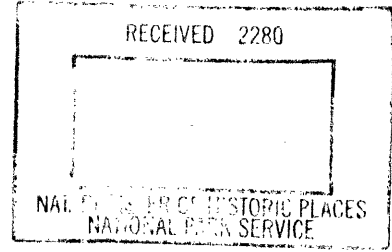


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

149



**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church

other names/site number Old St. Joe's
AHRS Site No. NOM-00040

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Bering and Seppala streets

not for publication N/A

city or town Nome vicinity N/A

state Alaska code AK county Nome code 180

zip code 99762

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Joan M. Antonson, Deputy SHPO
Signature of certifying official

24 January 2000
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

Paul R. Fugate 3/8/00

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: religion Sub: religious facility
landscape street furniture/object

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: social Sub: civic

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals, Late Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation other: steel piling
roof wood shingle
walls wood
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church was built in 1901 at the corner of 4th and Steadman streets in the gold rush boom town of Nome in northwestern Alaska. The wood, Late Gothic Revival style building has beveled shiplap siding and a steep, gabled, cedar shingle roof. It measures 40 feet by 61 feet. It is one of only three Late Gothic Revival style buildings in Alaska. Simpler than the High Victorian Gothic style, it has common Gothic style elements including finials, buttresses, and pointed glass windows with mullions. Unlike the other Alaskan examples (St. Peter's-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church at Sitka and McCabe College at Skagway, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places), Old St. Joseph's Church is constructed of wood instead of stone and timber.

J.B. Randell, a Seattle architect, designed the building. Not all of the design elements were carried through. Completed in 1901, St. Joseph's Church served the community until the 1940s when Nome's population became too small to pay the high operating costs. Sold to the U.S. Smelting, Refining and Mining Co. (USSR&M) in 1945, the company moved the church and used it as a warehouse until 1995 when it gave the building to the City of Nome. The city relocated Old St. Joseph's to its present location at the corner of Bering and Seppala streets.

At its original location on Steadman Street, Old St. Joseph's dominated the north end of town. Its tall bell tower and octagonal spire, topped by an 8 by 6 foot cross that was illuminated during the dark winters, reached a height of 88 feet. The bell tower and spire also dominate the front

=====
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

architecture
social history

Period of Significance 1901-1945

Significant Dates 1901
1903

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Lafortune, Bellarmine

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Randell, J.B.

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Cole, Terrence M. *Nome, City of the Golden Beaches.* Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, 1983.

Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus. *House Diaries, Nome.* Spokane, Washington: Gonzaga University.

Renner, Louis L. *Pioneer Missionary to the Bering Strait Eskimos: Bellarmine Lafortune, S.J.* Portland, Oregon: Binford and Mort, 1979.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS) N/A
- 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 # AK-6
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	08	480551	7152655	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

=====

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

Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church occupies Block 52A, Lot 1A, Townsite of Nome, Alaska.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes only the church building, not the remainder of the city park.

=====

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Cordova, City Manager's Office

organization City of Nome

date March 24, 1999

street & number P.O. Box 281

telephone 907-443-6600

city or town Nome **state** AK **zip code** 99762-0281

=====

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Nome

street & number P.O. Box 53

telephone 907-443-6600

city or town Nome **state** AK **zip code** 99762-0053

=====

elevation of the church. The tower measures 12 by 12 feet and is set eight feet into the church's southwest corner. Four smaller octagonal spires are on each of the bell tower's corners at the base of the large spire. By 1944, the large spire had become unstable and all of the spires were removed, leaving only the two-story tower.

The main entry to the church is through an ornate, arch-capped, double door in the bell tower. On the second floor, the bell tower has louvered arched windows on each elevation with small, paired louvered windows at the top of each of the tower's elevations. The front elevation of the church is the most decorative. Centered in the elevation are two, side-by-side doors with side panels. Each door has an arch over it. These doors are decorative only and never functioned because of the need for a vestibule to provide transitional space from the exterior to the interior. Above the double doors, centered in the gable wall is a twelve foot diameter, eight petal rose window.

The left and right elevations of the church are similar. Both have two attached buttresses placed on twenty foot centers with three arched windows centered in each bay defined by the buttresses. The left elevation has a door placed in the center of it in place of the arched window found on the right elevation. An enclosed passageway originally connected the church to the adjacent Parish House.

The church's rear elevation is not fenestrated. The sanctuary, flanked by small storage rooms, protrudes out from this elevation. The sanctuary is formed by a three-sided bay and covered by a peaked roof extending into the gable wall. When the building was moved in 1946, the sanctuary and storage rooms were removed and a wide, double leaf warehouse door placed in the wall.

The interior floor plan is an open one using columns to define various spaces. The nave, with a twenty foot ceiling centered between two side aisles, is defined by twelve foot tall columns on twenty foot centers the length of the floor plan. At the front of the floor plan is a shallow foyer defined by the bell tower to the east, two confessional stalls to the west, and a choir loft above. The end of the nave and the beginning of the sanctuary is defined by a large arched opening in the building's rear elevation.

The City of Nome was given the building in 1995, moved it to its present location in 1996, and completed restoration in 1998. The building has a new piling foundation that separates the warm building from the underlying permafrost.

The exterior of the church has been completely restored to its 1901 appearance. Missing elements were reconstructed based on the original architectural drawings, period photographs, and signs evident on the building. The changes to the original design include the use of steel in the framing of the bell tower and spire to meet building codes, addition of

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Nome, Alaska

Page 6

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a ramp to provide access to the main entry to meet the Americans with Disability Act requirements, and leaving the lower portion of the building's skirting open to provide for air circulation under the building. Placement of restrooms in the confessional stalls is the only change to the interior floor plan.

Old St. Joseph's continues to be a dominating building in the town, now as people drive into Nome from the airport. With its reconstructed steeple, Old St. Joseph's has once more become Nome's visual centerpiece.

=====
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church is one of a few remaining early buildings in the city of Nome. At the time of its construction in 1901 it was one of the large, dominating buildings in the community. For a number of years, the lighted cross topping the church's spire was an important landmark for travelers. The building is the only one remaining of the early Society of Jesus (Jesuit) mission in Nome. It is associated with Bellarmine Lafortune, S.J., who spent over forty years working with the region's Native people. The Nome mission was the focus for the Jesuits' work in the Seward Peninsula region. The Roman Catholic Church sold the building in 1945. Moved to a new location and restored, the church is once again a dominant building in town and a landmark for travelers entering the city.

Background

The mining camp of Nome "sprang up" after prospectors discovered gold in the gravel of nearby Anvil Creek in 1898. Over ten thousand people rushed to the area. Not long after, a group of Roman Catholics in the camp petitioned various Catholic orders for a mission. In response, Jean Baptiste Rene, S.J., the Prefect Apostolic of Alaska, visited Nome in August 1899. After his visit, Rene petitioned the Rocky Mountain Mission and the Province of California to establish a mission at Nome.

The task fell to Aloysius Jaquet, S.J., who arrived at Nome on July 4, 1901. Jaquet purchased property at the head of Steadman Street for \$600 from Charles McFaddon and Joel Williams. A Seattle architect, J.B. Randell, designed a parish house and church for the site. Construction of the two buildings started in early September. By November the church was complete enough to hold inauguration services. It was the first of five buildings in the mission complex. Buildings added later included the parish house (1901), school (1904), Holy Cross Hospital (1906), and an Eskimo church (1907).

The cross on the church spire towered 96 feet above ground. It became an important navigational aid for people traveling over the relatively flat tundra. Originally intended only to be illuminated during special occasions, the advantages of lighting the cross during the long, dark, winter months was soon realized. Seven lights on the seaward side of the cross and three on the tundra side provided an orientation for travelers. The cross became known as the "Whiteman's Star" to the Eskimo population. The city government, local miners, and members of the congregation shared the cost to illuminate the cross.

On July 16, 1903, Bellarmine Lafortune, S.J., arrived at Nome to assist Father Van der Pol, then in charge of St. Joseph's. For over forty years, Lafortune worked at the Nome mission, especially with the area's Eskimos. The Native elders remember Lafortune as "the Little Father." Through Lafortune's efforts an Eskimo workshop-chapel was built at Nome, a schooner was built for the priests to serve the people at outlying communities in

the region, missions at Mary's Igloo, Little Diomedé, and King Island were established, and an orphanage opened at Pilgrim Hot Springs. Lafortune's work helped many Seward Peninsula Eskimos adjust to the many changes, such as formal education and a cash economy, introduced by the non-Natives who settled in the area.

Among the church's activities, Father Van der Pol and Lafortune started the Miner's Home Club, open to non-Catholics and well as Catholics, in 1903. Club social events helped to raise money to heat and begin decorating the interior of the church. The club offered residents of Nome social activities during the long winter months.

At the time of the church's construction, Nome's population was over 12,000. The church was built under the assumption that the population would remain stable. By 1910, however, the city's population had declined to 2,600 and hit a low in the early 1930s of 852 people. The structure was too large and too expensive to operate. After 1927, it was only used for special occasions such as Christmas Mass. A Miner's Reading Room in the parish house was converted and used as a chapel for the non-Native congregation. The Eskimo congregation used a smaller church built in 1907. Both groups attended the special occasion services held at St. Joseph's.

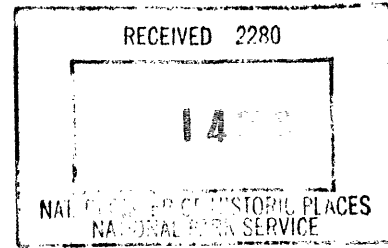
In 1944, part of the bell tower and the spire, which had become dislodged, were removed for safety reasons. The next year, a new, small church structure was built. The old building was sold to the U.S. Smelting, Refining, and Mining Company (USSR&M). The new owner moved the church two blocks from its original site at 4th and Steadman to 6th and Steadman streets during the winter of 1945-1946 and used the structure as a warehouse.

In 1995, Alaska Gold Company (formerly USSR&M) donated the building to the City of Nome. The City moved the building to the back of a city park where it faces west to Seppala Street. The building has been restored to its original grandeur and is used for community events and houses several displays telling Nome's history. Although located more centrally in the community than it was initially, it still dominates its setting and is a focal point for people entering Nome, now from the airport. As people approach Nome, they see the church facing the road much as travelers saw it in 1901. Of the five mission structures, the church is the only survivor. The other buildings have been torn down. Few buildings from Nome's early years still stand. Several fires and floods destroyed most of them. Old St. Joseph's Church, once again being used for more than religious services by the people of Nome, is one of few buildings from Nome's gold rush boom town days and an important building in the history of the community.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

Criteria consideration A: religious property

The historic significance for Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church is established by its architectural value, its association with an individual significant in the history of Nome and the Seward Peninsula, and as one of few remaining buildings from Nome's gold rush era. The church is one of three Late Gothic Revival style buildings in Alaska. It is the only one of the three constructed of wood. The others are in southeast Alaska and are constructed of stone and timber. The building is associated with Bellarmine Lafortune, S.J., who spent over forty years--an unusually long tenure--working with Native and non-Native residents of Nome and the Seward Peninsula. Lafortune was important as a social worker as well as a missionary. During his tenure the influenza epidemic of 1919 ravaged the Seward Peninsula, and Lafortune helped many orphaned children and widowed parents move and adjust to new communities and boarding schools. Lafortune's home base during his years in the north was Old St. Joseph's Church. Finally, the harsh climate, permanently frozen soil, several fires and storms destroyed almost all of the buildings built in Nome during the gold rush era, 1897-1910. The other two buildings that have been documented and listed in the National Register are a saloon and a private residence. Although constructed and owned by a religious institution and used for religious purposes during its period of significance, Old St. Joseph's Church served as a local landmark for travelers and a gathering place for residents who had few public gathering places other than saloons.

Criteria consideration B: moved property

For fifty years, Old St. Joseph's Church sat on blocks and served as a warehouse. The owner, Alaska Gold Company, discontinued its mining operations in the 1980s and wanted to destroy the building if another use could not be found for it. The residents of Nome made preservation and reuse of the building their highest priority project to commemorate the centennial of the gold rush and founding of the town. The new location of the church is two blocks from its original site. The site maintains the building's original relationship with its surroundings. It stands, as it did during its period of significance, inland from the Bering Sea and near the north end of town. Although moved, Old St. Joseph's Church has been rehabilitated to its early architectural appearance, and retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

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NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

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OMB No. 1024-0018
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photograph identification
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1. Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church (AHRS Site No. NOM-00040)
Nome, Alaska
City of Nome
March 1999
P.O. Box 281, Nome, Alaska 99762-0281
looking east at the front, or west, elevation
2. Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church (AHRS Site No. NOM-00040)
Nome, Alaska
City of Nome
March 1999
P.O. Box 281, Nome, Alaska 99762-0281
looking north at the south elevation
3. Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church (AHRS Site No. NOM-00040)
Nome, Alaska
City of Nome
March 1999
P.O. Box 281, Nome, Alaska 99762-0281
looking west at the rear (east) elevation of the building
4. Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church (AHRS Site No. NOM-00040)
Nome, Alaska
City of Nome
March 1999
P.O. Box 281, Nome, Alaska 99762-0281
looking south at the north elevation of the building
5. Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church (AHRS Site No. NOM-00040)
Nome, Alaska
City of Nome
March 1999
P.O. Box 281, Nome, Alaska 99762-0281
looking southeast toward the former altar space

OLD ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
NOME, ALASKA

