascended to well over 45,000.<sup>36</sup>

This renewal and dedication erased the earlier shadow of Lepore’s death in 1903 and the factional division related to his leadership. As recounted in “Mount Carmel Church Formally Dedicated with All-Day Service,” *The Denver Republican* wrote, on December 19, 1904:

The Mount Carmel church, many good Catholics thought, was started under and labored under a bad omen. Some refused to attend it, feeling that a curse not only hovered over the edifice itself but also attended those who became in any way connected with it (...) After this tragedy [Lepore’s death] Fathers Moreschini, Piccoli and others took hold of the church and their work was under the direction of Bishop Matz. Over \$8,000 was raised by the congregation, and the church was completed, a heating plant installed and the church building made modern in every way.

The church honors Our Lady of Mount Carmel, located near Nazareth. According to the church’s website,

The Mount is considered a symbol of blessing and beauty for its rich vegetation and beauty. Scripture tells that Elijah, the prophet, prayed to God on this Mount for rain during a drought and God answered his prayers with abundant rain and new life. The clouds that rose from the sea that brought the rain subsequently became a symbol for Mary and eventually developed into the title Star of the Sea.

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<sup>35</sup> “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Denver, Colorado, 1894-1944,” brochure, on file with History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>36</sup> “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”.

Mount Carmel eventually attracted an order of hermits, and from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on it served as a residence to a Latin community of hermits called the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. A religious order that followed in the footsteps of Mary, the Order of Carmel considers itself totally Marian, a privilege that it claims to have received from the Blessed Virgin Mary, herself, and which is made visible through the brown scapular.

The Mount Carmel brown scapular is the oldest among eight scapulars to be approved by the Church that have a Marian character. The brown scapular owes its origin and existence to Saint Simon Stock who received a large brown scapular from Our Lady in a vision on July 16, 1251. A scapular is actually the sleeveless outer garment of a monk's habit that falls from the shoulders. Its significance implies that one is clothed with Mary's attitudes and devotion to Christ.<sup>37</sup>

### **Frederick W. Paroth, Architect**

According to the architect biography developed by Nancy Widmann and entered into the *Guide to Colorado Architects* series by History Colorado's Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation,

Frederick William Paroth (1860 -1928) received his architectural training in Germany, arriving in the United States in 1882 and settling in Denver in 1889 at age 29. Paroth lived up to the claim he placed on his letterhead—"Fred W. Paroth, Architect and Superintendent... Catholic Institutions a Specialty." His first documented project was the 1890 two-story brick and stone St. Elizabeth's School in Denver. In 1891, he was the architect and builder of St. Elizabeth's Monastery and in 1896 credited as the "builder" of the German national parish of St. Elizabeth of Hungary's Church in the Romanesque Revival style with Gothic influences. St. Elizabeth's Church and Monastery on the Auraria campus in downtown Denver is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and as a Denver Landmark. In 1893, Paroth designed the first St. Anthony's Hospital and continued to work for the German order of Mount St. Francis Sisters as they added to their growing hospital complex in west Denver. His last documented project for the sisters was a two-story convent in 1921, erected adjacent to the hospital. Paroth also designed the 1903 Sacred Heart Orphanage in Pueblo for the St. Francis Sisters. The Denver Landmark Mt. Carmel Italian Catholic Church, built in 1899 [sic] in North Denver, is reported to have been the idea of Pastor Mariano Lepore who "had a Mr. Parrot [sic] work out ideas and assist with the architectural designs and plans." In 1904, Paroth was the architect of record for Annunciation Church and Holy Family Church, both in Denver. His 1928 obituaries reported other Denver projects—St. Clara's Orphanage, St. Rosa's Convent, warehouses and offices—and Colorado projects—Golden's St. Joseph's Church, Boulder's Church of the Sacred Heart (now demolished), and Pueblo's Sacred Heart Orphanage, as well as churches in Longmont, and "other towns near Denver." Paroth cited

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<sup>37</sup> "Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church: History," <http://ourladymountcarmel.com/history/> (accessed 31 Oct 2016).



St. Clara's Orphanage and Volker & Co. Warehouse when he applied for his "A" license in 1910.<sup>38</sup>

### **Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini**

Born July 15, 1850 in the province of Lombardy, Italy, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, as she was widely known, founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Cabrini ultimately made 67 trips to the United States, beginning in 1889 and arriving in Denver as a missionary in 1902 at the suggestion of Pope Leo XIII. In February 1906, she wrote in her personal papers:

Seated in a comfortable carriage of the Santa Fe Railway, my glance swept across those immense plains which, around Denver, are dotted with the cottages of our Italian agriculturists, and which, farther on, are uninhabited, there being immense tracts still of virgin soil. My thoughts flew to our emigrants, who, in such great numbers, land every year on the Atlantic shores, overcrowding still more the already populous city of the east, where they meet with great difficulties and little gain. In the west there is still room for millions and millions, and its most fertile soil would offer occupation more congenial to the Italian emigrants, as well as a field in which to develop their activities and their agrarian knowledge, and to crown their efforts and labors with copious results.<sup>39</sup>

Michele (d. 1911) and Rosina (d. 1935) Notary (NotarFrancesco) hosted Mother Cabrini at their home (extant), one block away from the current site of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at 3357 Palmer Street (now Navajo) (5DV.358.8). Michele was a notary public, travel agent, and owner of produce and liquor businesses. He helped found the oldest Italian Catholic society in Denver, the Mount Carmel Society, as well as the *Società Nativi di Potenza Basilicata* Lodge in 1899.<sup>40</sup> The Colorado State Register of Historic Properties-listed Morrato Block (5DV.6966, 8 Mar 2000) at 220 Champa Street in Denver was constructed for brother-in-laws Notary e Morrato, wine and liquor distribution. The other two branches of the business were in the Little Italy neighborhood itself.<sup>41</sup>

By June 1902, Mother Cabrini and her Order of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (founded in Rome in 1880) proceeded to establish a convent and school at the Notary home, serving about two hundred children. The *Denver Times* reported the school's dedication:

Bishop Matz, in the part of his address to the parents, dwelt on the fact that previous to the opening of this mission the two hundred little ones had been scattered from one end of Denver to the other, many of them attending no school at all. He besought them to remember that while the children were to become true American citizens, speaking English intelligently and fluently, that they were not to forget the music, the sentiment, and the pathos of the mother country and the mother tongue. The Missionary Sisters, some of whom speak only Italian while others are equally at ease in English, were

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<sup>38</sup> Nancy L. Widmann, "Annunciation Church (5DV.3287)," National Register of Historic Places nomination, adapted for the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's *Guide to Colorado Architects* entry, "Frederick William Paroth" (Jan 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Mother Frances Cabrini, quoted in *Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Denver, Colorado* [75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book] (Hackensack, NJ: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 1975) 4.

<sup>40</sup> The Potenza Lodge Hall is extant at 1900 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, nearby to Mount Carmel.

<sup>41</sup> Wray 10.

counseled to keep before them the finest traits of the two races and combine them for the children's best good.<sup>42</sup>

Mother Cabrini wrote in a letter regarding the inauguration of the house on December 18, 1902:

Our Sisters have begun their rounds. They have descended nine hundred feet into the mines, being lowered in a cage hardly large enough to contain them into a shaft about only one square metre wide, and cut obliquely in the rock. The compressed air introduced into the mines, makes respiration possible. They have also walked at times several kilometers through narrow tunnels at the same depth, speaking a word of comfort to these poor creatures and reminding them of the Eternal truths. It is not difficult to touch on the subject of hell as they walk through these dark tunnels where breathing is difficult, where the only available light is that of the few tallow candles, a pale idea, it is true, but still very expressive of the eternal darkness...The great amount of work I have found in this Western State will prolong my stay longer than I had expected. It is not time lost, however, so accompany me with your prayers and sacrifices, so that all our works may prosper to the greater glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus...<sup>43</sup>

Founded in October 1904, an orphanage, also in the Notary home, relocated in 1905. The school moved in 1908. The Sisters' convent remained at the Notary home (extant) until 1926.

Mother Cabrini became a naturalized United States citizen in 1909. She passed away on December 22, 1917. On July 7, 1946, she was the first U.S. citizen canonized as a saint by Pope Pius XII. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini is celebrated on November 13 as the patron saint of immigrants.

Other Colorado properties associated with her charitable works included Queen of Heaven Orphanage at 4825 Federal Boulevard in Denver (no longer extant). This was the home of the relocated orphanage reorganized in 1965 as a private elementary boarding school for girls, the Saint Cabrini Memorial Private School. Also known as *Regina Coeli*, the orphanage housed 160 children in a converted farmhouse that was replaced in 1921 by an impressive facility. The property was demolished in 1973.

The Mount Carmel Parish School (demolished) was housed in the former Church or Chapel of San Rocco at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Osage Street, immediately adjacent to the locally landmarked 1895 Damascio family residence (5DV.358.86) at 3611 Osage Street. The church purchased the building from Damascio after 1904 and renovated it with his assistance. The parish school was dedicated August 23, 1908. Completed in 1902, San Rocco was an imposing, four-story, Romanesque Revival-style stone building with a tall rusticated base, compass-head windows, front-gable, oversized Gothic entry arch surmounted by a large oculus window, and monumental entry flight of stairs, flanked by two towers. The parish school operated through 1955.

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Zahller 221.

<sup>43</sup> Mother Frances Cabrini, quoted in *Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Denver, Colorado* (1975) 10.  
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In 1910, Mother Cabrini founded a mountain camp for orphans. Known as the Queen of Heaven Orphanage Summer Camp, the property was listed in the National Register (5JF.2212, January 14, 2000, NRIS 99001666).

Upon reaching Mount Vernon Canyon, Mother Cabrini and some of the sisters climbed up the highest hill in sight. Overwhelmed with the splendid view of Denver and the Front Range, the sisters gathered white stones and arranged them in the shape of a heart to represent the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Inspired by the outing, Mother Cabrini somehow managed to buy the 900-acre hilltop site. She was warned there was no water, but, according to legend, moved a rock to uncover a still-flowing stream of artesian water, which served the summer home for orphan girls that Mother Cabrini and the Missionary Sisters constructed. In 1929, the spring was converted to a grotto, modeled after the Great Shrine of Lourdes in France, so all could come to sample the waters of Mother Cabrini. An anonymous donor contributed \$1,000 for a life-sized marble statue of Mother Cabrini, a replica of her statue in St. Peter's in Rome. On July 11, 1954, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart erected a \$15,000, Italian-made, twenty-two-foot-high statue of their patron, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, atop Mount Vernon (...) Rock gardens, outdoor stations of the cross, a chapel, and a carillon that fills the hills with the sound of music attract thousands of pilgrims each year to the mountaintop shrine, which is maintained by a convent of Mother Cabrini's sisters.<sup>44</sup>

The shrine remains a site of pilgrimage even today (5JF.2492).

### **Pastorships and the Order of the Servants of Mary (Servite Fathers)**

Father Mariano Lepore was a Diocesan priest born in Nusco, Italy, arriving in Denver in 1898. Brought to this parish by the pastor of nearby St. Patrick's, Lepore never saw completion of the second Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. On November 18, 1903, Father Lepore was attacked and shot in the church, passing away on November 20 at St. Joseph's Hospital. Although the true reasons for the murder will likely never be fully known, intimations in the *Denver Times* (27 Aug 1898) were somewhat scandalous: "A little over two years ago charges were made in public against Father Lepore of immorality, swindling, and lying." The murderer, laborer Giuseppe Sorice, also died at the scene. Unverifiable claims were about money and other supposed wrongs.<sup>45</sup> The San Rocco and Our Lady of Mount Carmel factions resolved their differences in 1904.

Rev. P. Guida of the Society of Jesus subsequently led the church through March 1904. In August 1904, Bishop Matz offered the Church to the Order of the Servants of Mary, Servite Fathers, with a letter addressed to the Rev. Ugo Crevier, Commissary General of the Servite Fathers in the United States, based in Chicago.<sup>46</sup> Founded by the Seven Holy Founders, the Order of the Servants of Mary originated in 1233 in Florence, Italy in dedication to Mary,

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado Catholicism and the Archdiocese of Denver 1857-1989* (Denver: University Press of Colorado and the Archdiocese of Denver, 1989) 56.

<sup>45</sup> Typewritten manuscript on file with History Colorado, notation: "item copied from the research files of Ruth Eloise Wiberg," 2004.

<sup>46</sup> "Rev. Julius M. Piccoli, O.S.M., "Historical Facts of Mount Carmel Church, 3549 Navajo Street, Denver, Colorado, 1899-1934," typewritten manuscript in the files of History Colorado.

Mother of Sorrows, and now spans worldwide. Also known as the Friar Servants of Mary, the Order was approved by the Bishop of Florence sometime between 1240 and 1247. In 1304, the Order was officially approved by the Holy See. The Order of Servites is the fifth mendicant order.

The Servite Fathers expanded to the United States in 1852, working with German-speaking Catholics beginning in New York City and subsequently Pennsylvania. The Order's history notes that Austrian Servites also began to work with Italian Servites in the Midwest. From July 1870, Bishop Joseph Melcher of Green Bay, Wisconsin, invited Servites to his diocese. By 1874, the Order worked in Chicago, where the headquarters of their American Province was established in 1909.<sup>47</sup> The corresponding American Province of Servants of Mary has its Motherhouse at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Omaha, Nebraska since 1925. In 1864, the Sisters of London/Cuves joined the Servite Order, in turn extending their service to the United States beginning in 1871. The Sisters initially settled in Mount Vernon, Indiana in 1892, from whence they expanded west.<sup>48</sup>

Between 1898 and 1904, the Servites were already active at a monastery dedicated to St. Juliana Falconieri, O.S.M., in Delta, Colorado, and Mother Cabrini was in contact with them there.<sup>49</sup> Mother Cabrini appealed to Father Thomas M. Moreschini, O.S.M. in Colorado Springs (en route to Delta), who came to Mount Carmel and began the work of fundraising to pay the church's creditors for construction to date and completing work on the building.

The architect was Mr. F. W. Paroth, and the contractor, Mr. Frank Kirchoff. The work began about the middle of September and was finishes [sic] towards the middle of December, 1904. When the work of the Church was completed everyone was happy and gave proof of the same on the Sunday of the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 1904, when Bishop N. G. Matz dedicated the Church. On this beautiful morning the Italian societies, with a band preceded by one hundred and fifty school children accompanied by the Sisters marched to 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Navajo, then Palmer Avenue, to meet the Bishop and accompanying him to the Church.<sup>50</sup>

According to a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary bulletin,

When the Servite Fathers took charge, the financial and moral conditions of the Parish were not very consoling, but, we can say, very discouraging. The church building consisted of four bare walls without plaster, decorations, fixed altars and pews: there was no roof, in its place a large canvas protected the faithful from rain and snow; there were no funds to complete the work, but a debt of \$11,500. The first full possession of the church, was to pay the various creditors and to bring to completion the church building. To that end they negotiated a loan of \$15,000 with an insurance company, paid the creditors, who kindly reduced the church debt to \$9,968.67 and in September, 1904,

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<sup>47</sup> Friars of Servants of Mary: USA Province, "Origins," <http://www.servite.org/History/History-Origins.aspx> (accessed 6 Oct 2016).

<sup>48</sup> Servants of Mary, "Mission and History," [http://www.osms.org/who\\_we\\_are/mission.html](http://www.osms.org/who_we_are/mission.html) (accessed 6 Oct 2016).

<sup>49</sup> Personal communication, Father Hugh Guentner. St. Juliana was the Italian founder of the Sisters of the Third Order of Servites around 1385.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 2-3.

<b>Our Lady of Mount Carmel Pastors</b>
Father Mariano Felice Lepore (1892-1903) Born and trained in Italy. Responsible for construction of the first church. First pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
Father John Guida, S. J. (1903-1904)
Father Thomas M. Moreschini, O.S.M. [Servite Father] (1904-1909) Born and trained in Italy, as well as England. First Servite pastor. Responsible for completion and dedication of first church and opening of the school. Healed fraction with St. Rocco Society.
Father Julius M. Piccoli, O.S.M. (1909-1938) Born and trained in Italy. Assistant and then successor to Fr. Moreschini, known for his aid to the poor and his kindness to children.
Father Angelico M. Barsi, O.S.M. (Oct 1926-May 1927)
Father Gaetano M. del Brusco, O.S.M. (1938-46)
Father Thomas LoCascio (1946-60)
Father Alphonse Mattucci (1960-66)
Father Robert Volk (1966-68)
Father Hugh M. Moffett (1968-74)
Father Gabriel M. Weber (1974-77)
Father Donald Duplessis (1977-79)
Father Joseph M. Carbone (1979-1988)
Father Gabriel M. Ramacciotti, O.S.M. (1988-1994) Born to Italian immigrants in Chicago. Studied in Rome 1948-51.
Father Timothy M. Kremen, O.S.M. (2004-2010)
Father Hugh M. Guentner, O.S.M. (2010-present)

resumed the interrupted work. After three months everything was completed: roof, alters [sic], decorations, and pews, at the cost of \$8,974.40.<sup>51</sup>

The Order of Servites have served the parish since Father Moreschini, who was instrumental in reconciliation with the fractured San Rocco Society and purchase of their chapel at 3601 Osage Street for a parish school. He also completed the church itself and assumed responsibility for the parish, as upon Lepore's death:

The Church was in the worst of conditions. It had no plaster and no roofing. The seats, those that we had, belonged to the Church of St. Patrick, and the altars hardly could be called such. The negotiations between Monsignor Bishop and the Order of the Servants of Mary came to a close in the month of August, 1904, with the approval of the Holy See with the decree to concede perpetually Mt. Carmel Church to the Order of the Servants of Mary, including the small home, the school, and the lots.<sup>52</sup> The Servite Fathers eventually came to oversee other Italian-American parishes in the front range: Our Lady of Sorrows, Eastlake (1916); Holy Trinity, Westminster (1947); and St. Catherine's, or Our Lady Mother of the Church, Commerce City (1948).<sup>53</sup>

By 1944, Father Gaetano del Brusco orchestrated purchase of 24 lots for construction of the high school and new grade school, as well as a Convent for the Sisters.<sup>54</sup> By that time, discussion of an enlarged rectory was already being discussed.

Mount Carmel High School at Zuni Street and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue was dedicated on September 23, 1951

(demolished). Mount Carmel Grade School was built at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Pecos Street in 1954 and now operates as the Pecos (Northside) Community Center. The new convent for the Servite Sisters was opened by January 1962 at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Wyandot Street. Both schools closed in

<sup>51</sup> "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

<sup>52</sup> "Historical Facts of Mount Carmel Church, 3549 Navajo Street, Denver, Colorado, 1899-1934," unattributed typewritten manuscript, on file with History Colorado, Denver.

<sup>53</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 21.

<sup>54</sup> "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

1968 due to the increasing relocation in the post-World War II era of the Italian-American community to the northwestern suburbs of Adams, Boulder, and Jefferson counties.

### **Parish Social and Cultural Activities**

Mother Cabrini's order, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, served the church and school from 1902 until 1926. The Servite Sisters of Omaha served from 1926 until 1968, which saw the closure of the schools.

Since the parish's establishment on March 18, or Palm Sunday, 1894, Our Lady of Mount Carmel has hosted numerous Italian societies. The *Società Nativi di Potenza* was founded in October 1899 by Ralph Mancinelli and mirrored comparable organizations in Chicago, New York, and New Jersey: "Originally a clearinghouse for immigrants from Potenza, located about 90 kilometers south of Rome, the group originally started its own insurance plan, translated letters and searched for employment for members. Today, it is a social organization with the qualification that members must be descendants from Potenza."<sup>55</sup> The Potenza Lodge subsequently moved to its own building (see above).

Founded in 1907, St. Anne's Society is beneficial and social, hosting pot luck suppers, annual business meetings, and serves as the Auxiliary of the Knights of St. John No. 51 at Mount Carmel.<sup>56</sup>

The St. Michael's Society, founded on May 14, 1912, is a non-profit, mutual benefit society that also inaugurated the first dinner-dance parish fundraisers. High Mass honoring St. Michael is held each September at the church.<sup>57</sup>

Founded in 1918, the Mount Carmel Altar and Rosary Society boasted both English and Italian-language branches through the 1940s. The society cares for the altar, makes vestments for the priest, and focuses on parish improvement. The society has also been responsible, more broadly, for church maintenance, and donated the organ and three bells in the belfry.<sup>58</sup> The organization hosts a cake booth and hope chest raffle at the annual bazaar (see below) as well as a First Communion breakfast. The Society banner is placed at the altar at Mass and carried in Feast Day processions, honoring Italian tradition.

Dating to 1926, the Ushers Club assists with keeping the church orderly and assisting with special events: "The club itself also served as a social organization and prior to World War II its activities included a Mother's Day breakfast for wives; family picnic during the summer; an annual dinner for ushers and wives given by the pastor on December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Lisa Benoit, "Italian American organizations promote awareness of tradition," *Denver Catholic Register* (2 Oct 1996).

<sup>56</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 56.

<sup>57</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 56-57.

<sup>58</sup> "Historical Facts of Mount Carmel Church, 3549 Navajo Street, Denver, Colorado, 1899-1934."

<sup>59</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975).

Founded in 1933, the church's Third Order of Servites is a spiritual organization dedicated to Our Mother of Sorrows and to the Dolor Rosary: "At this time [monthly Sunday meetings] the Rosary of the Seven Dolors is recited and usually there is a short instruction period. The Third Order also promotes the Living Rosary, in which a band of seven people is formed with a promoter at its head. Each member of the band says one Dolor of the Rosary each day and in this way each band daily completes one rosary."<sup>60</sup>

The St. Philomena Society, founded in 1938, evolved from a religious discussion club to a social club.<sup>61</sup> The 1939 St. Juliana Study Club was originally organized by Father Gaetano Del Brusco. Beginning in 1942 and no longer extant, the Mt. Carmel Parish Credit Union offered life savings and loan protection insurance, group rates on life insurance, and affiliation with Credit Union National Association and Colorado Credit Union League.<sup>62</sup>

In 1949, more than 100 people dedicated a chapel at the church to the 23 parish dead in World War II.<sup>63</sup> Those parish members who have served are also honored in the garden at the church.

Beginning in August 1953, the Mount Carmel Men's Club supported parish schools and church programs, including Mount Carmel High School alumni events and the annual golf and bocce tournaments.

With the advent of Mt. Carmel High School, it became apparent that there was a dire need for a ways and means committee. Father Thomas LoCascio, O.S.M., the pastor, solicited the entire parish for interested men to organize these people for the sole purpose of having a body that could support the school's extra-curricular activities.<sup>64</sup>

The Men's Club hosts an annual bazaar, social gatherings associated with *La Prima Domenica*, or Italian Mass, held the first Sunday of each month, bingo games, raffles, spaghetti dinners, and fund raisers. The Men's Club also acts as the Servite Secular Order of Mt. Carmel, maintains the community food bank, St. Vincent's Home, and Buon Appetito! spaghetti dinners.

The Legion of Mary, organized in 1961, pursue spiritual works of charity, such as visiting the sick and elderly, and assisting others with returning their faith. The Legion of Mary was responsible for restoration of the annual May Crowning, the feast that recognizes Mary as queen of heaven and earth by the crowning of her statue by young girls (Photo H15)<sup>65</sup>

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Women's Auxiliary formed in 1972 and, like the Men's Club, meets at the Parish Hall. It is comprised of wives and widows of members of the Men's Club. Beginning in 1975, the Ambassadors of Mary is composed of men who tend the Pilgrim Virgin Statue, escorting it every Saturday to a new residence where it would be honored: "Each week they take the statue to a new home and furnish the vigil light, vases and flowers to adorn it, free of charge, and lead the family, friends and neighbors in the recitation of the Rosary, the Litany of

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<sup>60</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 62.

<sup>61</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 58.

<sup>62</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 58.

<sup>63</sup> "Mt. Carmel Dedicates Chapel to War Dead," *Rocky Mountain News* (21 Nov 1949): 39.

<sup>64</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 59.

<sup>65</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 61.

Our Lady and the Act of Consecration to Her Immaculate Heart.”<sup>66</sup> Other societies have included: the Holy Name Society; Adolla club for ladies; St. Theresa Society; C.P.T.A., associated with the school; Boy Scouts Troupe; Itams Club of Denver; Usaly Club; St. Bernadette’s Club; North Denver Knights of Columbus Council No. 3319; Sons of Italy in America, Denver Lodge No. 2075; and Sewing Club.<sup>67</sup>

In early December, the church celebrates the Feast (or Solemnity) of the Immaculate Conception, celebrating Mary’s preservation from original sin. Early in the church’s history, circa 1893, the celebration was described thus:

The day was specially set apart by Pope Leo’s predecessor in 1854, and Italians in particular are wont to observe it. The Italian colony was in gala attire for this event. Special high mass was held at Mount Carmel church in the early morning, with 300 at communion. Father Lepore administered the blessed sacrament and at 6 o’clock a vesper service was held (...) The display of fireworks on this sacred day is an old custom with the Italians, and has been observed for generations, says Father Lepore (...) The new Catholic church of Mount Carmel for the Italian colony, and to be presided over by Father Leppore, will be ready for occupancy at Christmas time (...) The Mount Carmel parishioners are making preparations on a grand scale, unlike anything of a previous nature ever seen in Denver. The edifice is a magnificent one and crowns a prominent hill in the Italian settlement in North Denver.<sup>68</sup>

The Saint Joseph’s Day Table celebration, a Sicilian feast day (March 19), began formally in 1977 and offers thanks to the saint’s intercession for past blessings:

A table will be filled with an abundant variety of foods prepared by parishioners. There also will be homemade breads and cookies for sale. Each participant will receive a goodie bag that includes a small bread, a holy card, and fava beans. The items have all been blessed by a priest. Italian legend holds that a fava bean in your pantry and in your wallet will ensure that neither will go empty.<sup>69</sup>

The tradition is further described in an unattributed clipping on file with History Colorado:

The St. Joseph’s Altar is a Sicilian tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. During a lengthy famine, the community prayed to St. Joseph to intercede to God for them. Their prayers were answered as rain filled the dry wells and streams and gave birth to crops. These poor farmers and fishermen wanted to pay homage to St. Joseph for answering their prayers. An altar was constructed and precious foods that were common to them became elaborately decorated feasts (...) Here in Denver, the tradition was celebrated for the first time in 1977 in the home of Mary and Al Rotola. The following year, the St.

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<sup>66</sup> *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 61.

<sup>67</sup> “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Denver, Colorado, 1894-1944.”

<sup>68</sup> “Big Church Day: Italians in North Denver Observe the Feast of the Immaculate Conception,” undated clipping (ca. 1893) on file with History Colorado.

<sup>69</sup> “Mount Carmel parish to hold St. Joseph Table and Desolata Service,” *The Denver Catholic Register* (13 Mar 2002).



Joseph's Table was held for the first time at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic church, March 19, 1978 and has continued every year since.<sup>70</sup>

The Desolata Service, an Italian tradition of the Servite order, is on March 22 and marks the feast of Our Lady of Compassion, Mary at the Foot of the Cross.<sup>71</sup> A hallmark of the feast is the singing of the Oratorio.

The Golden Jubilee 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was held September 24, 1944, including General Communion for adults and children, Solemn Pontifical Mass and "Te Deum," as well as a more extensive musical program.

The church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with a Mass on May 15, 1994. Mayor Wellington Webb, Italian Vice Consulate Caterina Noya Scordo, State Representative Rob Hernandez, and Archbishop J. Francis Stafford, among others, were present. The Colorado Senate declared the remainder of the month "Mt. Carmel Days."<sup>72</sup>

The year 1994 also saw the founding of A.V.A.N.T.I. (Allied in Vision and Action Now for Tomorrow's Italian-Americans), which welcomed His Eminence, Camillo Cardinal Ruini, Vicar of Rome and President of the Italian Bishops' Conference, to celebrate Mass on August 12.<sup>73</sup> Surrounding this occasion, Mt. Carmel and its congregant families hosted 7000 Italian youth for World Youth Day.

The largest annual, three-day celebration of the parish, as part of the celebration of the Feast Day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, is the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel bazaar, held in July. This is among the most notable of the enduring traditions transplanted directly from Italy.<sup>74</sup> The year 2016 marked the 85<sup>th</sup> annual celebration. The celebration includes a traditional street procession of the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, live entertainment, and food booths (Photo H12).

The annual Feast of San Rocco is celebrated three days in the third week of August (around the feast day, August 22<sup>nd</sup>), featuring High Mass, the parading of the saint's statue through the neighborhood, followed by a bazaar, sponsored at the *Società Nativi di Potenza* Lodge (but for approximately forty years held at Mount Carmel).<sup>75</sup> The procession and Mass are at Mount Carmel, per long-standing agreement. The celebration hearkens to the traditions of Society of San Rocco organized in 1892 and split into two in 1896, *Fratellanza Catholica* and *Società di San Rocco*. The larger Society disbanded in 1926, the same year the annual feast began. The fourteenth-century French saint took a vow of poverty and undertook pilgrimage to Rome. Upon contracting the plague, he took refuge in a cave, where a dog brought him bread to eat, ultimately causing a nobleman to find and assist Rocco. Among other miracles, Saint Rocco is venerated as a protector against plague and contagious disease. He is often depicted pointing to an open sore

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<sup>70</sup> "The History of St. Joseph's Table," unattributed clipping on file with History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>71</sup> "Mount Carmel parish to hold St. Joseph Table and Desolata Service," *The Denver Catholic Register* (13 Mar 2002).

<sup>72</sup> "Mt. Carmel celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary," *Italiana: The Italian Voice of Denver* 2.3 (Jun/Jul 1994); R.W. Meddles, "Our Lady of Mt. Carmel celebrates 100 years," *North Denver Tribune* 60.19 (19 May 1994).

<sup>73</sup> "WYD generates new organization," undated clipping on file with History Colorado, Denver.

<sup>74</sup> Personal communication, Alisa DiGiacomo to Author, September 2016.

<sup>75</sup> "Servite priests serve Denver's Italians," *The Denver Catholic Register* (17 Dec 1986); Mark Stevens, "Paraders visit 'last bastions' of city culture," *Rocky Mountain News* (18 Aug 1980): 8.

on his left leg. Parishioners bid for the honor of carrying the statue and all monies from the Feast are donated to Catholic Charities.<sup>76</sup> The 1954 celebration described:

Six thousand people lined the streets of North Denver Sunday to watch the ancient and colorful Feast of St. Rocco, patron saint of many Italian towns (...) One of these was Potenza, a farm town in southern Italy. Sixty years ago [1894], Potenza citizens sent a statue of the saint to their relatives who had migrated to Denver. This statue has been carried the celebrations ever since. It held the place of honor in the church during the feast, while parishioners pinned bills of various denominations to a scarf around the neck of the richly robed statue.<sup>77</sup>

The parade also historically includes the carrying of religious candles, huge bouquets of flowers, society banners, and other smaller religious statuary. Women often walk barefoot behind San Rocco's statue.<sup>78</sup>

Mount Carmel now acts as the custodian of the sacramental books for St. Patrick's parish. Its active organizations include Men's Club, Secular Servants of Mary, Liturgy Commission, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Choir, Altar Servers, Ushers, Altar and Rosary Society, alumni, and the Dante Alighieri Society. The parish welcomes and serves the Italian-American community as well as all others interested in its programs.

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<sup>76</sup> The Wayfarer, "Parish Honors San Rocco With Colorful Ceremony," *Rocky Mountain News* (18 Aug 1952): 32.

<sup>77</sup> "St. Rocco Parade Viewed By 6000," (23 Aug 1954), unattributed clipping on file with History Colorado.

<sup>78</sup> Bob Lee, "Colorful Parade Marks San Rocco Festival Here," *Rocky Mountain News* (n.d.), clipping on file with History Colorado.

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Widmann, Nancy L. "Annunciation Church (5DV.3287)." National Register of Historic Places nomination. Adapted for the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's Guide to Colorado Architects entry, "Frederick William Paroth," on file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado, Denver.

"Will Baptize Bell." *Denver Times* (23 Mar 1899).

"Work on Mount Carmel Church is Well Under Way." *Denver Times* (19 May 1899).

Wray, Diane. "Morrato Block." Colorado State Register of Historic Properties nomination (Nov 1999) On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado, Denver.

Zahller (DiGiacomo), Alisa. *Italy in Colorado: Family Histories from Denver and Beyond*. Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2008.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: History Colorado, Our Lady of Mount Carmel

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 5DV.4204

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.225

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 13 | Easting: 499621 | Northing: 4401818 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Denver Assessor record for the Parish Hall reads: "L 22 TO 25 INC EXC N 15FT L 25BLK 6 CENTRAL SUB AN ADD TO TOWN OF HIGHLANDS." The Assessor record for the parking lots reads: "CENTRAL SUB AN ADD TO TOWN OF HIGHLANDS B6 L26 & 27 & S 18FTOF L28 & N 15FT OF L25." The Assessor record for the church reads: "L19 TO 21 INC BLK 6 CENTRAL SUB AS AN ADD TO THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS."

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The above-described parcels comprise the church, with its offices and associated garden, and the Parish Hall, with its associated parking lot and garage. This boundary comprises the land historically associated with the parish.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Astrid M.B. Liverman, Ph.D. (for property owner)  
organization: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado  
street & number: 1200 Broadway  
city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80203  
e-mail astrid.liverman@state.co.us  
telephone: (303)866.4681  
date: September 2016

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photograph Log

Name of Property: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

City or Vicinity: Denver

County: City and County of Denver

State: Colorado

Photographer: Astrid Liverman



Date Photographed: June 13, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 01 Church façade from Navajo Street, looking southwest.
- 02 Church, office annex/rectory, memorial garden, looking north from parking lot.
- 03 Church façade from Navajo Street, looking west.
- 04 Church cornerstone, 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- 05 Church interior, looking towards entrance.
- 06 Church high altar.
- 07 Church interior, looking towards south.
- 08 Ancillary altar to the south.
- 09 Church interior, detail ceiling.
- 10 Church interior, detail stained glass.
- 11 Church interior, detail entrance.
- 12 Church interior, display of hammer from original construction.
- 13 Memorial and contemplative garden, looking southwest.
- 14 Memorial and contemplative garden, looking northwest.
- 15 Memorial and contemplative garden, looking south.
- 16 Office annex, looking north.
- 17 Garage, looking southwest.
- 18 Parish hall façade from Navajo Street.
- 19 Parish hall, view south from parking lot.

### **Historic Photograph Log**

H1. Unattributed news clipping, destruction of the first Mount Carmel Church, 28 Aug 1898. On file with History Colorado.

H2. Source: "Dedication of Mt. Carmel Church," *The Daily News* (17 Dec 1904). Building in foreground is the temporary worship space erected following the 1898 fire of the first church.

H3. Undated (circa 1910), showing Church prior to alterations to entrance stair, Rectory, or memorial garden. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 16.

H4. Undated photograph, interior (ca. 1933), Christmas Day. On file with History Colorado.

H5. Interior, Christmas 1931. On file with History Colorado.

H6. Father Tom LaCascio performing the wedding of Margaret Lamirato and Bill Pitton, 1953. On file with History Colorado.

H7. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 7.

H8. Father Alphonse Monta, O.S.M., Prior General from Rome, blessing statue of St. Anthony Pucci, O.S.M., August 31, 1963. Assisted by Father Andrew Colletti, O.S.M., Father Marcetti, O.S.M., and Father Alphonse Mattucci, O.S.M. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 63.

H9. Altar & Rosary Society, n.d. (ca. 1930s). Note original garden space and Rectory prior to addition Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 1894-1994* 24.

H10. Memorial garden prior to 1965 (ca. early 1950s). Note statue of Sorrowful Mother at center on tiered circular pedestal is that which has been relocated to the southwest of the same garden. Large shrubbery and chain link fence behind pastor is no longer extant in post-1965 reconfiguration of garden. Note stained glass windows in their original appearance without protective covering. On file with History Colorado.

H11. Mount Carmel Feast, sponsored by Mount Carmel Society, 1922, Mount Carmel Society Hall, now Mount Carmel Parish Hall, in background. Music furnished by Italian Colonial Band of Denver, Colorado. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church*, reproduced in Zahller f 84.

H12. Procession of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel statue with the Mount Carmel Society Hall in background, photographed by the Rocky Mountain Photo Co., July 1920. Courtesy Mary Pomarico, CIAPA Archive. Source: Reproduced in Zahller 83.

H13. Parish hall interior subsequent to remodeling, dedication December 15, 1974. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 29.

H14. Carmelo Parade, between 1920 and 1930, photographed by Harry Mellon Rhoads. Source: Denver Public Library, Western History/Genealogy Dept., call number Rh-160

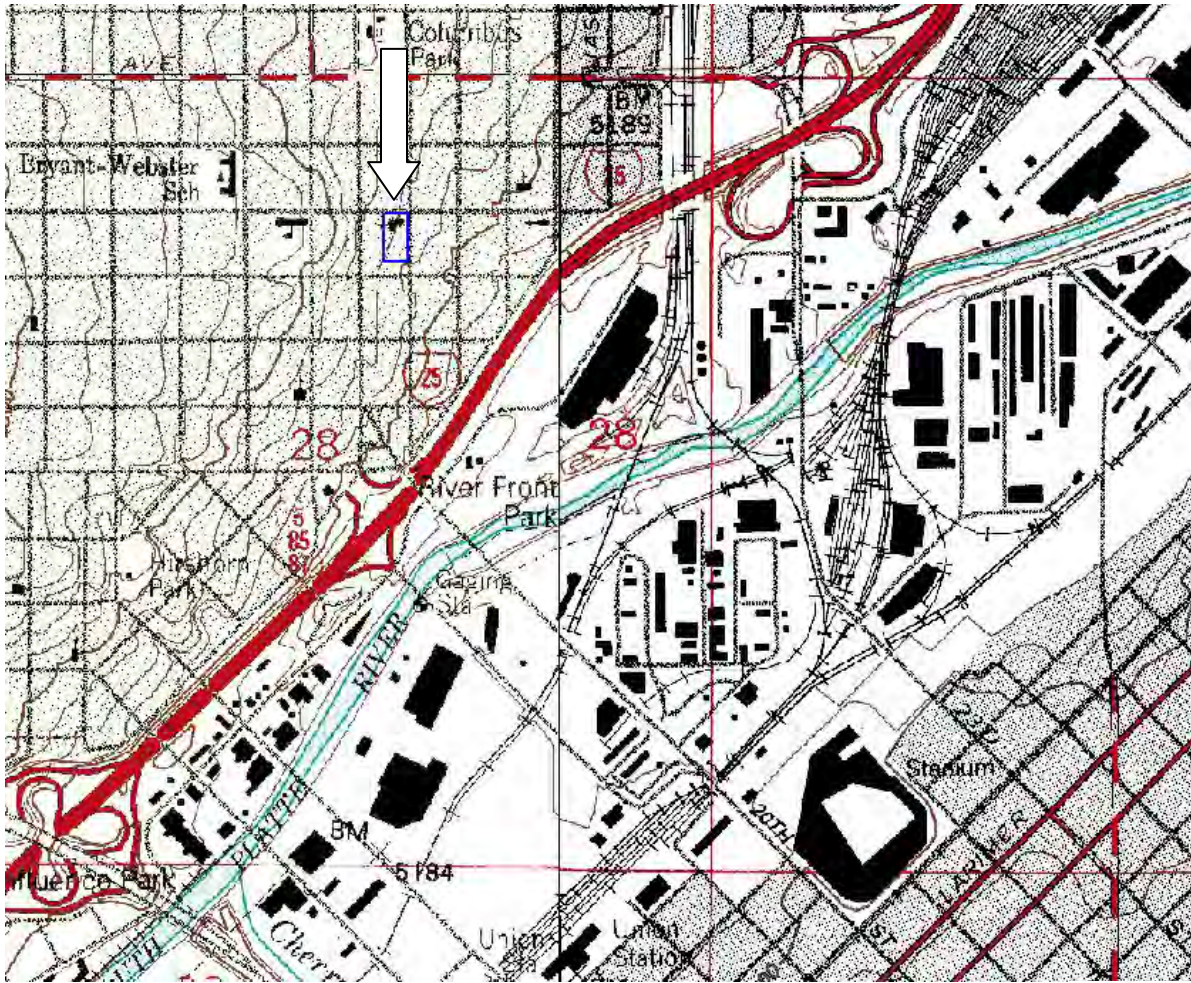
H15. May Crowning at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, photographed by Mile High Photo Company, ca. 1961. Depicts church interior with old wall coverings (medallions), prior to their covering with a gold redecoration. On file with History Colorado.

H16. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, First Communion class, 1924, photographed by Shuler Photo. At middle of back row is Father Julius M. Piccoli, O.S.M., third pastor from 1909-1938. Photograph depicts church steps prior to their reconfiguration. On file with History Colorado.

H17. Procession of Our Lady, photographed by Rocky Mountain Photo Co., ca. 1920. On file with History Colorado.

H18. 1994 commemorative logo. Note that the emblem in the upper left, adjacent to the tower, is that of the Servite Order. The crown evokes the seven founders of the Order in the thirteenth century. On file with History Colorado.

H19. Mount Carmel Parish School (formerly San Rocco Chapel), with Damascio house at right. Van's Studio, c. 1945. On file with History Colorado.

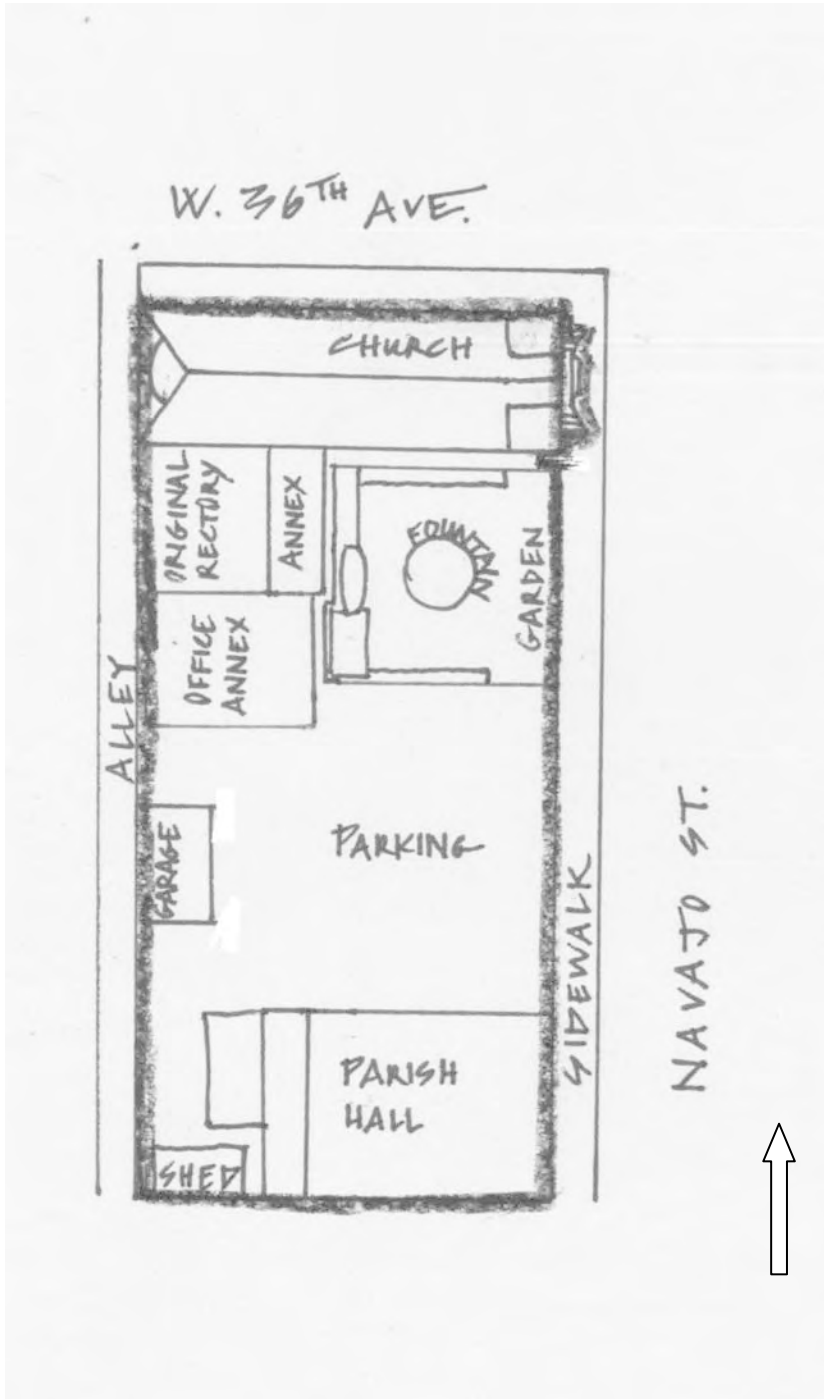


1:11,000 scale

U.S.G.S. Quadrangle Map: Arvada  
PM 6th Township 3S Range 68W Section 28 SE SW NW NE  
Elevation 5220'







**Sketch map** (not to scale)  
N.B. Darkest line represents nomination boundary.

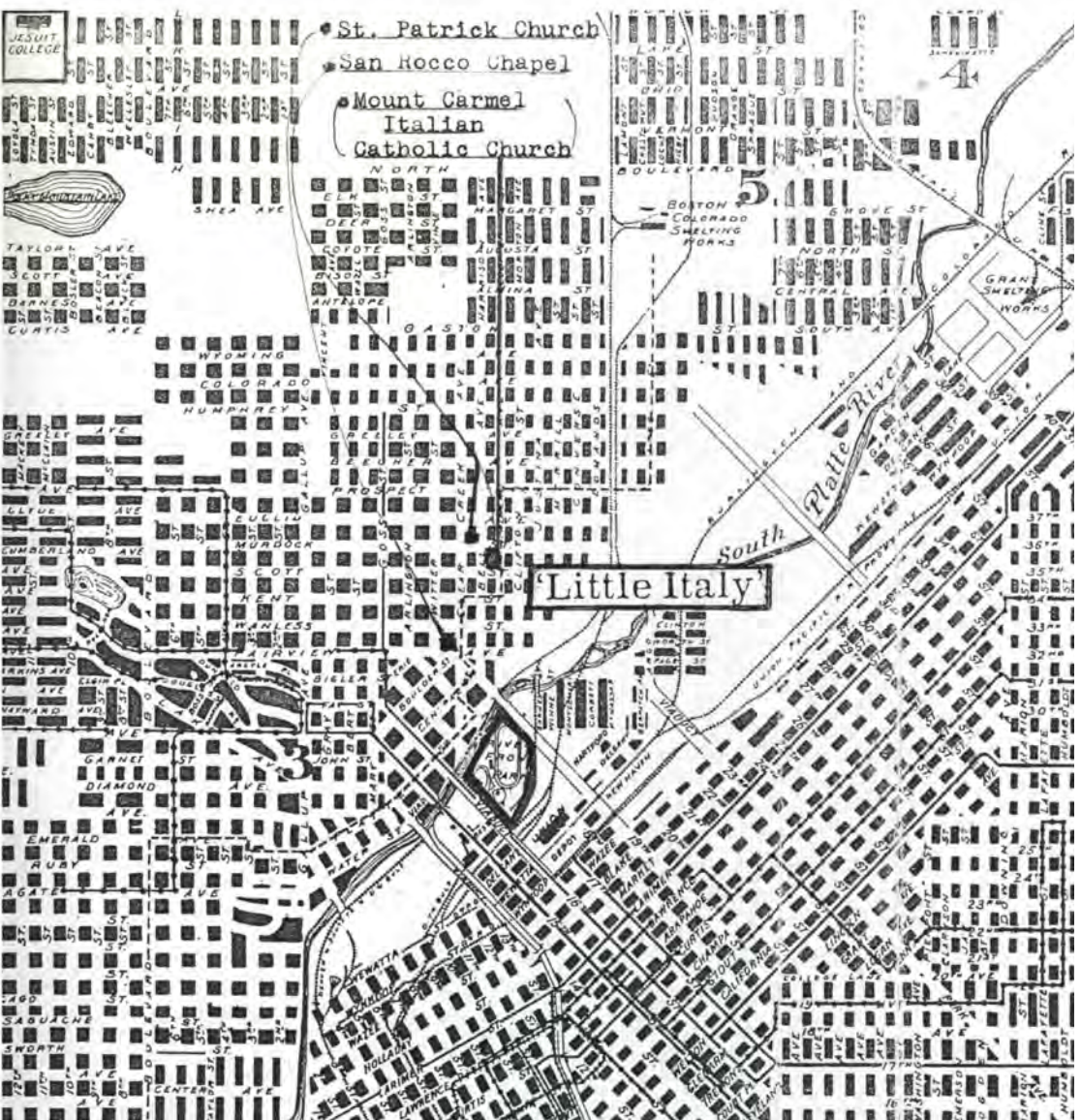


Figure 1. *Rollander's Guide Map and Street Index to Denver* (1892). Annotated version on file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado, Denver.

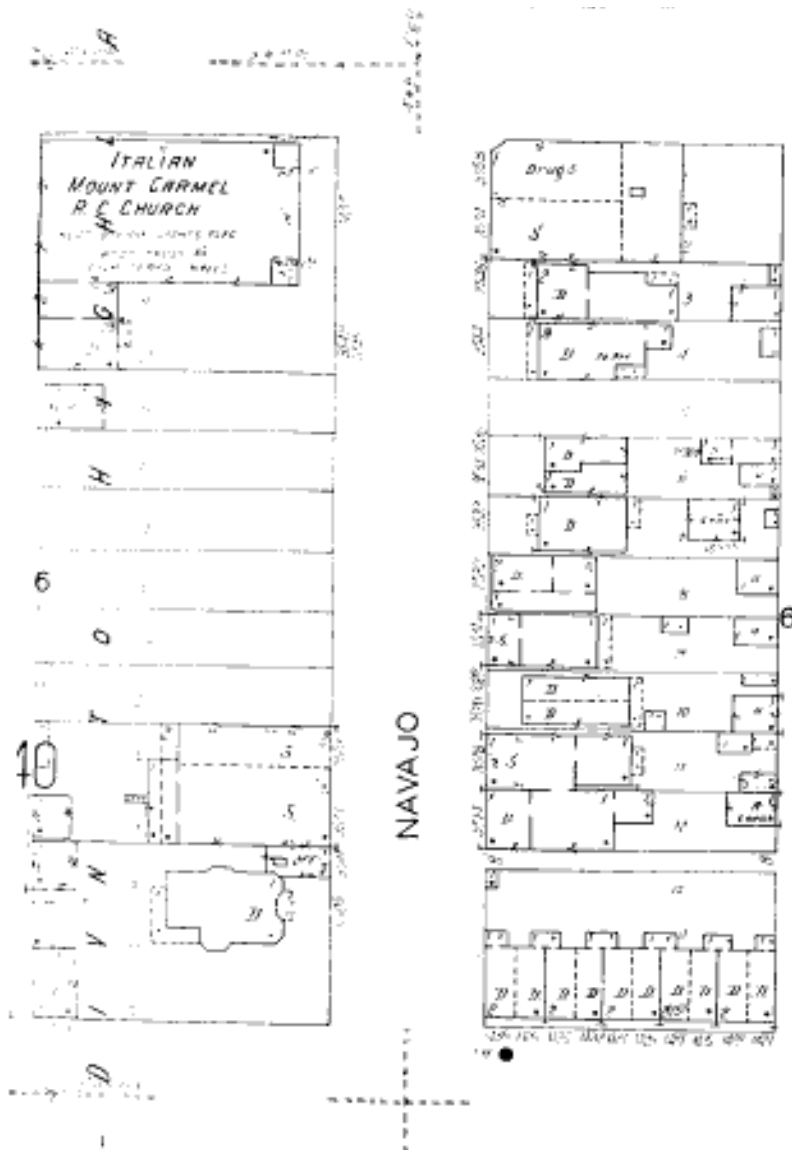


Figure 2. Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Denver, Colorado. Sheet 642, Volume 6 (1930).

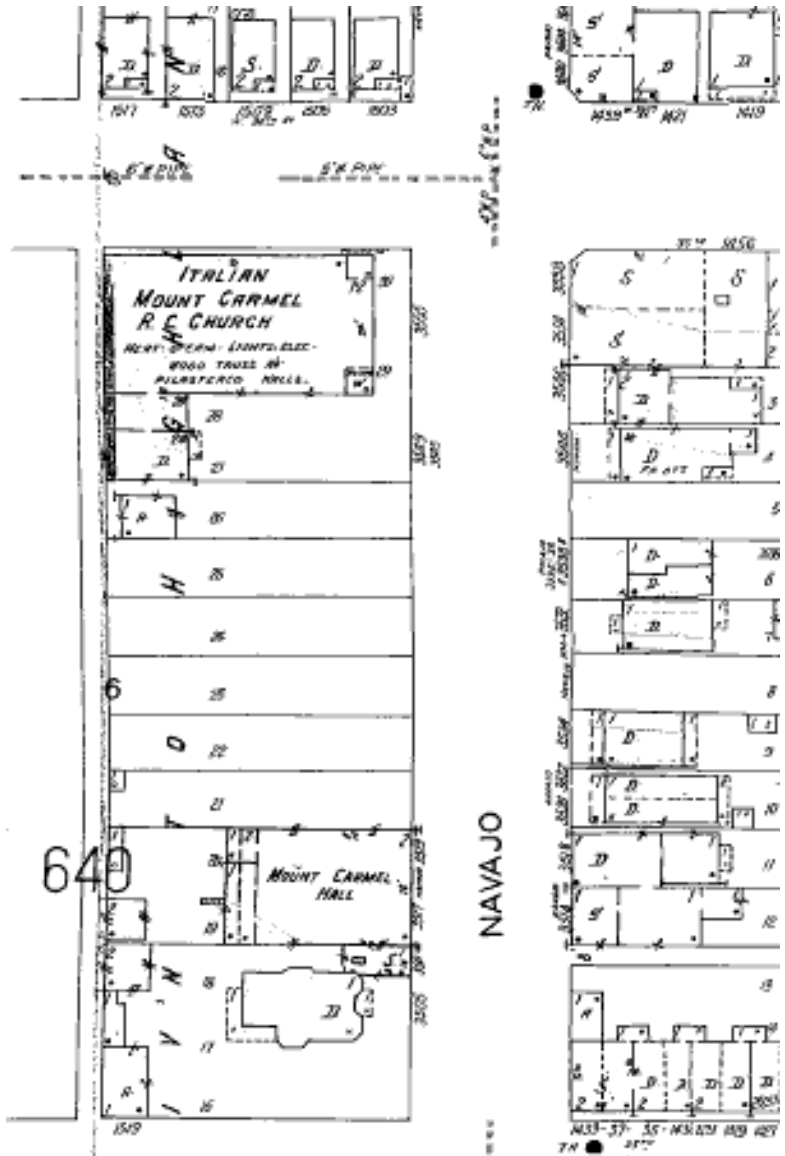
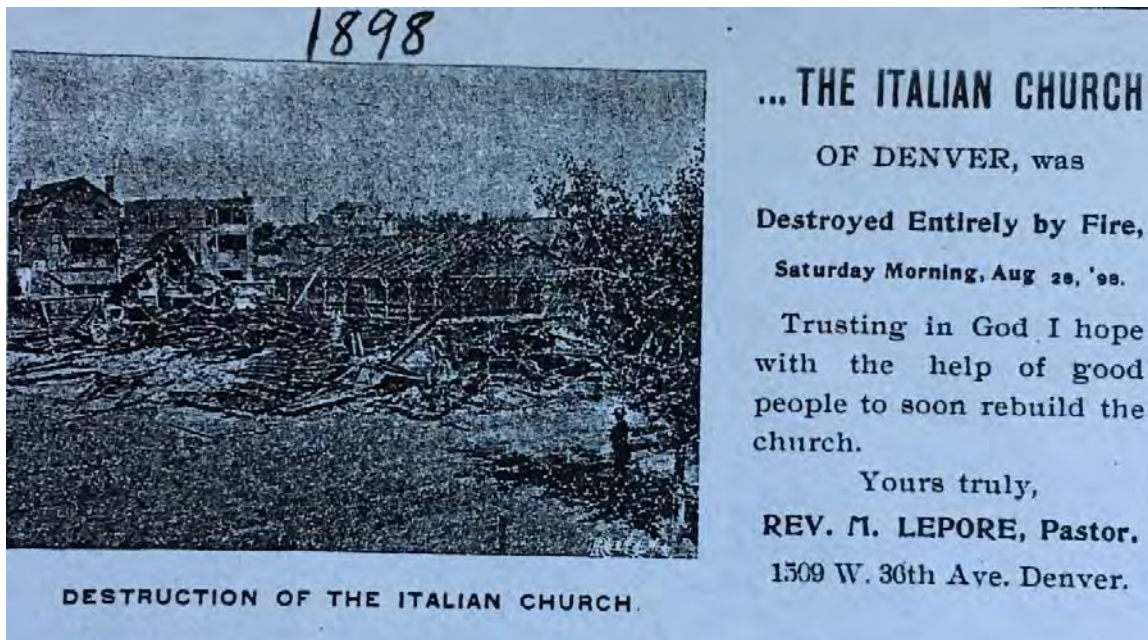
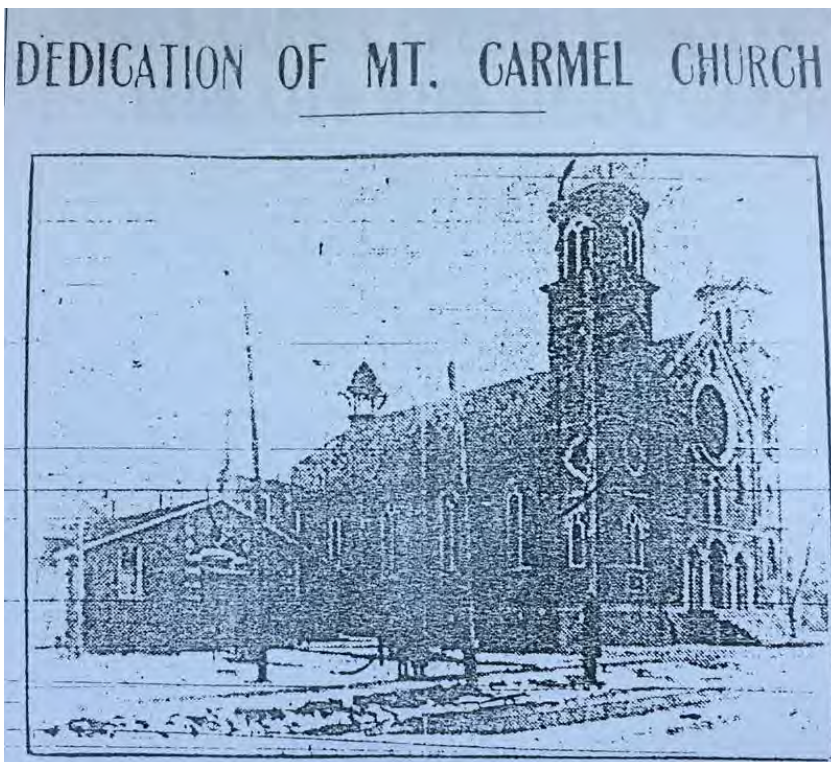


Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 642, Volume 6 (1930-Dec. 1950).





H1. Unattributed news clipping, destruction of the first Mount Carmel Church, 28 Aug 1898. At right is the first Mount Carmel school under the direction of Mother Cabrini. On file with History Colorado.



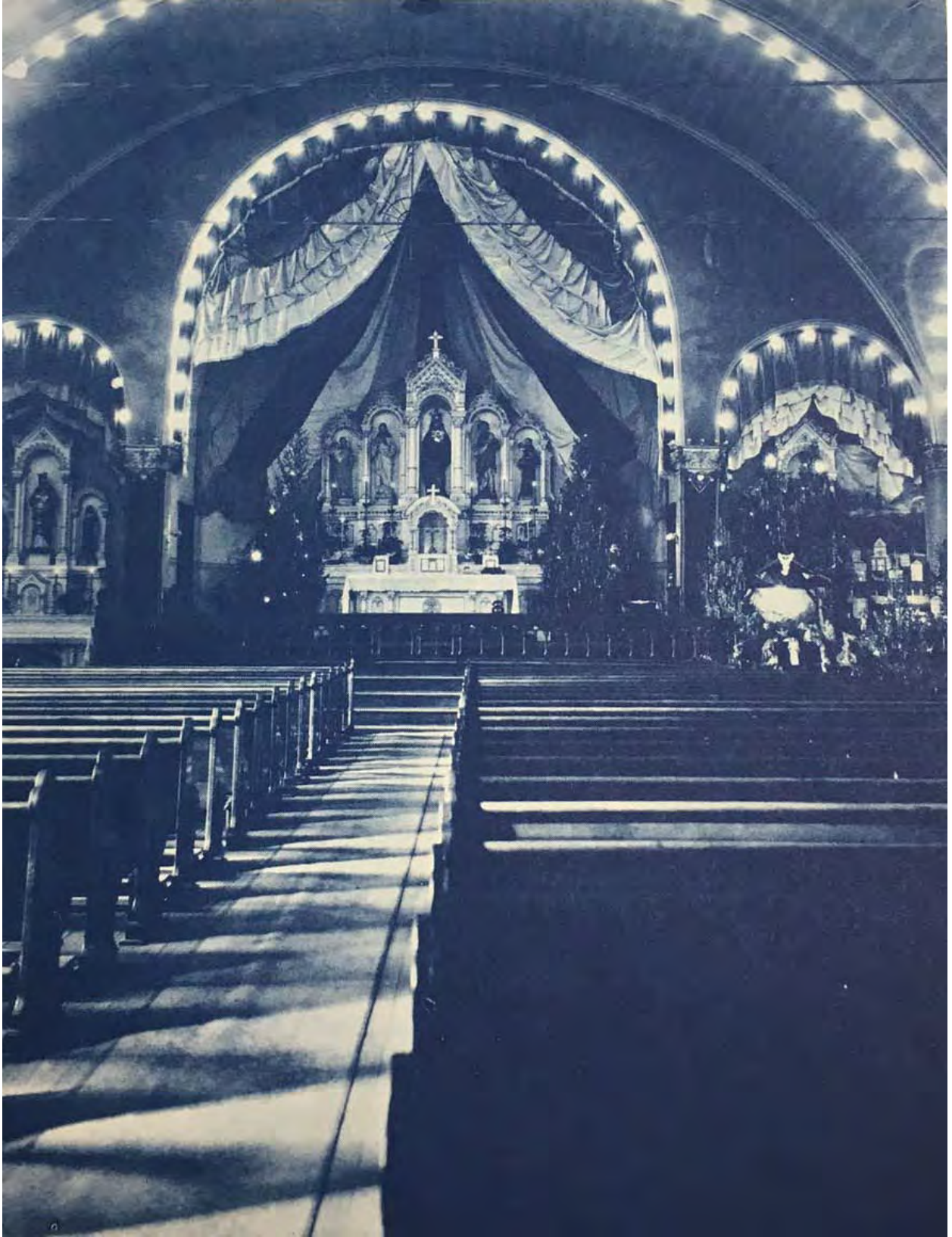
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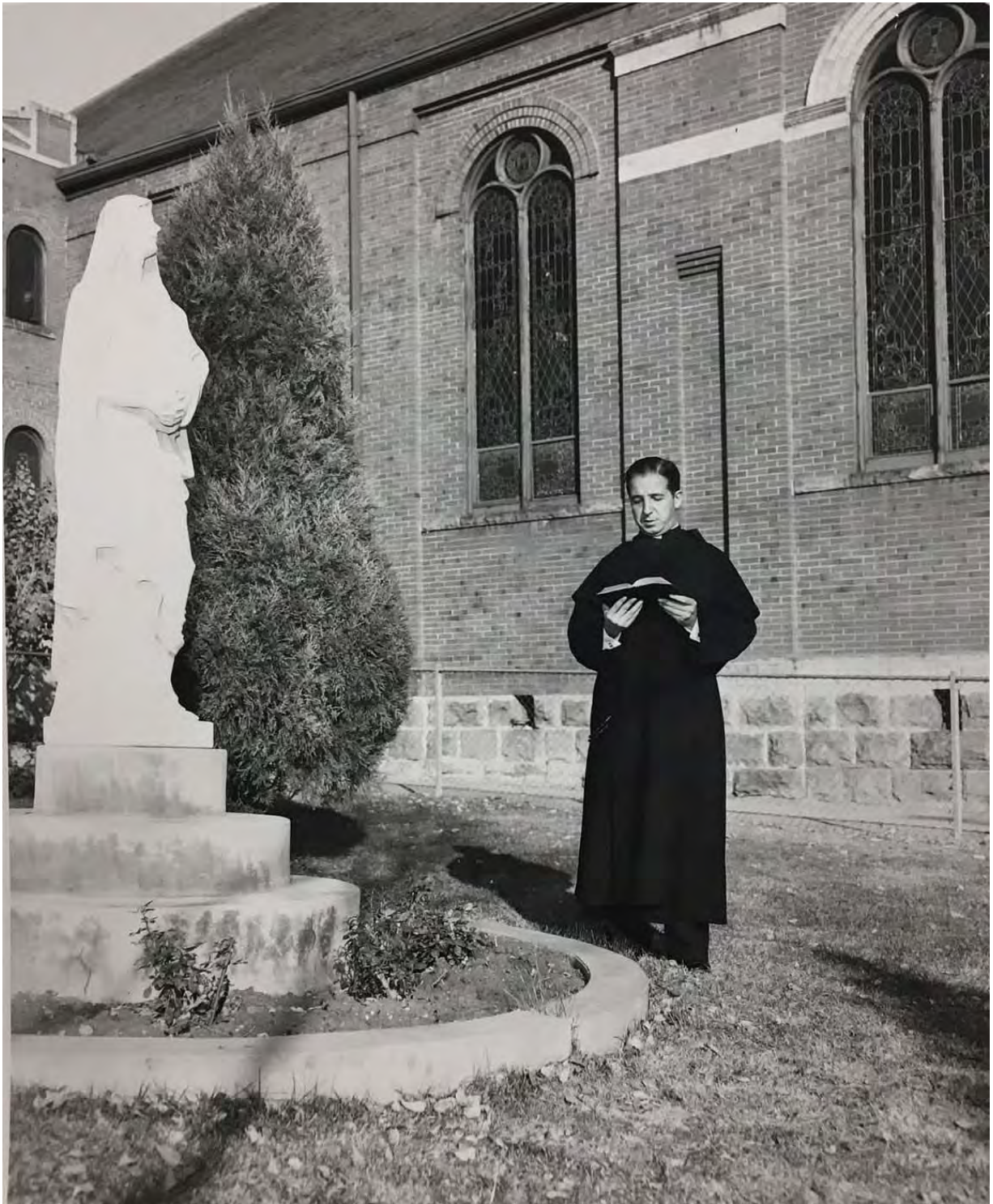
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H13. Parish hall interior subsequent to remodeling, dedication December 15, 1974. Source: *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (1975) 29.





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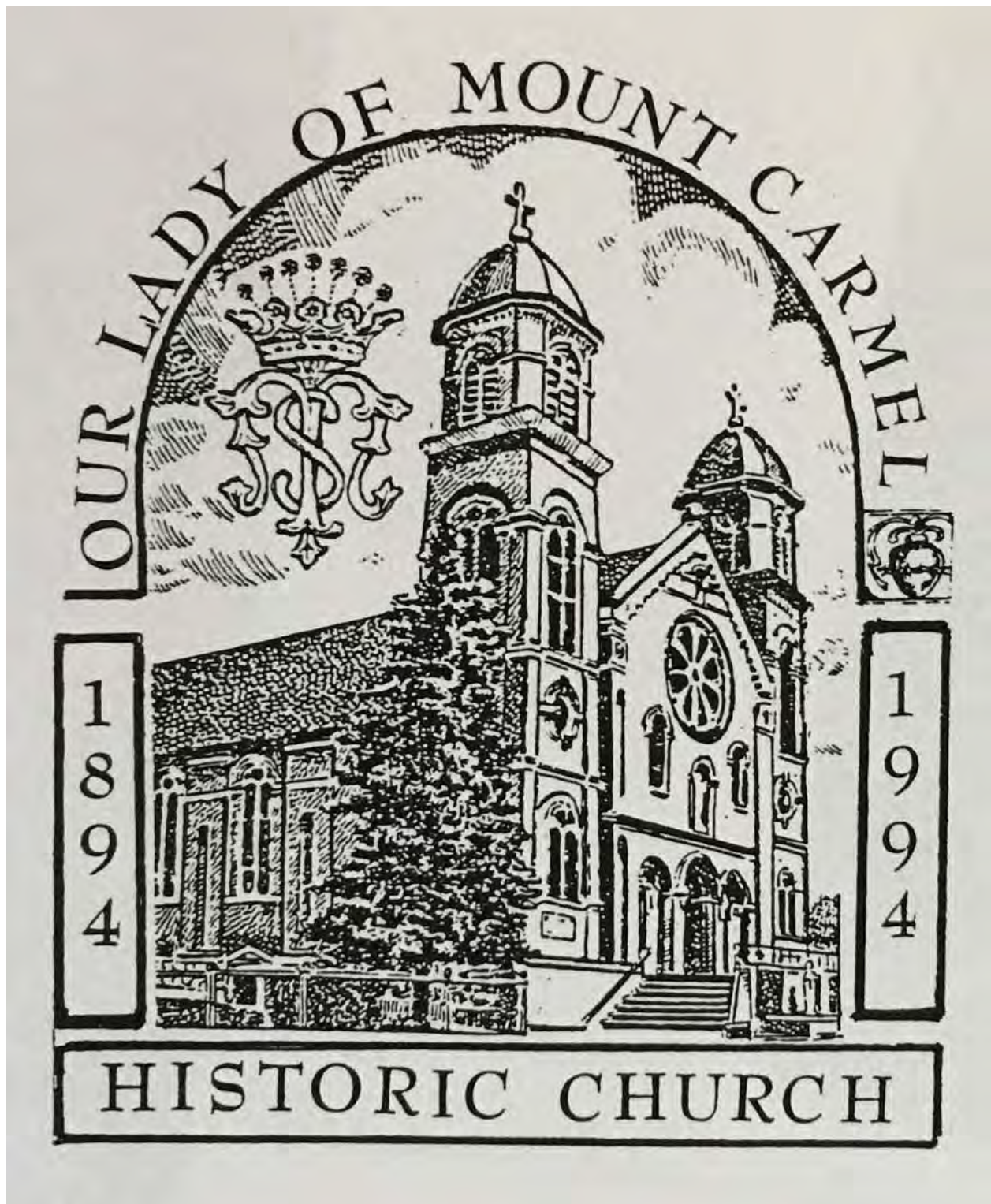
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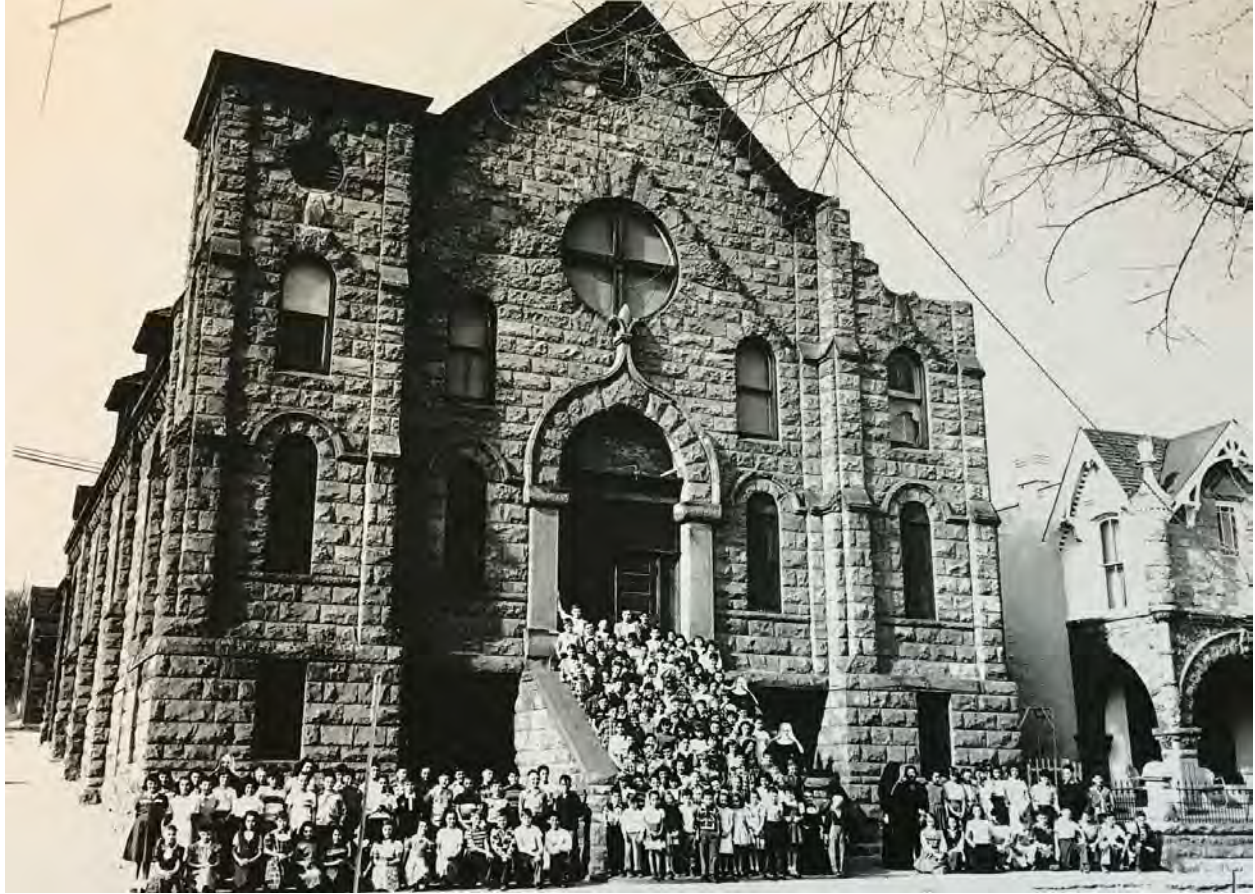
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H19. Mount Carmel Parish School (formerly San Rocco Chapel), with Damascio house at right. Van's Studio, c. 1945. On file with History Colorado.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.











ITALIAN  
MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH  
ERECTED 1899.

Rev. M. LEPORE, Pastor











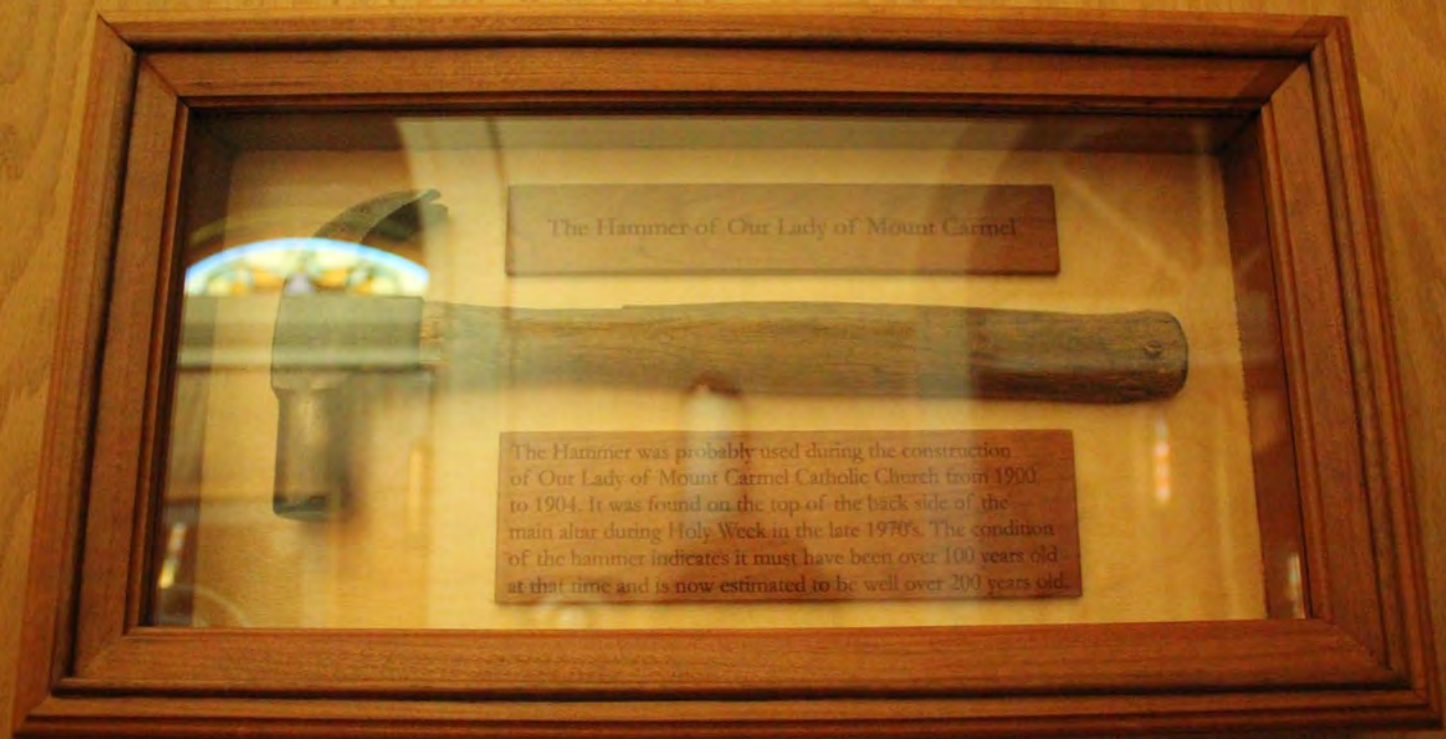


GIFT OF  
NICOLA LO TITO

GIFT OF  
FILIPPO VESSA







The Hammer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

The Hammer was probably used during the construction of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church from 1900 to 1904. It was found on the top of the back side of the main altar during Holy Week in the late 1970's. The condition of the hammer indicates it must have been over 100 years old at that time and is now estimated to be well over 200 years old.



OUR LADY OF ST. CARMEL  
PARISH - FRESH MEADOWS  
NEW YORK





OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL  
PARISH OFFICE  
1519 N. WALTON ST.







1316



JARDIN HALL



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver           | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |  |

Accept  Return  Reject  Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



## **OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH**

**3549 Navajo Street – Denver, Colorado 80211**

**[www.ourladymountcarmel.com](http://www.ourladymountcarmel.com)**

**November 29, 2016**

**The Archdiocese of Denver  
1300 Steele South Steele Street  
Denver, Colorado 80210**

**Dear Archbishop Aquila,**

**The following information is about the National Register of Historic Places Landmark Nomination for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church you received recently. We wanted to provide some background and explanation for this nomination and to request your support and approval.**

**In an effort to pursue the National Historic designation for our church, we formed a committee to study the pros and cons of doing so. The committee includes leadership representatives from History Colorado, the organization that assists with landmark designation in the state of Colorado, and others that are very experienced in these matters in the fields of education and history, along with very interested long term members of our parish.**

**It was long thought that our church was designated as a National Historic site until it was recently questioned. Research showed that the church is designated only as a Colorado Landmark. This was very disappointing, and almost embarrassing, since many other churches in Denver and the state have received the National Historic Designation. Our community believed that Mount Carmel had as well. This was especially surprising to the long time Italian members of the parish who took pride in believing their church was registered as a National Historic Landmark church all along.**

**The committee believes that designation on the National Register of Historic Places as a landmark would be a very positive thing to pursue and there would be no negatives associated with this honorary designation. Looking back, there could have been significant financial assistance with our roof replacement and the recent repair of the stained glass had this designation been in place. We also are continuing to think about the future of the parish as well, and see many benefits associated with this designation. Some of these benefits could include additional publicity for the parish, more awareness of our mission and community, and assistance with preservation of this important building. This historic church is a landmark in the center of a city that is changing and growing, and where the demographics are shifting. We hope that this designation allows us to be in touch with both new and established members of the community to celebrate the historic and important faith-based role Mt. Carmel continues to play in the metro area.**

**The committee and I would very much appreciate your support in this effort. We will look forward to meeting with you to answer any questions about this nomination and to discuss it as needed. Representatives from the committee are available, and would be anxious to meet at your convenience.**

**On behalf of the committee, respectfully I am,**

**Father Hugh Guentner, OSM**

**Pastor – Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Denver**



February 13, 2017

Attn: Stephanie Toothman, Ph.D.  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places  
Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005

**Re: National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church  
(5DV. 4204)**

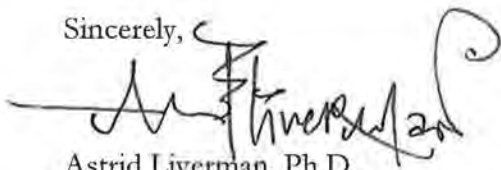
Dear Dr. Toothman:

We are pleased to submit for your review the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nomination for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church (5DV.4204), located in the City and County of Denver, Colorado.

The State Historic Preservation Office prepared the nomination on behalf of parishioners. The Colorado Historic Preservation Review Board has unanimously recommended forwarding to the Keeper for final approval. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church to the National Register of Historic Places.

We look forward to formal listing of this nationally significant property. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (303)866-4681 or by email at [astrid.liverman@state.co.us](mailto:astrid.liverman@state.co.us)

Sincerely,



Astrid Liverman, Ph.D.

National and State Register Coordinator, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Enclosures:

CDs (2) of full nomination with photos

Signature page