

PH 0083030

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kansas	
COUNTY:	Ellis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER:	4	DATE
RECEIVED MAR 29 1971 NATIONAL REGISTER		

1. NAME

COMMON: St. Fidelis Catholic Church

AND/OR HISTORIC: "Cathedral of the Plains"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Southeast corner of St. Anthony Street and Delaware Street

CITY OR TOWN: Victoria

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67671 COUNTY: Ellis CODE: 051

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Most Rev. Cyril J. Vogel, Bishop of the Diocese

STREET AND NUMBER: Diocese of Salina
421 Country Club Road

CITY OR TOWN: Salina STATE: Kansas CODE: 67401 20

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: Ellis County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Hays STATE: Kansas CODE: 67601 20

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas CODE: 66612 20

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

715.20.0028

STATE: Kansas
COUNTY: Ellis
ENTRY NUMBER: 715.20.0028
DATE: 5/1/71

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

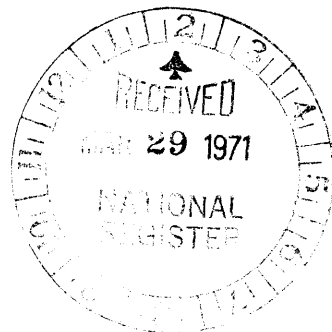
St. Fidelis Catholic Church at Victoria is a large rural church building in a Romanesque influenced style. It is constructed of limestone cut in uniform horizontal courses with individual stones varying in length. The stone face is broken, giving a massive rusticated appearance. The building plan is a typical nave and transept style with dual towers flanking the west entrance. The overall length is 220 feet with a width at the transept of 110 feet and at the nave of 73 feet. The interior height is 44 feet while the twin towers rise 141 feet. The main roof is a double pitch with wood shingles. Four-sided steep pitch roofs top each tower. A dentiled cornice defines the roof line for the main building and the towers.

Buttresses modulate each side of the structure. Windows are long narrow slits rising from a stone sill and terminating in a circular stone arch. The colored glass windows are recognized as being of very high quality. A large rose window is located directly above the triple doors of the main entrance. Centered above it is a niche with a stone statue of St. Fidelis. A projected water base encircles the entire building.

Adjoining the church on the south is a large two-story native stone monastery built in 1901-1903 by the Capuchin Order, which also houses a preparatory seminary of the order.

Basically St. Fidelis Church has not been changed much. Metal doors have been installed in the main entrance, and the interior has been redecorated. The towers now contain electrically operated bells which can be heard seven or eight miles on a clear day.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

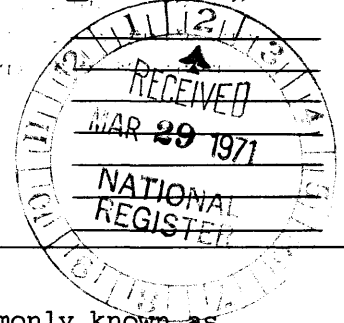
PERIOD, (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1908-1911

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Fidelis Catholic Church at Victoria, commonly known as the "Cathedral of the Plains," is a monument to the faith and courage of the Russian-German immigrants who came to Kansas in 1876 to escape oppression in Russia. They established a settlement called Herzog (named for a Russian village) a mile from the Victoria colony, an aristocratic English colonial venture sponsored by George Grant. The English colonists for the most part had departed by the 1880's and their settlement and lands were acquired by the Russian-German immigrants. The two settlements were consolidated under the name of Victoria.

Religion was very important to these immigrants. For the first year or two their church was a frame lean-to attached to the house of one of the parishioners. Larger stone structures were erected in 1878 and again in 1884 as the congregation increased. (The first resident pastor was supplied in 1878 by the Capuchin Order, which has continued to provide the spiritual leadership of the parish.) By 1900 the need for a larger church was again apparent, and it was decided to build a church large enough to serve the present and all future needs.

John T. Comes of Pittsburgh, Pa., one of the country's foremost church architects, finished the plans in 1905. These plans were modified in 1907 by a Topeka architect, John Marshall. The E. F. A. Clark Construction Co. of Topeka began the construction in 1908; the cornerstone was laid on October 4, 1909; and the building was dedicated on Sunday, August 27, 1911. Construction costs have been estimated at \$132,000.

Engineers estimate that 125,000 cubic feet of stone were hauled from the quarries seven miles south of Victoria. No mechanical or power equipment was available so all stones had to be quarried by manpower and dressed by hand. Hired laborers did the quarrying and construction work, while the parishioners donated their time, horses, and wagons to haul thousands of loads of stone and sand to the construction site.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"At Old Victoria," Topeka Capital, September 17, 1910.
 Baier, William, "Victoria Man Resides in Grant's Famed Villa," Hays Daily News, June 25, 1967.
 Bollig, Richard Joseph, History of Catholic Education in Kansas, 1836-1932 (Washington, D. C., The Catholic University of America, 1933), pp. 82, 88.
 Broderick, Robert C., Historic Churches of the United States (New York, Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1958), pp. 138, 139.
 Leiker, Victor C., "Towers in the Western Sky Attest Faith of Pioneers," Kansas City Star, April 4, 1948.

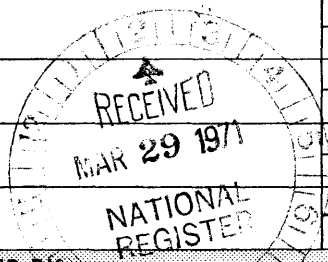
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	38	51	23
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	99	09	02
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3-4 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY:

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Planner
Charles Hall, Architectural Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: March 26, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas 66612 CODE: 20

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name Nyle H. Miller
 Title Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society
 Date March 26, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Cinnally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAY 14 1971

Date _____

ATTEST:
William M. ...
 Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 19 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Ellis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 715,20,0028	DATE 5/4/71

(Number all entries)

6. Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration
1939 (Federal)
Records destroyed. A guide book, Kansas, was published in 1939.

8. Bedford stone from Indiana was imported for the ornamental stone in the doorways and for the capitals and bases of the large Vermont granite pillars which support the roof and Gothic arches. The colored glass windows were purchased from a firm in Chicago, and it was only in the late 1940's that it was established that they were made in Munich by one of the oldest colored glass firms in the world. These windows are considered among the outstanding church windows of their type in the United States.

When constructed it was the largest Catholic church west of the Mississippi river, having a seating capacity of 1,100. The church is dedicated to St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, a priest of the Capuchin Order who was martyred in 1622.

William Jennings Bryan, after seeing the twin spires of the church rising majestically from the flat lands of northwest Kansas, called it the "Cathedral of the Prairies." Common usage has changed it to "Cathedral of the Plains."

St. Fidelis is one of the largest and most prominent of Kansas' rural churches. Visible for many miles, its twin towers dominate the countryside. It is one of the most outstanding examples of church architecture and construction in Kansas and has been a landmark on the high plains since it was completed.

9. "Pioneer's Death Recalls Building of Victoria Church," Ellis County News, March 4, 1948.

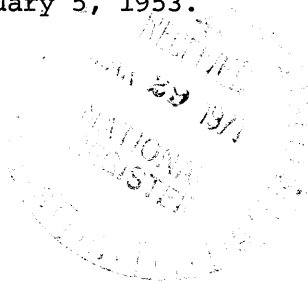
Raish, Marjorie Gamet, Victoria, the Story of a Western Kansas Town, Fort Hays Kansas State College Studies, General Series, No. 12 (Topeka, State Printer, 1947).

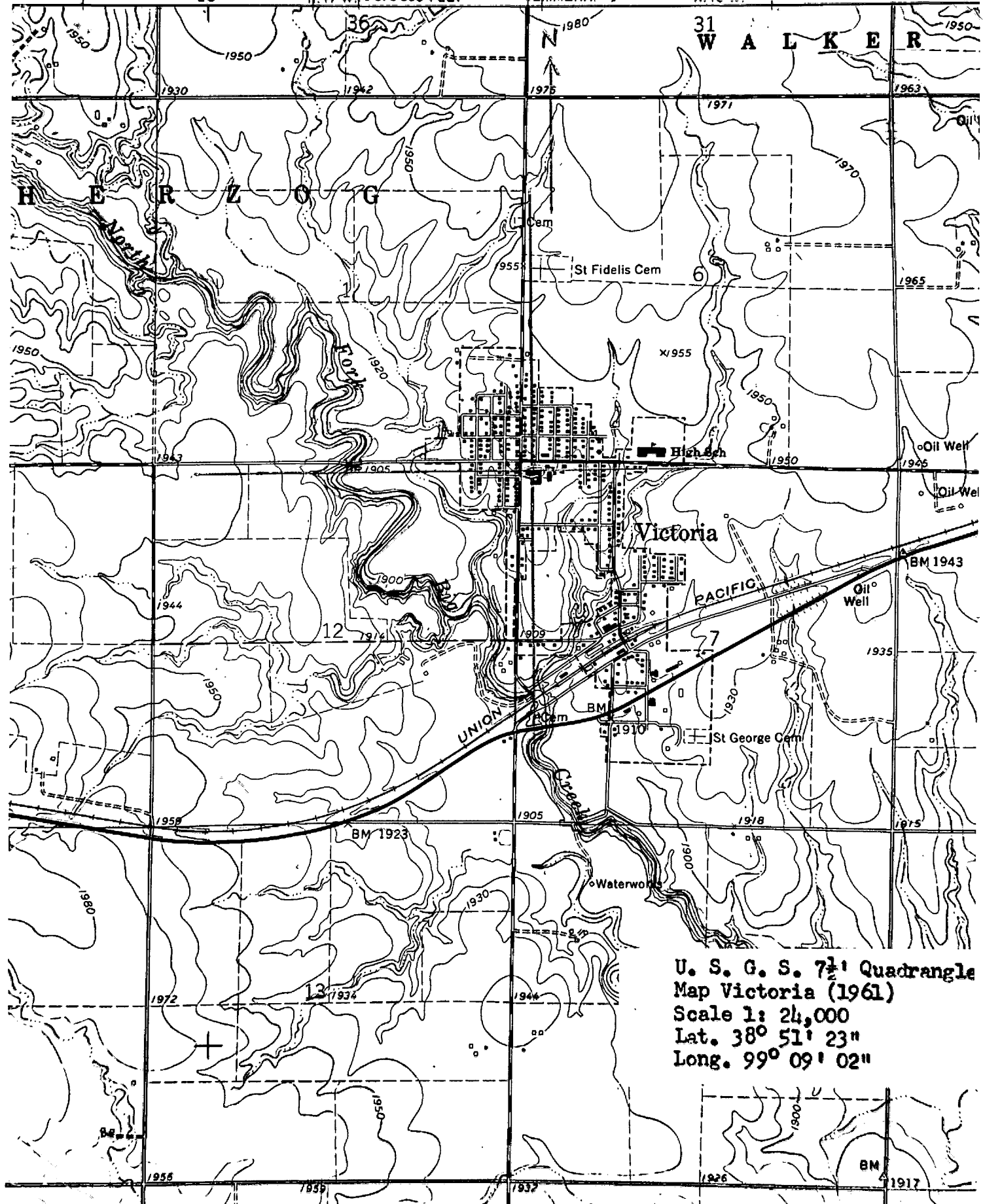
Robinson, James L., "Cathedral of the Plains," Topeka Daily Capital, April 16, 1954.

"St. Fidelis Church" (n.p., n.d.), 6 pp. brochure.

"Tall Spires on the Prairie," Kansas City Star, August 27, 1911.

Watson, John, "St. Fidelis, Cathedral of the Plains," Wichita Evening Eagle, February 5, 1953.





U. S. G. S. 7 1/2' Quadrangle
Map Victoria (1961)
Scale 1: 24,000
Lat. 38° 51' 23"
Long. 99° 09' 02"

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Ellis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.5.20.0028	DATE 3/4/71

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: St. Fidelis Catholic Church
AND/OR HISTORIC: "Cathedral of the Plains"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Southeast corner of St. Anthony Street and Delaware Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Victoria

STATE: Kansas	CODE 67671	COUNTY: Ellis	CODE 051
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3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:
U.S.G.S. 7 1/2' Quadrangle, Victoria

SCALE:
1: 24,000

DATE:
1961

4. REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
 2. North arrow.
 3. Latitude and longitude reference.

