

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **SEP 26 1985**
date entered **OCT 24 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. Mary of the Assumption

and/or common St. Mary of the Assumption

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication

city, town Laurin N/A vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Madison code 057

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Roman Catholic Bishop of Helena, a corporation sole

street & number 515 N. Ewing Street P.O. Box 1729

city, town Helena N/A vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Madison County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Virginia City state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Mary of the Assumption church is an attractive and well-maintained architect-designed masonry structure located along the main street paralleling the Northern Pacific railroad tracks on the west side of Laurin, Montana a small hamlet with less than 20 buildings. Built along a modified cruciform ecclesiastical Gothic plan, the sandstone church rests on an uncoursed granite foundation, and has to the right side of the main entrance a shouldered, three story, single bell tower with an octagonal roof. Decorative wooden fascia board encircles the church at the eaves. Windows along the nave, apse and on the tower are stained glass, produced in Minneapolis by the Forman Ford Company, and have Gothic stone arches with solid sandstone sills. Windows in the chancel and ambulatory are 1/1 double hung sash with stone lintels and sills. All window frames are original.

Between 1956-1959 new concrete steps were constructed in both the front and rear of the building. From 1977-1981, deteriorating mortar in the foundation and walls was replaced, and the stained glass windows were covered on the exterior with Lexan. Solid oak doors in the front of the church were refinished in 1983. The gable roof, which is covered with the original fish scale patterned metal shingles, has four matching gable dormers on each side with single pane lancet windows. A cement-covered chimney pierces the roof at the rear of the building.

The interior of the church remains essentially the same as when originally constructed in 1899. The vaulted ceiling has attractive, ornamental oak wood trusses, while oak wainscoting, pews and furnishings still adorn the nave of the church. There is a hand-crafted oak reredos behind the altar which extends for the full height from the floor to the ceiling. Between 1956-1959 the semi-circular shaped chancel was extended five feet into the nave, and the church lights were replaced with contemporary spotlights. In 1984, the chancel was expanded into a circular shape and the interior was carpeted.

The original wood frame Catholic church and rectory, built in ca. 1875 are located adjacent to St. Mary of the Assumption church. Insufficient information exists on the history, construction, and integrity of the buildings to evaluate their National Register eligibility at this time.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1899–1900 **Builder/Architect** Charles Stabern/C.S. Haire

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1899–1900, St. Mary of the Assumption church in Laurin, Montana is significant as a well-preserved example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. Designed by the eminent Montana architectural firm of Link & Haire, the church features extraordinarily high quality craftsmanship exhibited by the masonry and interior woodwork, a prominent three story bell tower in the front and attractive stained glass Gothic windows highlighted by decorative stone arches and lintels. St. Mary of the Assumption has served as the primary Roman Catholic church for a widely-dispersed mining and agricultural population within the Ruby Valley of southwestern Montana for nearly 90 years. In excellent condition, it is a major architectural landmark and the largest, most sophisticated building in Laurin.

After gold was discovered in nearby Alder Gulch in 1863 and a rush of fortune seekers flooded the area, this small community of Laurin, which has a population of less than 50 people, quickly became established as an important trading post for the entire Ruby Valley mining region. The original canvas tent trading post, later replaced by a log structure, which also served as general mercantile store, was opened and operated by Jean Baptiste Laurin, the founder of the town. In the mid-1860s, over 10,000 miners descended upon the area, but within five years most mines were no longer economically viable and towns in the valley were abandoned in favor of new strikes. As a result of his enterprising business endeavors during the mining boom, Jean Laurin became one of the wealthiest citizens in Laurin and, according to early newspaper accounts, shared his wealth in order to promote the success of the town. In 1897, after Laurin and his wife had died, \$8,000 was donated in her name toward the construction of a new Catholic church in Laurin for an expanding parish.

St. Mary of the Assumption Church is the second Catholic church to be built in Laurin. Since its dedication in 1901, St. Mary's has been used in conjunction with the original 1875 frame church that stands adjacent to the nominated property and is currently used as the parish hall. St. Mary's is the most substantial and well-crafted building in Laurin and is a major visual component of this community's identity.

Typically church buildings in small, rural towns throughout Montana during the late 19th century were built of wood frame and sheathed with white clapboard siding. Following a basic one room plan, these gable-roofed buildings invariably had a rectangular shape with a square bell tower placed atop the roof. More substantial brick or stone churches were usually found in larger communities where bigger parishes called for, and could support the construction of these structures. In Laurin, which in the later 1800s likely had a population of at least several hundred people, the need for a larger and more expansive church became clear when the parish outgrew the earlier 1875 frame building. With an interest in constructing a notable church for the community and impressed with his previous work, the Laurin parish hired Charles Haire to design their building. Haire was a partner with John Link in what was one of the most prominent architectural firms in Montana during the early-to-mid-20th century. Link and Haire together designed over 1,000 public, private, commercial and institutional buildings in the northwestern U.S., including the additions to the Montana Capitol building. Solidly constructed, St. Mary church is an impressive

9. Major Bibliographical References

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish Records, No. 225, Diocese of Helena Archives, Helena, MT. Miller, Joaquin. Illustrated History of the State of Montana, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1894, 177-178.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Alder

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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4	1	3	2	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification Using the section corner common to sections 4 and five on the north line of T6S R4W as the initial point of beginning; thence N 57-41'-45" a distance of 3301.15 feet to a point which is the NW corner of the old school tract and the NE corner of the tract originally owned by the CATHOLIC (see continuation sheet attached)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Father Frank Wiegenstein and T.G. Haggerty, Engineer

organization St. Mary of the Assumption date December 12, 1983

street & number 105 West Poppleton telephone 406-842-5588

city or town Sheridan state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Marcelle Shifry*

title SHPO date Sept 23, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register date 10-24-85

Alton Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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received
date entered

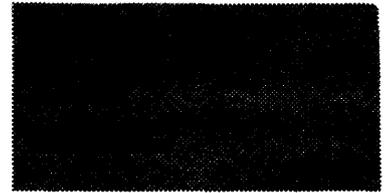
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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masonry building more likely found in a much larger town. Built as a smaller scale version of a modified cruciform plan, the church features stylized architectural elements and attractive interior furnishings.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

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Church; thence S 17 - 30'-00"E 43.4 feet to actual point of beginning; thence S 17 -30' -00" E along the same line a distance of 120.6 feet to SE corner; thence S 71 -27'-00"W a distance of 164 feet to SW corner; thence N 17 - 30'-00"W a distance of 112.6 feet; thence N 71 - 27'-00"E a distance of 52.35 feet; thence N 17 - 30'-00"W a distance of 8 feet; thence N 71 - 27' - 00" a distance of 111.65 feet to the point of actual beginning.