

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Oregon
COUNTY:	Union
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	DEC 3 1974

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Ascension Episcopal Church and Rectory

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Church Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cove

STATE: Oregon CODE: 41

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Representative Al Ullman Oregon Second Congressional District

COUNTY: Union CODE: 061

**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"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

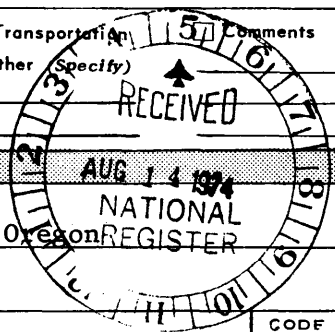
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon

STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 951

CITY OR TOWN: Bend STATE: Oregon CODE: 41



**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Union County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: LaGrande STATE: Oregon CODE: 41

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Parks and Recreation Branch

STREET AND NUMBER: Oregon State Highway Division

CITY OR TOWN: Salem STATE: Oregon CODE: 41

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Oregon
COUNTY:	Union
ENTRY NUMBER:	DEC 3 1974
DATE:	

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ascension Episcopal church, started in 1874 and completed in 1875, is nestled at the bottom of a small cover-like recess in the hills of the eastern side of the Grande Ronde Valley in a small town originally called Forest Cove, but now Cove or sometimes by old-timers, "the Cove." It is a handsome example of the Gothic Revival of the mid-nineteenth century and is an illustration of the uniquely American expression of Gothic verticality using simple wooden construction forms and techniques.

The church was built under the direction of the Rev. R. D. Nevius, D.D., who is thought to have taken the plans from a pattern book. The building is a simple rectangle oriented east-west with the altar at the east end in the traditional manner. There is a small extended vestibule measuring about 10 x 10 feet at the west end. The nave is divided into four bays which are clearly expressed on the exterior by inclined buttresses which support the heavy timber decorated roof trusses between bays on the interior. The buttresses also carry lateral forces acting upon the building efficiently to ground. Steeply pitched gable roofs with plain frieze and boxed cornice cover the nave and vestibule. Two small ventilation dormers are set into each slope of the nave roof and a stove chimney with a corbelled cornice and vaulted cap penetrates the nave roof about half way up the south slope at the west end. There is another stove chimney similarly located outside the east wall, which serves a small vestry ell added in 1896 or 1897. A gabled bellcote straddles the ridge at the west end of the nave.

Lancet windows are set into the north and south walls in each bay of the nave and smaller lancet windows, which also contain stained glass in a diamond pattern, are similarly placed in the vestibule. The pointed arch opening at the west end of the vestibule contains a double leaf paneled door. A rose window containing trefoil tracery is set into the west wall of the nave above the vestibule, and there are three lancet windows above the altar at the east end. Exterior siding is vertical board and batten. The upper course of boards overlaps the lower at the eave line in the gable ends and is scalloped. The building rests upon a mortared rubble or fieldstone foundation.

Ascension church is remarkably unchanged. The altar has been moved away from the east wall so that it is now free-standing. Shutters were added to the windows to protect them when the church is not in use, and the wood-burning pot-bellied stoves were replaced with oil stoves about fifteen years ago. Fiberboard wall covering above the wainscoting on the interior dates from the 1920s.

The original part of Ascension rectory, oriented east-west like the church and also with a steeply pitched gable roof, was built in 1876 and measures about 18 x 24 feet. Eave and cornice details repeat those of the church. A brick stove chimney penetrates the south slope of the roof in the center near the ridge. A dormer with a steeply pitched gable roof is also set into this slope. There are triangular transom windows above the double hung sash windows, which contain four lights over (continued)

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

**4. SIGNIFICANCE**

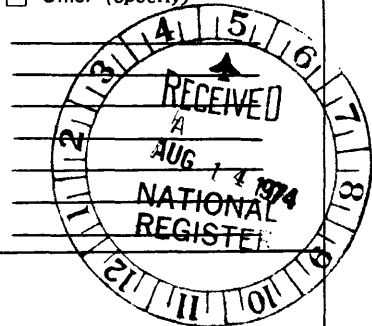
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1874-1876**

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 checked="" 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Ascension Episcopal Church in Cove ranks as one of the finest examples of the Gothic Revival in wood in Oregon, and it and the similarly detailed Rectory next door constitutes a unique ensemble. They are among the oldest surviving structures in the fertile Grande Ronde Valley, of which John C. Fremont said when he explored it in 1848, "This valley is a place, one of the few I have seen in our journey so far, where a farmer would delight to establish himself."

Ascension church is one of the so-called "Nevius Churches" in Oregon, after the Rev. Dr. R. D. Nevius. Nevius, who came to Oregon from Alabama, was an energetic missionary with the extraordinary ability to enlist support from many sources and was charged with missionary efforts in the two thirds of the state east of the Cascade Range. He was responsible for the organization of many congregations and the erection of seven churches, all of distinctive architectural form and style. Five of the Nevius churches survive basically intact as well as the lower portion of a sixth which was dismantled and moved from its original site in Union, and reconstructed across the street from Ascension church in Cove as a dining hall for Ascension Summer School in the 1920s. The building now serves as a crafts hall, though it was so altered when rebuilt that it bears little resemblance to its former self.

Another individual, Samuel Gautier French, originally from Baltimore, Maryland, was also responsible for Ascension Church. French, who was of substantial means, came West for reasons of health arriving in the Cove area, where he decided to settle, in the summer of 1862. He purchased 100 acres of land and commenced raising fruit, cattle, vegetables and wheat and went into partnership with two friends from Missouri to build a grist mill in 1866. Their principal market was the gold camps to the south and east. Through the efforts of Nevius and the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Wistar Morris, Missionary Bishop of Oregon, French donated much of the money for Ascension Church and a close friend donated the land. The cornerstone was laid in July of 1874 and the church was completed in 1876 at a cost of about \$2,100. In addition, French offered a personal guarantee of \$500 a year for the maintenance of a clergyman.

French died at the age of 46 in 1882. Never married, he left all of his Western property for the establishment of a school for girls in Cove, as well as a \$5,000 endowment for the minister's salary, a (continued)

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Allen, Albert E., "Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, Oregon Diocese", Typescript from records of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon with original documents. Oregon State Library, Microfilm 116.

Perkins, Lewis L., "Samuel Goutier French, 1838-1882." Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, March 1973, pp. 37-44.

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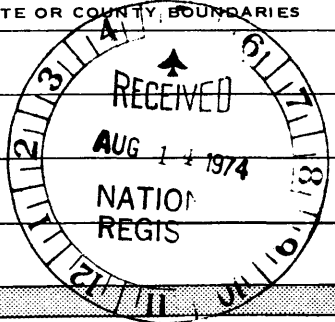
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	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	0	'	"	0	'	"	45	0	17	52
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	117	0	48	43
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"				
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 (over) (A)

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



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Paul B. Hartwig, Park Historian and D. W. Powers III, Temporary Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Oregon State Highway Division DATE: August 2, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: State Highway Building

CITY OR TOWN: Salem STATE: Oregon 97310 CODE: 41

**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: *Quinn K. Tolbert*  
Title: State Parks Superintendent

Date: August 7, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

*Arthur M. Hansen*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/13/74

ATTEST: *George J. Murphy*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: Nov. 27, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE		Oregon
COUNTY		Union
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	DEC 3 1974	

(Number all entries)

ASCENSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND RECTORY (CONTINUED)

2. Location

Ascension Episcopal Church and Rectory are located in the SE 1/4 Sec. 16, T.3S., R.40E of the Willamette Meridian, in Union County, Oregon, on tax lot 2700 of McDaniel's Addition to the city of Cove.

7. Description

four. • Window openings on the west side are paired, and there is a small window in the west half of the ground floor south wall. Like the church, rectory siding is board and batten, the lower edge of the upper course in the gable ends however is not scalloped.

A five-room wing was added to the north side of the rectory in 1897, with form and detail faithful to that of the older part. Detail in the present wing however dates from a general rebuilding of it about fifteen years ago, as it had fallen into a very poor state of repair. The older part of the rectory was thoroughly reconditioned at the same time.

8. Significance

carriage and two of "my best horses for his pastoral work thereabouts." The school opened in 1884 but closed in 1900. The land and endowment lay fallow for nearly a quarter century before the school was reopened as a church summer school in 1924. Ascension Summer School continues today, and is in addition a year round conference and ecumenical seminar center. Ascension Church and Rectory are now a part of the school facilities and are maintained by the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon.

