

Mission Nuestra Señora del Carmen
Yoleta, Texas.

Miss. No. Tex-0104

HABS

TEX.

71- YSL

1-

**ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...**

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bartlett Cooke, District Officer
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio, Texas.

HABS
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MISSION NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL CARMEN
Ysleta, El Paso County, Texas.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Owner: Catholic Church

Date of Erection: 1681-2

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Adobe blocks, stucco exterior, plaster interior, wood frames, doors, windows, roof, etc.

Other Existing Records: Unknown

Additional Data:

When Governor Otermin retreated before Pope and his rebellious Indians from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Guadalupe Mission at Paso del Norte (now Juarez, Mexico) in the year 1580 he brought with him many Christianized Indians, mostly Tiguas, Senecus and Piroes.

After remaining at the Guadalupe Mission for a while, they established a settlement on the Rio Grande about twelve miles east, naming the place Ysleta del Sur (Ysleta of the South). The Tiguas gave it this name for the Pueblo Ysleta, which they had been forced to abandon. Ysleta, meaning little island, was the name given the site in New Mexico, because the whimsical current of the Rio Grande River flowed on either side, as suited its romantic fancy, making an island.

Fire destroyed the floor, roof of the building, furniture, etc., in 1908. The original roof was constructed of wood beams hewn in the forests of New Mexico, floated down the Rio Grande River to the building site. All construction work was performed by native Indians. Original ceiling and roof timbers were effectively carved by the Indians.

Exterior stucco is of several shades of buff; all fairly new. Exterior brick work such as copings, door and window treatments, etc., of red brick. Portions of the exterior woodwork and metal work painted a dark maroon red. Color combination is poor. Original color in all probability was considerably different.

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Work is continually being performed in repairing and reconstruction, as necessary to keep the old micks construction in tact.

Credit for much of this information is given to Bishop A. J. Schuler, El Paso, Texas, and Father LeVain, Mission Nuestra Senora del Carmen, Ysleta, Texas.

Author: *Bartlett Cocks*
Bartlett Cocks, District Officer

Date: December 10, 1936.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

2/9/37 *TW*

Mision De San Antonio De La Isleta Del Sur
(Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church)
Southeast corner of Alameda Ave and
Zaragosa Drive
El Paso (filed under Ysleta)
El Paso County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3104

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Addendum to

Mission Nuestra Senora Del Carmen
(Mission Corpus Christi De La Isleta
Del Sur)
Ysleta
El Paso County
Texas
in HABS Texas Catalog (1974)

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur
(Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church)

An Addendum to
Mission Nuestra Senora del Carmen
(Mission Corpus Christi de la Isleta del Sur)
Ysleta
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Location:

The church and surrounding property include approximately 7 acres at the southeast corner of Alameda Avenue and Zaragosa Drive, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. The immediate area is often referred to as Ysleta, since it had been an independent town before its annexation to the city of El Paso in 1955.

USGS Ysletia Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator: 13:374220.3506760.

Present Owner:

Catholic Diocese of El Paso in conjunction with the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus.

Present Use:

It is used in conjunction with a new church, built on the same property in the 1960's, for religious services and functions. A Mass at 6:30 A.M. and at 7:00 P.M. is held in the old church seven days a week. Also Saturday confessions are held there from 4 to 5 P.M., and it is often used for prayer meetings, weddings, and other special events.

Significance:

The layout of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church is an example of the New Mexican style of mission churches which were built during the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by their linear, boxlike forms, with little emphasis on exterior decoration. Although there are no known original interior features surviving, and the east facade has been changed radically, the building retains a great amount of symbolic significance to local residents and members of the Tigua Indian Tribe, for whom the mission was originally built.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur
(Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church)
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1. Dates of Erection: It is believed that the first church of 1680 was a log structure (Decorme, "Comprendio," and "The Missions") and later, a permanent church was built and then destroyed in the 1740 flood (Burrus Interview). The present building is thought to be from the reconstruction of 1744.¹ It is located on a rise of ground, away from its original site, in order to avoid damage from more destructive floods, (Burrus Interview). During the night of May 14-15, 1907, the church burned, destroying the interior.² The only surviving elements of the building were the walls, bell, statue of the Body of Christ (Decorme, "Comprendio"), and a set of doors. (El Paso Herald, Nov. 5, 1909:3). It was decided to rebuild the church, using the same walls.³ The reconstruction was largely the work of Father John Cordova, during 1908-09. By photo comparison, it can be determined that little was altered on the main walls, except for the east entrance facade. There has been almost no change in the appearance of the building since Cordova's work.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The first official Grant of Church Property was given on February 22, 1691 to Father Joaquin de Hinojosa by Governor Diego de Vargas for lands needed for the maintenance of the mission only (Jenkins). The first formal deed defining definite boundaries for the church property was granted to Bishop Salpointe of the Arizona and New Mexico Diocese, in 1874.⁴ The boundaries set by this document are also the present-day limits to the church property, except for a small parcel ceded in the northwest corner of the lot.
4. Alterations and additions: Little has changed on the present appearance since the reconstruction after the fire of 1907. It seems during the last twenty years of the 19th century, though, the church had undergone vast change. It is extremely difficult to date alterations since there are no known surviving accounts of work done to the church. However, through travel accounts, photo comparisons, and newspaper descriptions it is possible to make reasonable assumptions. The earliest known pictures (Bourke and Decorme, "Comprendio") show a basically square east facade, with a small gable topped by a triangular pediment with two arched bell openings. At this time, it can not be determined whether the gable was original to the building. It seems likely that sometime in the late 1880's or early 1890's, the gable was expanded to a wide triangular shape and the old style square windows were replaced by double hung sash. In 1897, the finishing touches of the bell tower were completed with the addition of the dome on top.⁵

Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur
(Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church)
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Also, about this time the double hung sash window, above the main doors on the east facade, was replaced by a four part circular window. Sometime after 1901, the arched gable openings were filled in. The church continued this appearance until the 1907 fire. There are no known photographs of the pre-fire interior and the only known account of it was a brief newspaper description after the fire. ⁶

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The original church was established by Governor Don Antonio de Otermin and Father Leyva Ayeta about October 10, 1680 for refugee Tigua Indians of the Pueblo Revolt of the same year. Father Alvaro de Zavaleta served as its first priest, and the name given to the first church was "Sacramento". ⁷ When de Vargas granted the mission land in 1692, the church received the name "Mision de Corpus Christi de los Tihuas de Ysleta" (Jenkins). Although Sacramento and San Antonio were the original patron saints, San Antonio eventually won dominant status for the Tiguas. In later accounts of the church, it became known as "Mision de San Antonio de la Ysleta" (Jenkin, Menchero and Benavides Reports). ⁸

There is little recorded about the church for the next 170 years, except for an occasional clerical report on the status of activities there. In 1829, there was a great flood that did much destruction to the valley and possibly changed the course of the Rio Grande to far south of the church. However, this date may be arbitrary since other accounts claim floods of later years caused the boundary change. In 1846, the area came under American control with the arrival of Colonel Doniphan's expedition. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo established the river as the boundary in 1848 (Diamond "Chronology"), confirming American possession of the area. Franciscan Administration over all churches in the valley was withdrawn in 1852, ending 172 years of control. The Franciscans were replaced by secular priests for the next 20 years (Decorme, Short History). In 1870, Father Realy Vasquez blessed the first picture of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, starting a controversy that nearly destroyed the congregation. Over Tigua protests, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was appointed patroness by Bishop J. B. Salpointe in 1874. Thereafter, the name of the church was changed to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The last action of the controversy took place when Father Lassaigue placed the statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on the main altar, and moved the one of San Antonio to the side altar.

The administration of secular priests ended in 1872, when the Apostolic Vicariate of Arizona put the church under the control of French priests. Their stay was temporarily ended in 1881 when

Italian Jesuits were installed. The French priests came back briefly in 1892 until the return of the Italian Jesuits in 1894, who retained control for the next 27 years. Finally, Mexican Jesuits were given charge in 1921 and have remained at the parish till the present (Decorme, Short History).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: There are two main collections of old photos of the church available to the public. One is in the El Paso Public Library in the Southwest Collection under the Ysleta Church File. The second is at the University of Texas at El Paso library in the special collections section with the Calleros Collection. Several views are also included with Decorme's "Compendio." The original 1881 water color by John G. Bourke is with his collection of journals (volume 50) at the United States Military Academy, special collections division, West Point, New York. There is a copy of his journals on microfilm at the University of Texas at El Paso Library. Also, a collection of current and old views was included with the National Register of Historic Places nomination form of the church in July 1972.⁹ Seven HABS photos were taken in 1936 and photographs were taken by HABS photographer, David Kaminsky, Summer 1980.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Burrus, Ernest J., S.J. Interview on July 31, 1980 at Sacred Heart Church, Oregon Street, El Paso. Discussion of Decorme Documents and Ysleta Church.

Decorme, Gerardo, S.J. "The Missions of the El Paso Valley." Unpublished. C. 1962. (Father Ernest J. Burrus of Sacred Heart Church, El Paso and the El Paso County Historical Society have photocopies of the original manuscript written in Spanish).

Decorme, Gerardo, S.S. "The Tigua Indians Compendio, 1680-1960." Unpublished. 1960. (Father Ernest J. Burrus of Sacred Heart Church, El Paso has the original manuscript written in Spanish).

Deed Book, University of Texas, El Paso, special collections division, Book E.

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Diamond, Thomas M., Jr. Interview on July 28, 1980, at law office of Diamond, Rash, Anderson, Leslie, and Smith, 1208 First City National Bank, El Paso. Discussion of legal status of Tigua Property and Ysleta History.

Diamond, Thomas M., Jr. "Pueblo de la Ysleta del Sur Chronology and related historical material", 1500 A.D. - 1968 A.D." Unpublished. c. 1968. (A copy can be obtained through Mr. Diamond).

El Paso Herald.

May 15, 1907, 1: 5, 6, 7.
May 21, 1907, 10: 5.
June 14, 1909, 5: 2.
November 5, 1909, 4: 3.
June 23, 1910, 10: 1.

El Paso Morning Times.

May 15, 1907, 2: 6.

El Paso Times.

May 11, 1952, 40: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
August 1, 1971, 8: 1, 2, 3, 4, .

Jenkins, Myra Ellen. "History and Administration of the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur during the Spanish Colonial Period." Unpublished research for the State of New Mexico records center. (A copy may be obtained through Thomas M. Diamond, 1208 First City National Bank, El Paso).

Martinez, Peter Joseph, S.J. Interview with Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church on July 29, 1980 at the Church. Discussion of building and its appointments.

Monday Morning Graphic.

September 20, 1897. 8: 2.

Waltz, Vina. "History of the El Paso Area, 1680 - 92." Ph.D. dissertation. University of New Mexico, 1951.

b. Secondary and Published Sources:

Calleros, Cleofas. The Mother Mission. El Paso, Texas: American Printing Company, 1952.

Decorme, Gerardo. Short History of Ysleta Mission. Privately printed.

Hackett, Charles, Ed. Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya and Approaches thereto, to 1773. Washington: Carnegie Institution, III, 1937.

Hughes, Anne E. The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement In the El Paso District. University of California Press, 1914.

Kubler, George. Early Religious Architecture of New Mexico. Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1940.

Thomas, Laura. A Short History of Ysleta, Texas. City of El Paso Planning Dept., 1966.

3. Likely Sources Not Investigated:

El Paso Diocese Chancery Records. Juarez Archives (on microfilm at University of Texas at El Paso Library).

D. Supplemental Material:

Footnotes:

1. Hackett, Historical Documents. 1744, Menchero Report, Vol. III, p. 406.

The Mision of San Antonio de la Isleta is one hundred and sixty leagues to the south (of Santa Fe); it has ninety families and is situated one league from Rio del Norte. It is administered by a father who is building by his own efforts a very capacious church, which I do not doubt his faithful industry will bring to a conclusion.

2. There are two conflicting reports on the origin of the fire. One account states that the fire was started by the altar candles; the other maintains that it was caused by ignited chemicals (sulfur) that had been placed in the bell tower to rid it of bats. In his interview, Father Burrus, who was born in Ysleta, claims the story of the chemicals in the tower is the correct one.

3. The El Paso Herald of May 21, 1907, mentions that an unanimous vote was taken by the congregation of the Church at Ysleta in favor of the reconstruction of the building. It was decided to reuse the old walls so that "the Historic Structure might be preserved," and that "the sentiment surrounding the edifice (sic) in the hearts of all people in that section is so strong that even if only a small part of the old building can be utilized in rebuilding, it will be done."
4. This claim may soon be disputed. In an interview, Thomas Diamond, legal representative for the Tigua Indians of El Paso, claims there may be a technical complication that will lead to a court case involving legal possession of the church land, in the next few years.
5. The completion of the tower is indicated by a newspaper account from the Monday Morning Graphic. September 20, 1897, "the old church at Ysleta is being fitted out with a large and handsome dome, which will add much to the appearance of the church when completed." However, in "Compendio," Decorme thinks that "perhaps" the tower was completed by Father Pedro Lassaigne in 1876-81. Decorme's credibility, in this case, may be questioned because he does not footnote his statement. His argument is further weakened by the fact that Bourke, in his 1881 watercolor, shows no tower. Decorme seems a little unsure of his date because he uses the spanish word "tal vez," in his manuscript, which translates to "perhaps."
6. The El Paso Herald of May 15, 1907, states:
"The interior of the church was large and without seats of any kind, except near the altar, where of late years a number of benches have been placed. The walls were four feet, six inches thick, the windows high near the ceiling and iron barred."
7. "The Missions" by Decorme, letter from Ayeta, December 20, 1680. Original copy in Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico City, Mexico.
8. The name "Ysleta" (sometimes spelled "Isleta") is derived from the name of the Isleta Pueblo of the Tiguas in New Mexico.
9. The National Register form shows an early photo captioned "Ysleta Mission about 1860." Research indicated this date is incorrect and is probably closer to 1895.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur is a surviving example of a New Mexican style mission church. Although the present church is believed to be the third one built for the Isleta del Sur Pueblo, in 1744, it still evidences strong New Mexican influence in the box-like form, transept clerestory, and eastern orientation of the front facade. None of the original interior elements remains due to a disastrous fire in 1907. The present interior and east facade dates from the subsequent rebuilding.
2. Condition of Fabric: Although the church has undergone drastic changes during its history, the present building and interior appointments are in sound condition. However, there are some minor maintenance repairs such as repainting, flooring and window work that need to be completed.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The church has a basic Latin cross layout, with two small sacristies at the both sides of the apse and behind the transepts. There is also an extension off the south transept referred to as the old rectory. The church is 42' - 5-1/2" across the east facade, and measures 53' - 2" from transept to transept. The distance from the front of the east facade to the rear of the north apse is 109'-10". The old rectory is 49' - 3" by 32' - 0". The building is two stories high, with a flat roof. The old rectory is one story high, also with a flat roof.
2. Foundations: There are no foundations. The adobe blocks are placed on the ground, and a protective concrete belt was added around 1950.
3. The walls of the church and the old rectory are constructed of adobe blocks, covered by white cement stucco. The openings in the east facade (doors, windows, and niche) have brick surrounds, painted light brown. There is also brick coping on top of the parapets and gable that is covered by cement stucco.
4. Structural system: Adobe load bearing walls, with wooden floor joists and plank flooring. The roof framing is not visible but is believed to be made of sawn vigas from the 1908-09 reconstruction.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main opening in the east facade has modern metal doors, painted yellow. The old rectory has both metal and wood, flush panel doors.
- b. Windows: There is a four part fan window on top of the main east entrance. Located directly above that, is a four part, green stained glass, circular window. The windows along the sides of the nave are wooden casements. The end of each transept has a large, six part circular window, added after the 1907 fire, having blue, green, and orange stained glass sections. All windows of the old rectory are six pane, double hung sash window that provides light for the baptistry.
- c. Other: There is a niche located in the east gable that contains a statue of San Antonio.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The entire church, except for the bell tower, has a flat roof, with a low parapets, and a large gable in the east end. The roof has a covering of asphalt roll roofing placed over a mud roof (terrado roof).
- b. Cornice: Roof drainage is done through pipe canales through the sides of the parapet.
- c. Tower: There is a bell tower adjoining the east facade along the north side, capped by a wooden pointed dome, covered by metal sheets, and painted silver. At the base of the dome is a wooden shelf, which has a small, decorative parapet along its edges. Below the dome is a square structure rising from the roof line of the main building. This structure louvered, arched windows, and contains three bells.

C. DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: None.
- b. First Floor: The church follows a basic cruciform plan. The nave has a center aisle with twenty-four pews on each side of it. About midway up the north wall is a niche that contains

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a shrine to Our Lady of Fatima. In the rear of the nave above the back pews, is a balustraded choir loft. Along the sides of the nave are fourteen wooden framed pictures representing the stations of the Cross. The main nave contains statues of four saints on pedestals projecting from the walls. In the east end of the nave on the north wall is a figure of Saint Monica, and directly opposite on the south wall is a statue of Saint Isidore.

At the western end of the nave, before the transept crossing, is a figure of Saint Martin on the north wall, opposite is St. Aloysius, along the south wall.

The transepts contain side altars and confession booths in both wings. In the north transept, along the west wall, is an altar to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Between this side altar and the apse is a statue of Little Flower of the Carmelite Order on a projecting pedestal from the wall. The east wall of the same transept contains confession booths. Along the west wall of the south transept is an altar to San Antonio, with the statue of the Body of Christ, which survived the fire of 1907. Between this altar and the apse is a statue of our Lady of Lourdes on a pedestal extending from the wall.

The main apse is balustraded, and is fronted by an arch resting on ionic style pilasters. It contains the main altar to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

On either side of the apse is a sacristy. The one of the north side is used for storage and the south one is a preparation room for the priest.

The bell tower is entered through a door in the north wall under the choir loft. It contains two flights of wooden stairs that proceed to a landing. From the landing, the choir loft can be entered or a wooden ladder can be taken up to the belfry. The belfry contains three cast bells containing the name "Menelly, Troy, N. Y." on all of them.

Connected to the south transept is the old Rectory. The section contains a baptistery, with a front and what appears to be an old painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The rest of the area is being remodeled into a library and recreation area.

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2. Wall and Ceiling Finish: All walls in the nave, transept, and apse have 4" vertical, beaded board wainscot, painted light brown. The rest of the walls are plastered and painted yellow.

The apse has painted curtain swags at the top of the wall, and there are shadows of curvilinear designs above the wainscot in the nave, that have been painted over. The walls of the sacristices and old rectory have plain white plaster walls. The ceilings of the nave, transept, and apse have painted canvas with polychrome motifs. The ceiling above the apse has the coat of arms of the Franciscan Order painted on it. The north sacristy has sawn, exposed vigas and the south sacristy has a canvas ceiling. The old rectory has modern drop ceilings.

3. Flooring: The center aisle of the main nave is carpeted and the floor under the pews has linoleum tile. The transept area has carpet and linoleum. The entire apse is carpeted. The north sacristy, bell tower, and baptistery have narrow board floors. The south sacristy and old rectory have linoleum tile floors.

4. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: Doors are wood, flush paneled, some having single pane transoms. Doorways and window trim have classic revival motif trim, with corner blocks.

5. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning: Heating is by a modern gas system. There is an evaporative cooling system presently being installed.
- b. Lighting: Natural and electric lighting.
- c. Plumbing: The south sacristy and old rectory have plumbing.

D. SITE:

1. General setting and orientation: The church sits on a rise of ground, approximately in center of the Ysleta area. Although, at one time, the surrounding land was mainly agricultural, today, it is heavily developed by approaching urbanization from the city of El Paso.
2. Outbuildings: The church property contains many 20th century buildings of recent origin.

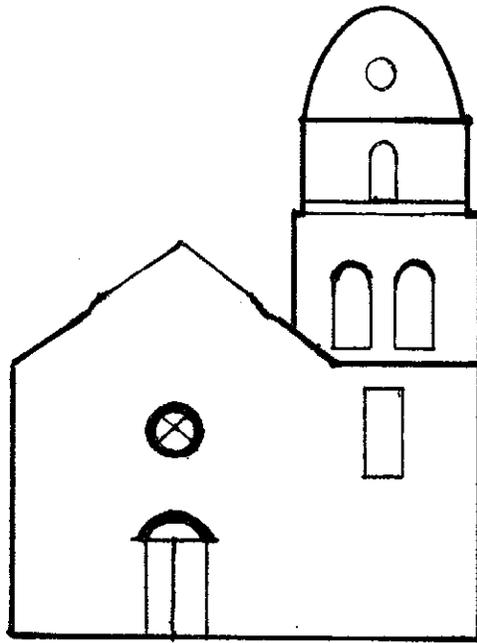
Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur
(Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church)
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- a. Rectory: This one-story adobe building is apparently of early origin, it is located south of the church, across the parking lot. It measures 82' along the north side, and 83' along the east side. The interior has exposed square hewn vigas and latias in a herringbone pattern. The rest of the vigas are covered by a modern drop ceiling. Father Martinez claims that some of unexposed vigas have painted decoration.
- b. Jesuit Hall: This one-story building is located beside the church on the north side. It is adobe and the main north facade is done in a Renaissance revival style. The building was built in the 1920's to be used as a parochial school. Presently, it is being used as an auditorium, kitchen, classroom space, and storage.

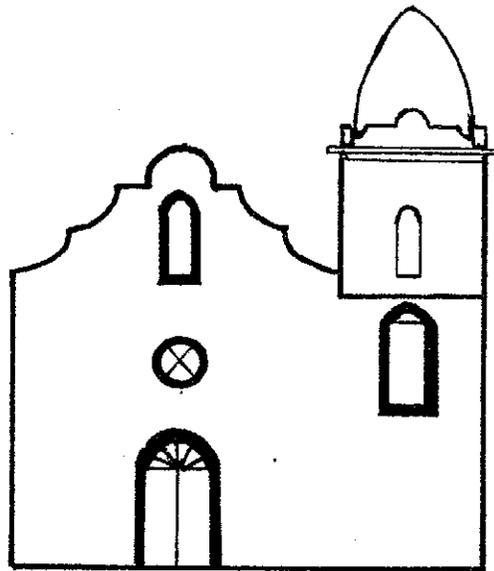
Prepared by Christopher Witmer
Architectural Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
August, 1980

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Mision de San Antonio de la Isleta del Sur in El Paso, Texas was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS), National Architectural and Engineering Record, in cooperation with the West Texas Council of Government (WTCOG). Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect, the architectural documentation was completed in the HABS field office in El Paso, Texas by Project Supervisor, Paul D. Dolinsky (HABS, Washington, D.C. office), Project Historians Christine Saurel (Columbia University) and Christopher S. Witmer (The Pennsylvania State University), Architectural Foreman Dwight H. Burns (Texas University), Architectural Technicians Ann Louise Barr (University of Arizona), Barry Gill (North Dakota State University), Thomas M. Hocker (The Catholic University of America), and Sandra L. Sherrill (Auburn University), and Architectural Phtographer David J. Kaminsky.



IV. 1901 (OR LATER)

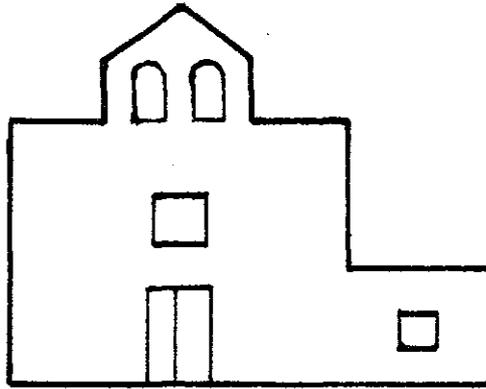


V. 1908-09 to present

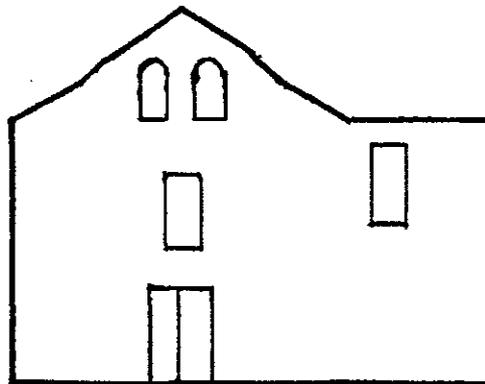
EAST
FACADE DEVELOPMENT OF YSLETA CHURCH
EL PASO, TEXAS 1881 - 1980

Mision de San Antonio
de la Isleta del Sur

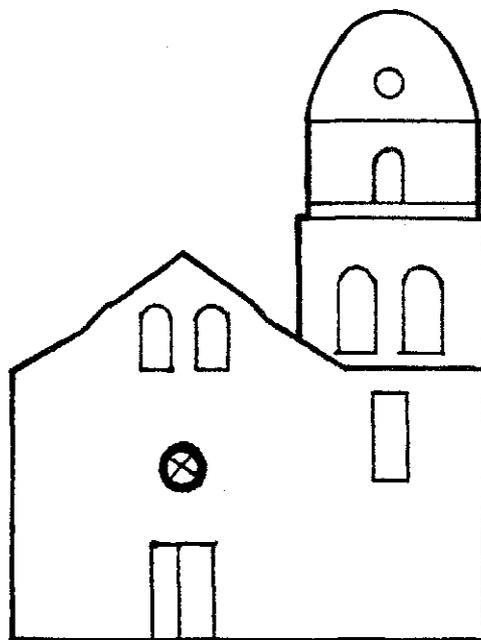
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I. 1881
(based upon Bourke's watercolor)

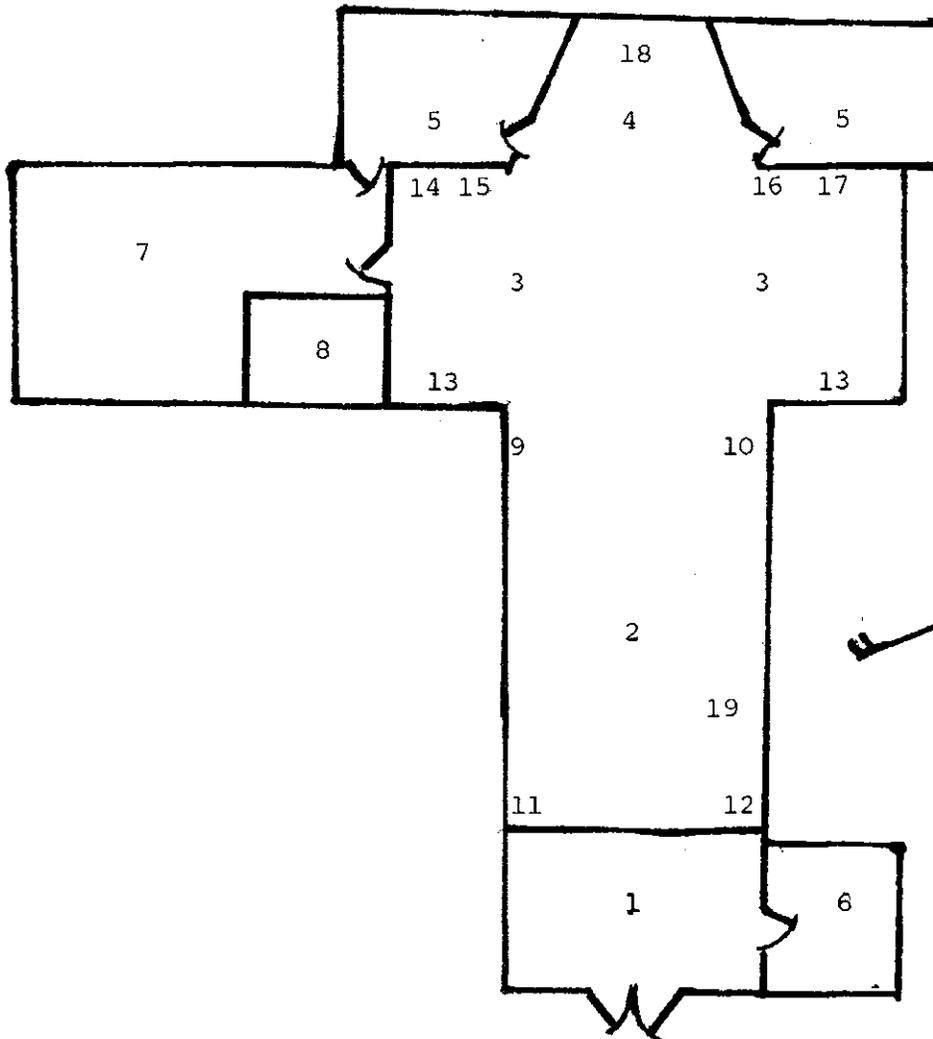


II. c. 1895



III. 1897

Mision de San
Antonio de la
Isleta del Sur
[HABS No. TX-3104]
(Page 15)



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH, EL PASO, TEXAS
JULY 31, 1980

1. Choir Loft
2. Nave
3. Transcept
4. Apse
5. Sacristy
6. Tower
7. Old Rectory
8. Baptistery
9. St. Aloysius
10. St. Martin
11. St. Isidore
12. St. Monica
13. Confession Booths
14. Altar of St. Anthony above the statue of The Body Of Jesus
15. Our Lady of the Lourdes
16. Little Flower of the Carmelite Order
17. Altar of Our Lady of Guadalupe
18. Main Altar to Our Lady of Mount Carmel
19. Shrine to Our Lady of Fatima

CSW

DIAMOND, RASH, ANDERSON, LESLIE & SMITH

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MANUEL DEL VILLAR Y GARZA
REYNOLD GONZALEZ VILLARREAL
ROGELIO SANCHEZ CORTES
MAX HANFF VAZQUEZ

Mision de San Antonio
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July 29, 1980

Mr. Chris Witmer
4433 N. Stanton
El Paso, Texas

In Re: Ysleta Grant

Dear Chris:

This will verify my conversation with you on the 28th day of July, 1980. It is the position of the Tigua Indians that the incorporation of Ysleta in 1872 permitting the giving away of public lands was an invalid act of the Legislature in contravention of the Constitution of 1859 which prohibits the giving away of state lands. The Indians therefore take the position, upon my advice as their attorney, that all grants by the Town of Ysleta and subsequent grants by the County of Ysleta after the dissolution of the town in 1874 were unconstitutional and invalid including the title of the Catholic church to the Ysleta Mission.

The Indians have been advised of the potential claim they have to existing title throughout the entire grant area and have elected instead to pursue other legal recourses. In this respect, we did successfully intervene in docket number 22C before the Indian Claims Commission which was the case involving the Lipon and Mescalero Apache claim. While the Indian Commission commented favorably on the claim of the Tiguas, they nonetheless held that we were not entitled to the status of an intervener or because of the Court decision in the Wichita Comanche Intervention case which held that there was no excuse for failing to file within the deadline of the Indian Claims Act. We thereupon shifted gears and resorted to a Congressional Reference Bill. The Congressional reference bill permits either House or Congress to waive a statute of limitations. These bills are pending on behalf of the Tiguas, the Tonkawas, the Alabama Coushattas and the Louisiana Coushattas with respect to Texas claims. If we are successful with the Congressional Reference Bill, then the Indians would receive monetary damages for their interest in the Ysleta Grant and surrounding aboriginal claim areas.

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Chris Witmer
July 29, 1980

Mision de San Antonio
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If we are unsuccessful in our effort to obtain recourse through the Congressional Reference Route, then it is my opinion that the tribe would make a claim for the present title of the Grant areas. This would be the same type claim which has been asserted in the northeast area of the United States. The Indians have been reluctant to pursue this course of action because of the obvious disruption that will occur in the community and the bad relations that will exist between present title holders in themselves. However, it is the only recourse available to them if Congressional Reference is unsuccessful.

Sincerely,



Tom Diamond

TD/dg

ADDENDUM TO

MISION DE SAN ANTONIO DE LA ISLETA DEL SUR

(Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church)

(Mision Nuestra Senora del Carmen)

(Mision Corpus Christi de la Isleta del Sur)

SE corner of Alameda Ave. & Zaragosa Dr.

El Paso

El Paso County

Texas

HABS No. TX-3104

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20001

ADDENDUM TO:
MISION DE SAN ANTONIO DE LA YSLETA DEL SUR
(Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church)
(Mision Nuestra Senora del Carmen)
(Mision Corpus Christi de la Isleta del Sur)
Southeast corner of Alameda Avenue & Zaragosa Drive
El Paso
El Paso County
Texas

HABS TX-3104
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FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001