

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ORIGINAL - NOT TO BE REMOVED
FROM FILES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Florida
COUNTY:	Dade
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Plymouth Congregational Church [a] 8Da390

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
3429 Devon Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Coconut Grove

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Eleventh

STATE: Florida CODE: 12 COUNTY: Dade CODE: 025

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"/> 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
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) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Plymouth Congregational Church, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:
3429 Devon Road, Coconut Grove

CITY OR TOWN:
Miami

STATE: Florida CODE: 12

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Dade County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
73 West Flagler Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Miami

STATE: Florida CODE: 12

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Florida Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: Summer, 1972 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Archives, History and Records Management

STREET AND NUMBER:
Department of State, The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN:
Tallahassee

STATE: Florida CODE: 12

STATE:	Florida
COUNTY:	Dade
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)

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

The Plymouth Congregational Church is situated on a spacious tract of land in Coconut Grove, Florida. The building, patterned after a Spanish Mission Church in Mexico, was designed by Clinton MacKenzie of New York. A Spanish stonemason, Phillippe Feliz Rebom, was commissioned to set the stones. Each of the hand-hewn native limestone blocks was placed by hand during the 18-month period of construction. The one-story stone structure has three doors and two bell towers in the main facade. The main entry is a massive, 300-year old, hand-carved door composed of walnut, backed with Spanish oak, and contains the original hand-wrought iron fittings. The central door is of immense proportions, is semi-circular, and ornamented with stone pilasters supporting an entablature. A niche above this door has a broken pediment above. The central door is flanked by smaller entrance doors leading to side loggias. These side loggias enclose the interior and extend the length of the church in a south to north direction. Evenly spaced posts support the eaves which extend from the gabled roof. The roof covering consists of red Spanish and French tiles. The main facade is perfectly balanced in appearance, and this symmetry is continued in the pair of bell towers which extend upward from the roof line. The bell towers are capped with stone finials, and are notable features of the exterior. A scalloped parapet between the bell towers is also topped with decorative finials. The lower portion of the main facade containing the side doors are joined to the upper portion by large scrolls. The majority of the main facade is heavily covered by dense vine growth. Overall plan of the Church is cruciform, with aisled nave and includes wing extensions at the rear (north) portion of the building. Window treatment consists of diamond-shaped panes in french doors, with semi-circular arched transoms above. There are no windows in the main facade. The exterior and interior walls are formed from irregular hand-cut block of native coral.

The entire complex includes several buildings in addition to the core building; among them are: the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, an office building, a school, and the walled gardens. The sanctuary and gardens are the oldest portions in the complex. The garden on the east side of the sanctuary is walled on three sides, and enclosed on the fourth by the church. Loggias around the walls present the effect of a cloistered courtyard. In the north end of this courtyard there is an open pulpit built of the same coral rock. The west side of the courtyard is not enclosed and is open to the other buildings.

The sanctuary was enlarged in 1953, with additional expansion in 1958. Architect Robert Law Weed designed the additions in a style compatible to the original structure.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

2

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian;	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) <u>1917</u>			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Settlement</u>
<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			
<p>The Plymouth Congregational Church plays a major rôle in the settlement of Coconut Grove, Florida. The growth of this 19th century bay community traces from the earliest settlers in the area who organized the Union Chapel which was the forerunner of Union Congregational Church, founded in 1897. James Bolton, the first pastor, offered incorporation of his congregation into whatever denomination would provide financial assistance, and when the Church of the Pilgrims accepted, the church was renamed Plymouth Congregational Church. The church facility was constructed over an 18-month period, from 1916-1917. However, the history of the congregation and the first chapel began with the establishment of a one-room Sunday School building, erected in 1887.</p> <p>Earliest known Church records of the Union Congregational Church are dated March 2, 1901. During the first three years of existence, a small chapel was erected on land donated by Commodore Ralph M. Munroe. The names of Coconut Grove's first settlers appear among the list of founders of the congregation, and it is from this standpoint that the Plymouth Congregational Church derives its primary significance. The first Congregationalist minister was Solomon G. Merrick, who became pastor in May, 1901.</p> <p>Significance of this property relates not only to its direct association with the pioneers of Coconut Grove in the late 19th century, but also to its architectural design. As an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style, it has been recognized by leading architects as one of the finest specimens of Spanish design in the South, as well as being one of the most historic churches in Dade County, Florida.</p> <p>The Church building represents the history and development of one of South Florida's earliest settlements.</p>			

3

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Attached Sheet)

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							
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds			
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	N25	43	19	W80	14	53
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: TWO

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mary K. Evans, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives, History and Records Mgt. DATE: 8/15/73

STREET AND NUMBER:
Department of State, The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION	NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION
<p>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:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title <u>Historic Preservation Officer</u></p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Florida	
COUNTY Dade	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) 9. Major Bibliographical References

- American Institute of Architects, Inc. A Guide to the Architecture of Miami, South Florida Chapter, 1963.
- Ash, Agnes. "A Vine Place to get Married," The Miami News, June 12, 1966.
- Bischoff, William H. "Every Stone in the Church was 'Loved' Into Place," Miami Daily News, 1946.
- "Church Beautiful at Coconut Grove, " Miami Herald, April 14, 1919.
Coral Gables Times, March 20, 1958.
- Dade County Courthouse, Miami, Florida. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Dade County Records. (Subgroup: deeds).
- Ferguson, Gladys. Personal Interview (by Mary K. Evans) February, 1972. Plymouth Congregational Church, Coconut Grove, Florida.
- Florida Collection. Documents, photographs, articles, news clippings. Miami Public Library, Miami, Florida.
- Historical Museum of Southern Florida and the Caribbean. Special collection including photographs, documents, newspaper articles, and miscellaneous materials relating to Coconut Grove. Miami, Florida.
- Kent, Gertrude M. The Coconut Grove School in Pioneer Days, 1887-1894. Coral Gables, Florida: Parker Printing Co., 1972.
Miami Herald, November 17, 1922; November 19, 1922.
- Muir, Helen. Miami, U.S.A. Coconut Grove, Florida: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1953.
- Munroe, Ralph M. and Vincent Gilpin. The Commodore's Story. New York: Ives Washburn, 1930. Reprinted Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1967.
- Overstreet, Mrs. J. D. "The Church in the Garden" (A History of Plymouth Congregational Church from 1897-1950), Coconut Grove, Florida, (n.d.).
- Parks, Arva Moore. The History of Coconut Grove, Florida, 1821-1925. University of Miami Master's Thesis, 1971.

(con't.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Florida	
COUNTY Dade	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) 9. Major Bibliographical References (con't.) -2-

Plymouth Congregational Church. "This is Our Church," Coconut Grove, Florida, 1964.

Rogero, Nancy. "Plymouth Church Has Mellow Beauty," Miami Herald, 1939.

Trapp, Mrs. Harlan. My Pioneer Reminiscences. 1940. (n.p.).

6

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE FLORIDA

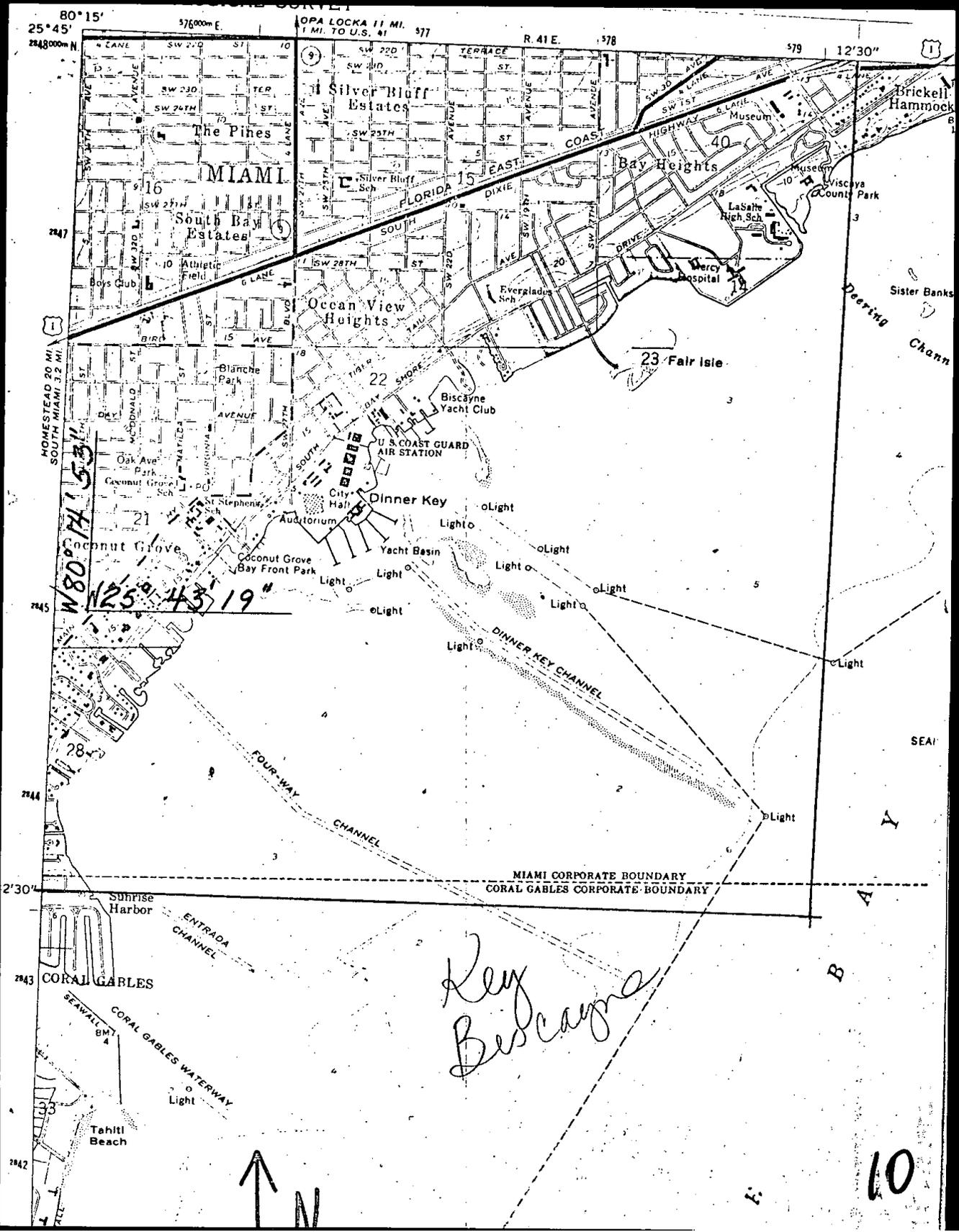
Date Entered JUL 23 1974

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Plymouth Congregational Church	Coconut Grove Dade County
Ruskin Women's Club	Ruskin Hillsborough County

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

Also Notified

Hon. Edward J. Gurney
Hon. Lawton Mainor Chiles, Jr.
Hon. Dante B. Fascell
Hon. Sam M. Gibbons



80°15'
25°45'

OPALOCKA 11 MI.
1 MI. TO U.S. 41

R. 41 E.

12°30"

HOMESTEAD 20 MI.
SOUTH MIAMI 3.2 MI.

W 80° 14' 53"
N 25° 41' 19"

Key Biscayne

10



Form 10-301
(July 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. NAME COMMON		AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Plymouth Congregational Church			
2. LOCATION		COUNTY	TOWN
STATE	Florida	Dade	Coconut Grove
STREET AND NUMBER			
3429 Devon Road			
3. MAP REFERENCE SOURCE		DATE	SCALE
USGS Key Biscayne Quad.		1962; revised 1969	1:24000

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW.

FLORIDA MASTER
SITE FILE

FDAHRM 802==

Site No. 8 Da 390 1009==

Site Name Plymouth Congregational Church 830==

Other Name(s) for Site _____
_____ 930==

Other Nos. for Site _____ 906==

Type of Site Building 832==

Location of Site:

County Dade 808==

Instructions for locating site (or address) 3429 Devon Road
Coconut Grove, Florida
_____ 813==

Ownership:

Owner of Site: Name Plymouth Congregational Church, Inc. 902==

Address 3429 Devon Road
Coconut Grove, Florida 903==

Occupant, Tenant or Manager:

Name Mrs. Ferguson, Church Secretary 904==

Address 3429 Devon Road
Coconut Grove, Florida 905==

Form Prepared By:

Reporter (or local contact):

Name Mrs. Ferguson 816==

Address 3429 Devon Road
Coconut Grove, Florida 817==

Recorder:

Name & Title Evans, Mary K., Historic Sites Specialist 818==

Address Div. of Archives, History & Records Mgt. 819==
Department of State, The Capitol

Date of Site Survey 6-26-72 Tallahassee, Florida 820==

Previous Survey(s), Excavation(s) or Collection(s) (Enter title of survey, date, whether Federal, State, County or Local, Location of Survey Report(s) and Material's Collected).

Florida Historic Sites Survey

Summer, 1972

State

Division of Archives, History & Records Mgt.

Department of State, The Capitol

Tallahassee, Florida

839==

Photographic Record Numbers 72-N-03-30-46; 72-N-07-184-188

860==

11

CONTINUATION SHEET

Present & Original Physical Appearance

-2-

the bell towers is also topped with decorative finials. The lower portion of the main facade containing the side doors are joined to the upper portion by large scrolls. The majority of the main facade is heavily covered by dense vine growth. Overall plan of the Church is cruciform, with aisled nave and includes wing extensions at the rear (north) portion of the building. Window treatment consists of diamond-shaped panes in french doors, with semi-circular arched transoms above. There are no windows in the main facade. The exterior and interior walls are formed from irregular hand-cut block of native coral.

The entire complex includes several buildings in addition to the core building; among them are: the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, an office building, a school, and the walled gardens. The sanctuary and gardens are the oldest portions in the complex. The garden on the east side of the sanctuary is walled on three sides, and enclosed on the fourth by the church. Loggias around the walls present the effect of a cloistered courtyard. In the north end of this courtyard there is an open pulpit built of the same coral rock. The west side of the courtyard is not enclosed and is open to the other buildings.

The sanctuary was enlarged in 1953, with additional expansion in 1958. Architect Robert Law Weed designed the additions in a style compatible to the original structure.

15

HISTORIC SITE DATA SUPPLEMENT

Site No. _____
Site Name Plymouth Congrega-
tional Church

Present Use (check one or more as appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Government 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Park 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 838==
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence 838==	Other (Specify): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Military 838==	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 838==
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 838==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 838==

Period (check one or more as appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian 842==	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century 842==	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century 842==	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century 842==
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century 842==	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century 842==	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century 842==	

Specific Dates: Beginning 1917 844== Ending 846==

Areas of Significance (check one or more as appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Prehistoric 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Education 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Political 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning 910==
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Historic 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering 910==	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy 910==	Other (Specify): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Science 910==	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Settlement 910==
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 910==
<input type="checkbox"/> Art 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 910==
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 910==
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Military 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 910==	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation 910==	<input type="checkbox"/> Music 910==		

Thematic Classification:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> Military 912==	Other (Specify): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architectural 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> Political 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 912==
<input type="checkbox"/> The Arts 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> Society 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 912==
<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration & Settlement 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> Science & Technology 912==	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 912==

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary)

The Plymouth Congregational Church plays a major role in the settlement of Coconut Grove, Florida. The growth of this 19th century bay community traces from the earliest settlers in the area who organized the Union Chapel which was the forerunner of Union Congregational Church, founded in 1897. James Bolton, the first pastor, offered incorporation of his congregation into whatever denomination would provide financial assistance, and when the Church of the Pilgrims accepted, the church was renamed Plymouth Congregational Church. The church facility was constructed over an 18-month period, from 1916-1917. However, the history of the congregation and the first chapel began with the establishment of a one-room Sunday School building erected in 1887.

Earliest known Church records of the Union Congregational Church are dated March 2, 1901. During the first three years of existence, a small chapel was erected on land donated by Commodore Ralph M. Monroe. The names of Coconut Grove's first

(con't.) 911==

13

Remarks & Recommendations:

835==

Major Bibliographic References:

American Institute of Architects, Inc. A Guide to the Architecture of Miami, South Florida Chapter, 1963.

Ash, Agnes. "A Vine Place to get Married," The Miami News, June 12, 1966.

Bischoff, William H. "Every Stone in the Church was 'Loved' Into Place," Miami Daily News, 1946.

"Church Beautiful at Coconut Grove," Miami Herald, April 14, 1919.

Coral Gables Times, March 20, 1958.

Dade County Courthouse, Miami, Florida. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Dade County Records. (Subgroup: deeds).

Ferguson, Gladys. Personal Interview (by Mary K. Evans) February 1972. Plymouth Congregational Church, Coconut Grove, Florida.

Florida Collection. Documents, photographs, articles, news clippings. Miami Public Library, Miami, Florida.

(con't.)

920==

CONTINUATION SHEET

Statement of Significance

-2-

settlers appear among the list of founders of the congregation, and it is from this standpoint that the Plymouth Congregational Church derives its primary significance. The first Congregationalist minister was Solomon G. Merrick, who became pastor in May, 1901.

Significance of this property relates not only to its direct association with the pioneers of Coconut Grove in the late 19th century, but also to its architectural design. As an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style, it has been recognized by leading architects as one of the finest specimens of Spanish design in the South, as well as being one of the most historic churches in Dade County, Florida.

The Church building represents the history and development of one of South Florida's earliest settlements.

16

CONTINUATION SHEET

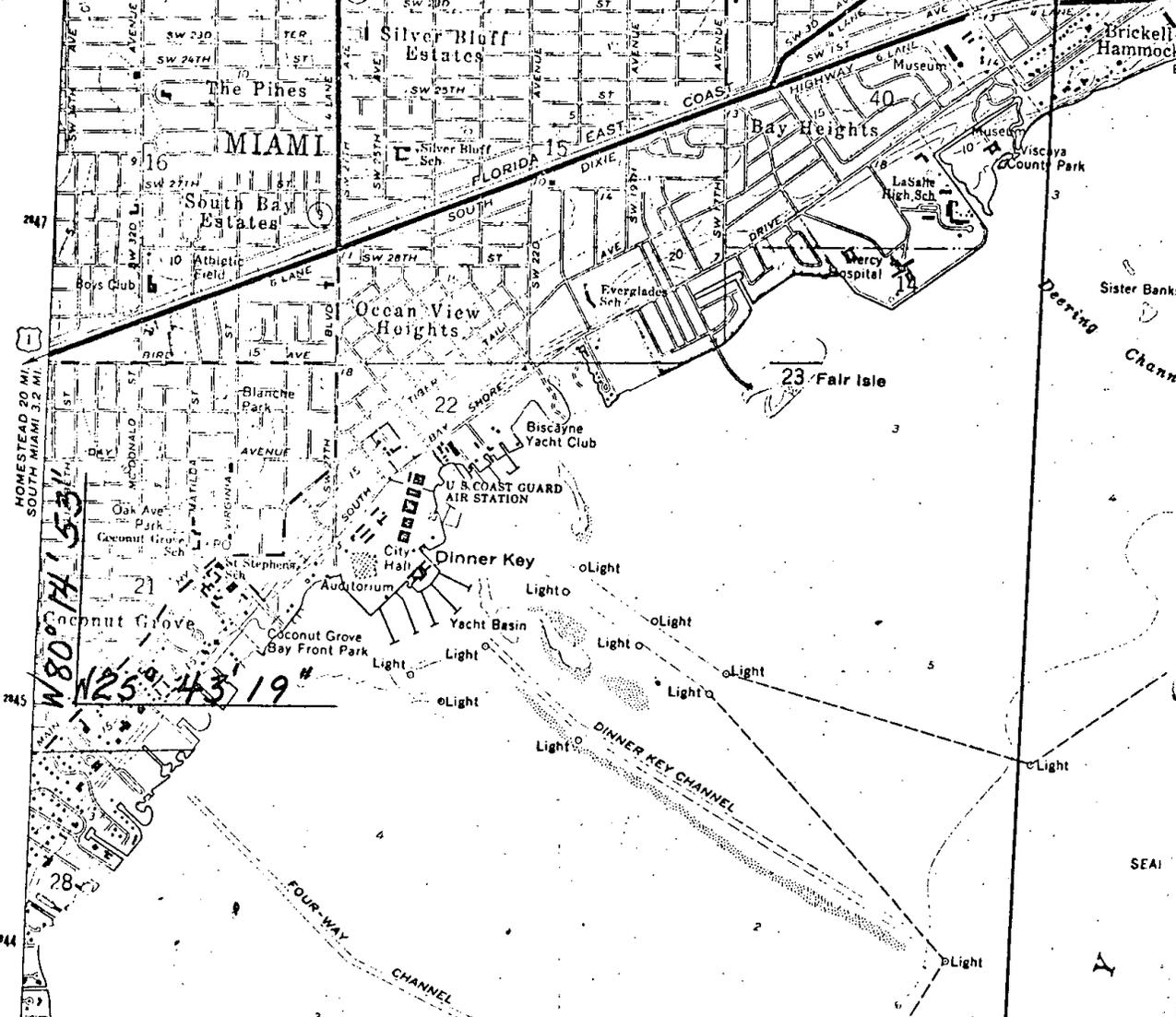
Major Bibliographic References

-2-

- Historical Museum of Southern Florida and the Caribbean. Special collection including photographs, documents, newspaper articles, and miscellaneous materials relating to Coconut Grove. Miami, Florida.
- Kent, Gertrude M. The Coconut Grove School in Pioneer Days, 1887-1894. Coral Gables, Florida: Parker Printing Co., 1972.
- Miami Herald, November 17, 1922; November 19, 1922.
- Muir, Helen. Miami, U.S.A. Coconut Grove, Florida: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1953.
- Munroe, Ralph M. and Vincent Gilpin. The Commodore's Story. New York: Ives Washburn, 1930. Reprinted Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1967.
- Overstreet, Mrs. J.D. "The Church in the Garden" (A History of Plymouth Congregational Church from 1897-1950), Coconut Grove, Florida, (n.d.).
- Parks, Arva Moore. The History of Coconut Grove, Florida, 1821-1925. University of Miami Master's Thesis, 1971.
- Plymouth Congregational Church. "This is Our Church," Coconut Grove, Florida, 1964.
- Rogero, Nancy. "Plymouth Church Has Mellow Beauty," Miami Herald, 1939.
- Trapp, Mrs. Harlan. My Pioneer Reminiscences. 1940. (n.p.).

17

80°15' 25°45' 2848000m N 576000m E OPA LOCKA 11 MI. 1 MI. TO U.S. 41 577 R. 41 E. 578 979 12'30"



HOMESTEAD 20 MI SOUTH MIAMI 3.2 MI W 80°14' 53" W 25°43' 19"

MIAMI CORPORATE BOUNDARY CORAL GABLES CORPORATE BOUNDARY

Key Biscayne Quad

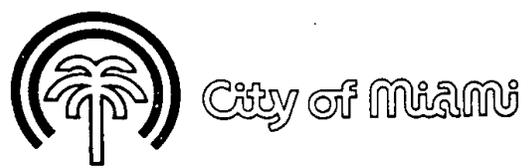
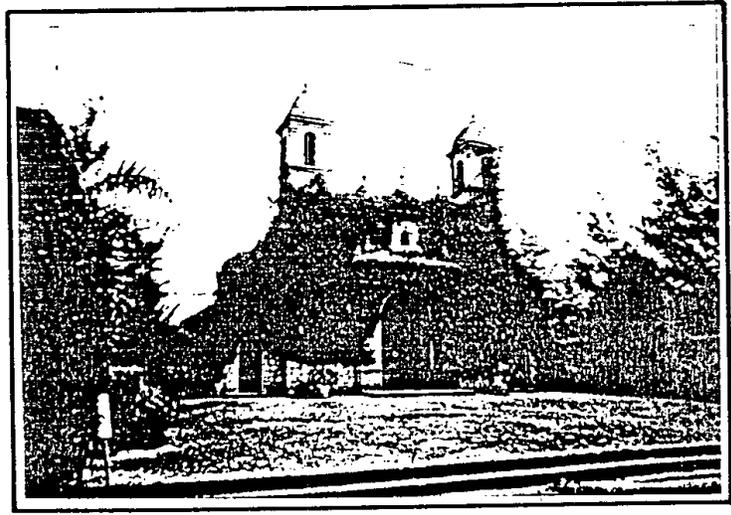


18

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

3429 DEVON ROAD

Designation Report



REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
3429 DEVON ROAD
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton 11-19-82
Historic Preservation Consultant Date

Accepted by Charles Edwin Lane 11-30-82
Chairman, Heritage Conservation Board Date

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9620

Date MAY 31 1983

20

	<u>Page</u>
I. General Information	2
II. Significance	5
III. Historical Information	6
IV. Architectural Information	7
V. Planning Context	10
VI. HC Zoning Elements	11
VII. Bibliography	12

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Plymouth Congregational Church

Current Name:

Plymouth Congregational Church

Location:

3429 Devon Road
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Owner:

Plymouth Congregational Church
c/o William C. Lewis
401 Miracle Mile
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Present Occupant:

Plymouth Congregational Church
3429 Devon Road
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Use:

Religious

Present Zoning District:

R-1

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

The lot shown as "Church" on the amended plat of PLYMOUTH COURT, as recorded in Plat Book 4 at page 78, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; and the southwesterly 50 feet of the southeasterly 200 feet of that portion of Lot "A" of the plat of EWANTON HEIGHTS, as recorded in Plat Book B at Page 52 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, lying northwesterly of Main Highway, Miami, Florida.

22

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

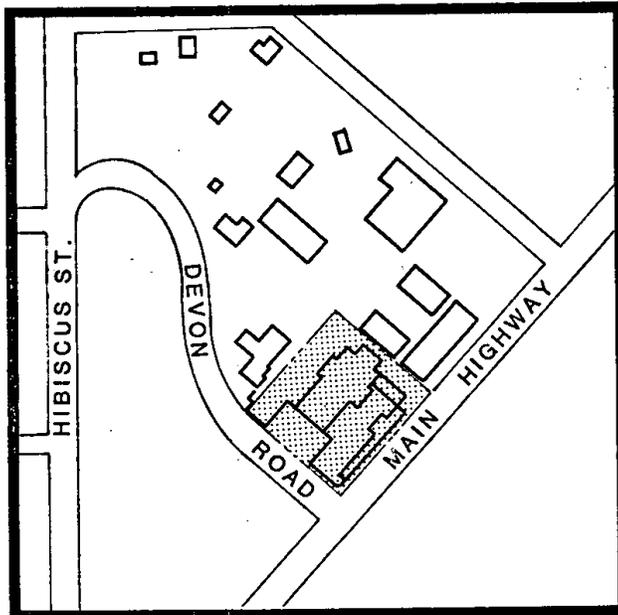
Architectural Significance - 1
Historical Significance - 1
Contextural Significance - 1

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

3429 DEVON ROAD



location



site plan

24

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

Plymouth Congregational Church is significant for its association with the early development of Coconut Grove. In addition, the church is an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its design, details, materials, and craftsmanship.

Organized in 1897, Plymouth Congregational Church was founded by some of the most influential pioneer citizens of Coconut Grove. Solomon G. Merrick, father of George Merrick who developed Coral Gables, became pastor in 1901 and was the first Congregationalist minister to serve the Church. Plymouth Church expanded rapidly as Coconut Grove developed and outgrew two chapels before erecting the present structure in 1916.

Plymouth Congregational Church is also significant as an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture. The building's twin bell towers, curvilinear gable roof, and elaborate front entrance are important elements of the entire composition. Also noteworthy is the building's stonework, laid by a single stonemason, a Spaniard named Felix Rebom.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

Plymouth Congregational Church is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

3. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community.

Plymouth Congregational Church is a reflection of the development of Coconut Grove from its pioneer days and has served as one of the most significant religious institutions in that community.

5. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction.

Plymouth Congregational Church is an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture, particularly evident in its twin bell towers, curvilinear gable roof, and side arcades.

7. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality, or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

Plymouth Congregational Church is especially noteworthy for its outstanding stonework, enriched classical door surround, elaborate front door, and twin bell towers.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1916-1917

Architect:

The architect for Plymouth Congregational Church was Clinton McKenzie of New York, a nationally-known church architect.

Builder/Contractor:

The stonemason for Plymouth Congregational Church was Felix Rebom.

Historical Context:

Plymouth Congregational Church had its start in 1897 when the Union Congregational Church was founded by Rev. James Bolton. During the first three years, a small chapel was erected on what is now Grand Avenue and Virginia Street on land donated by Commodore Ralph Munroe. A larger structure was built on McFarlane Road, now the site of the American Legion hall, during Solomon Merrick's pastorate.

In 1915, Rev. George Spaulding urged the membership to invest in real estate. The church purchased a tract of land in Coconut Grove, subdivided it, and sold enough lots to begin construction of the present church building on a portion of the land. The original part of the church was begun in June, 1916, and completed in August, 1917.

The major period of growth for the church occurred between 1947 and 1971, when membership increased from under 100 to nearly 2,000. The church also expanded physically to meet its growing needs. A major addition to the church was completed in 1954, and additional buildings, including educational units, a church office building, and a fellowship hall, were added in 1959. Plymouth Congregational Church continues to function as a major institution in Coconut Grove.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

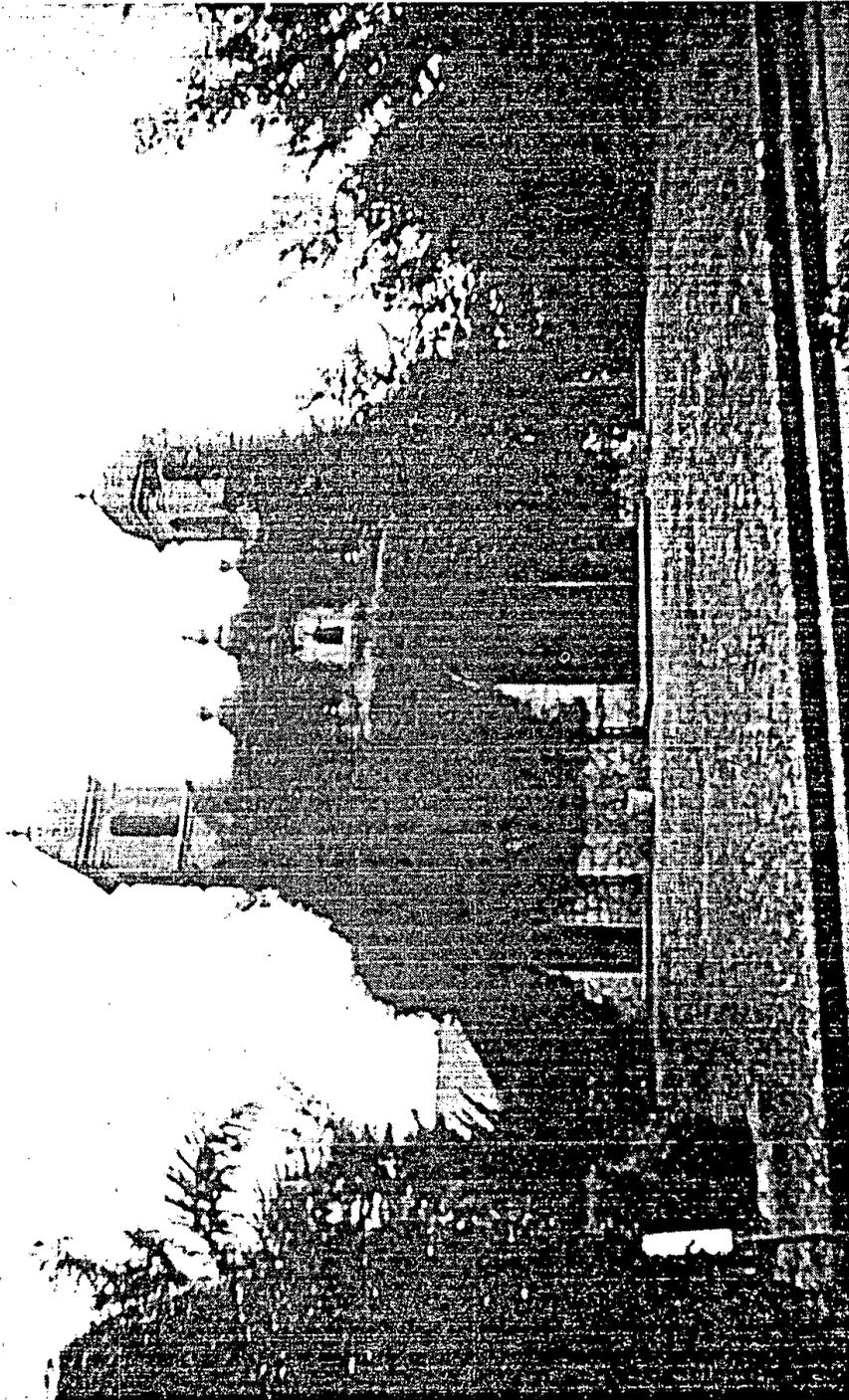
Plymouth Congregational Church was constructed as a one story rectangular structure. Topped with a gable roof covered with corrugated clay tiles, the building is constructed of native oolitic limestone.

The southwest (front) facade is highlighted by a curvilinear gable surmounted by twin bell towers. The main entrance is located in the center bay and features an enriched classical door surround. The door itself is approximately 375 years old and came from a monastery in the Pyrenees Mountains. Made of hand carved walnut backed with oak, it still retains its original hand wrought iron fittings. Smaller doorways on either side of the main entrance lead to side loggias which enclose the interior. Round arches supported by piers comprise these side elevations.

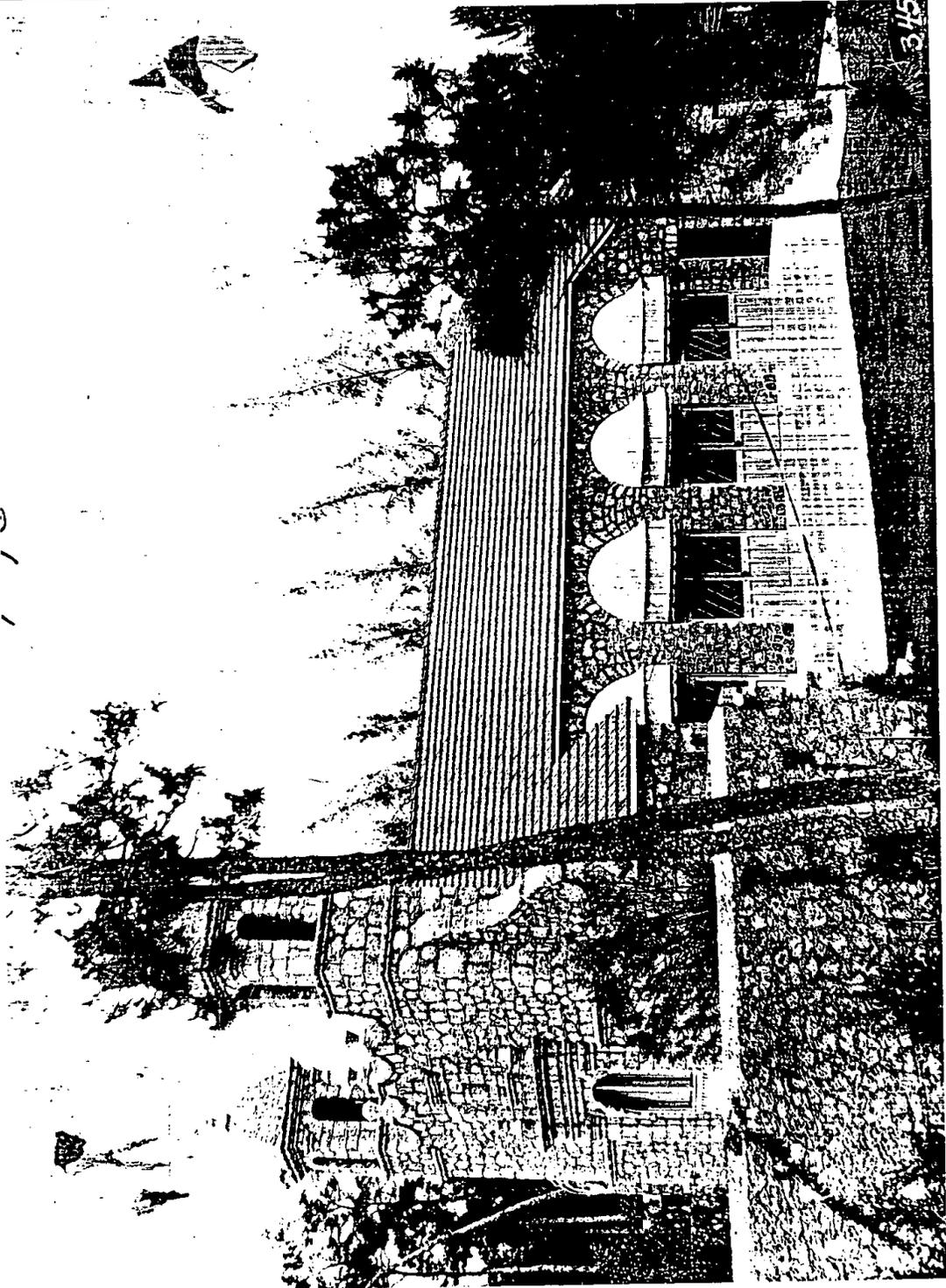
The church was enlarged in 1954 by the addition of two transepts and a new chancel. This addition, designed by Robert Law Weed, changed the plan of the church from rectangular to cross-shaped.

Description of Site:

Plymouth Congregational Church is located on the corner of Devon Road and Main Highway, and the lot is enclosed by a wall of oolitic limestone. A garden on the east side of the sanctuary is walled on three sides and enclosed on the fourth by the church. Loggias around the walls present the effect of a cloistered courtyard. An open garden is located to the west of the church.



Plymouth Congregational Church
3429 Devon Road
Southwest (front) facade
1982



Plymouth Congregational Church
3429 Devon Road
Southwest (front) and southeast facade
c. 1920
(Historical Association of Southern Florida)

29

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Plymouth Congregational Church is situated in the midst of a stable single family residential neighborhood. The church has a large congregation, which values the historic significance of the buildings. No significant change is anticipated within the boundaries of the proposed HC-1 zoning overlay.

The church also owns several acres of land in addition to the area included within the proposed HC-1 zoning overlay boundaries. This additional area is not fully utilized by church related facilities, and may be subject to future development. Such development should be in accord with the existing R-1 zoning height and bulk regulations to avoid negative impacts on the historic site.

VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

Boundaries:

The boundaries of the HC zoning district have been drawn to include only that tract of land immediately surrounding Plymouth Congregational Church. Although other portions of the property are historically related to the church building, it was the decision of the Heritage Conservation Board to maintain the boundaries of the Interim Heritage Conservation Zoning District. This should not be construed as a precedent-setting decision, but rather as the grandfathering of a previous decision.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of Plymouth Congregational Church and all surfaces of all other existing improvements or structures (walls, loggias, etc.) on the site shall be considered major exterior surfaces subject to review.

Major Landscape Features Subject to Review:

The major landscape features subject to review shall include all features which are subject to requirements for tree removal permits, as set forth in Chapter 17 of the City Code.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ash, Agnes. "A Vine Place to Get Married," The Miami News, June 12, 1966.

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 3429 Devon Road.

"The History of Plymouth Congregational Church." Brochure, Plymouth Congregational Church, Miami, Florida.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form for Plymouth Congregational Church.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISIONS: ARCHIVES, HISTORY & RECORDS MANAGEMENT - CORPORATIONS
CULTURAL AFFAIRS - ELECTIONS - STATE LIBRARY SERVICES

DA 0090

News Release

CONTACT: Jim Purks or David Fountain 224-2171

August 16, 1974

TWX Number: 810-931-3677

National Register

(Tallahassee)---Two buildings of historic significance in Dade County, a home and the site of a Revolutionary War fort in Pensacola have been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Robert Williams, director of the Florida Department of State Division of Archives, History and Records Management, made the announcement which signals national recognition of the historic importance of these representative glimpses of Florida's past.

In Dade County, the latest listings include the Coral Gables City Hall, built in 1927; and the Plymouth Congregational Church in Coconut Grove, a fine example of Spanish Mission architectural style, built in 1917.

In Pensacola, the site of Ft. George, built by the British in 1778, has been singled out for recognition. Preservation work is already underway on the little that remains of this fort where one of the few Revolutionary War battles in Florida took place. Also in Pensacola, the Clara Barkley Dorr House, built in 1871, has been listed on the National Register as one of the best-preserved examples of post-Civil War classical revival architecture. Over \$16,000 in state grant money was recently awarded as Florida's contribution to a \$65,000 restoration project underway on the property.

80A 390

RICHARD (DICK) STONE
SECRETARY OF STATE

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Bill Thompson
FROM: Rodney Little
SUBJECT: Certificates

Date: 8-13-74

DA 0390

Could you please prepare certificates for the sites listed below?

Coral Gables City Hall
Plymouth Congregational Church
Clara Barkley Dorr House
Site of Fort George (1778-1781)
Centro Asturiano
Chapin House
Ruskin Women's Club

DA 9790

RICHARD (DICK) STONE
SECRETARY OF STATE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dean Kane

FROM: Rodney Little

SUBJECT: National Register Entries

Date: 8/12/74

Please prepare news releases for National Register additions listed below. I have enclosed a copy of the form for each for your information. Thank you. (Please return the National Register nomination forms when you are finished.)

Site of Ft. George
Escambia County

Plymouth Congregational Church
Dade County

Ruskin Women's Club
Hillsborough County

Coral Gables City Hall
Dade County

Centro Asturiano
Hillsborough County

Chapin House
Hillsborough County

Clara Barkley Dorr House
Escambia County

DA 0390

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE FLORIDA

Date Entered JUL 23 1974

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Plymouth Congregational Church	Coconut Grove Dade County
Ruskin Women's Club	Ruskin Hillsborough County

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

Also Notified

Hon. Edward J. Gurney
Hon. Lawton Mainor Chiles, Jr.
Hon. Dante B. Fascell
Hon. Sam M. Gibbons



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

DA 0000

Mr. Robert Williams, Director
Division of Archives, History and
Records Management
Dept. of State
401 East Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

FEB 22 1974

Dear Mr. Williams:

We are pleased to acknowledge the receipt of the following nominations to the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation on February 21, 1974.

1. 1415 North Franklin Street, Hillsborough Co.
2. Stovall House, Hillsborough Co.
3. Levick House, Hillsborough Co.
4. Bay City Walking Dredge, Collier Co.
5. Cape St. George Light (ACLL 134), Franklin Co.
6. First Coconut Grove School House, Dade Co.
7. Ted Smallwood's Store, Collier Co.
8. Plymouth Congregational Church, Dade Co.
9. The O'Reilly House, St. Johns Co.
10. El Jardin, Dade Co.
11. Coral Gables City Hall, Dade Co.
12. Clara Barkley Dorr House, Escambia Co.
13. Ruskin Women's Club, Hillsborough Co.
14. Johnson-Wolff House, Hillsborough Co.
15. Union Railroad Station, Hillsborough Co.
16. Centro Asturiano, Hillsborough Co.
17. Chapin House, Hillsborough Co.
18. El Centro Espanol of West Tampa, Hillsborough Co.

When the properties have been placed on the National Register you will receive a copy of Congressional notification.

Sincerely yours,

Marguerite H. Mott
Chief, Control Unit
National Register

DA 0390

February 13, 1974

Plymouth Congregational Church, Inc.
3429 Devon Road, Coconut Grove
Miami, Florida

Dear Sir:

It is my pleasure as Director of the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management to notify you that Plymouth Congregational Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with procedures established by the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. As you know, the National Register is the official schedule of the nation's cultural property that is worth saving. Of course, this action in no way affects your property rights.

The nomination is considered for inclusion by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in Washington. This procedure of evaluation ranges in duration from one to six months. We will notify you immediately when we receive word (if the property should be accepted).

I have enclosed a small pamphlet explaining the National Register in some detail but if you have any additional questions please call me (904/488-1480) or one of my staff members, Randy F. Nimnicht, Historic Preservationist (904/488-7365) collect.

Sincerely,

Robert Williams

RW:Nsr

Enclosure

DA0890

STATE OF FLORIDA
Department of State

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE 32304



RICHARD (DICK) STONE
SECRETARY OF STATE

ROBERT WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY, AND
RECORDS MANAGEMENT

(904) 488-1480

February 12, 1974

Dr. William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
National Register of Historic Places
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Bill:

Enclosed please find several nominations to the National Register of Historic Places as listed on the attached list. These nominations are worthy of submission to the Register as approved by the Florida Review Committee for the National Register and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Williams".

Robert Williams
State Historic Preservation Officer

RW:Nsr

Enclosures (18) nominations

NOMINATIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES - 2-12-74

<u>Name of Site</u>	<u>County</u>
1. Cape St. George Light	Franklin
2. Levick House	Hillsborough
3. Stovall House	Hillsborough
4. 1415 N. Franklin St.	Hillsborough
5. El Centro Espanol of West Tampa	Hillsborough
6. Chapin House	Hillsborough
7. Centro Asturiano	Hillsborough
8. Union Railroad Station	Hillsborough
9. Johnson-Wolff House	Hillsborough
10. Ruskin Women's Club	Hillsborough
11. Clara Barkley Dorr House	Escambia
12. Coral Gables City Hall	Dade
13. El Jardin	Dade
14. The O'Reilly House	St. Johns
15. Ted Smallwood's Store	Collier
16. Bay City Walking Dredge	Collier
17. Plymouth Congregational Church	Dade
18. <u>First Coconut Grove School House</u>	Dade

DA 0390

STATE OF FLORIDA
Department of State

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE 32304



RICHARD (DICK) STONE
SECRETARY OF STATE

ROBERT WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY, AND
RECORDS MANAGEMENT

(904) 488-1480

November 7, 1973

Member, Florida Review Committee
for the National Register of
Historic Places
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Enclosed you will find twenty nominations for consideration in your capacity as a member of Florida's Review Committee for the National Register of Historic Places. As usual, you will find a tally sheet on which to indicate your approval/disapproval and/or comments. Please feel free to mark on the nominations indicating any errors, changes, etc. We decided to include with the nominations a copy of the up-to-date list of National Register sites which have been registered.

We would appreciate having your tally sheet returned by November 28. You need not return the nominations unless you have marked on them to indicate mistakes or requested changes.

We are concerned at the relatively few nominations that we have requested your review of in the last six months. We have completed a great deal of site work but we experienced some problems over the summer months in getting the nominations in final draft form. So between now and the end of December we are going to make an effort to make up for lost time.

Thank you for your prompt return on the previous batch.

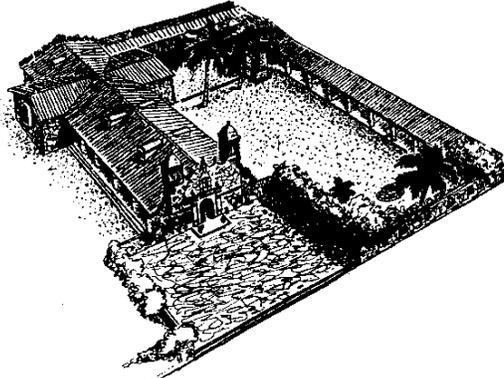
Respectfully,

Randy F. Nimnicht
Historic Preservationist

RFN:cgl

Enclosures (20) nominations
(1) list of N.R. sites

A GLIMPSE AT OUR STORY



The history of Plymouth Church has been written by many dedicated men and women who worked tirelessly with the little they had and who dreamed of what their church could be. The first of these dreams had its beginning with the organization of Union Congregational Church on November 15, 1897. Its four members included the pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. James Bolton.

Much of our church's history is synonymous with the community life of Coconut Grove and has

drawn within its influence many of the pioneers whose names are well known in South Florida. Commodore Ralph M. Munroe presented the ground for the original chapel. The records show that the collections for the first three years were \$33.22, \$80.56, and \$40.78. Out of these amounts the entire expense of operating the church was taken - including the cost of coal oil for the lamps - and what was left was paid to the minister. In spite of the small congregation, a church costing \$1,300 was built, and for \$100 an organ was purchased.

Rev. Solomon G. Merrick became the pastor on May 1, 1901. Mrs. Merrick organized the Woman's Society in September of that year, and a remarkable achievement was revealed in the payment of a \$300 debt on the church. Four women, with only a wilderness around them, held church suppers for patrons who had to travel down the coast in schooners. It was a record breaking example of the faith that makes all things possible.

uth Church
many dedicated
rked tirelessly
had and who
r church could
ese dreams
th the organi-
regational
5, 1897. Its
ed the pastor
and Mrs. James



The persistent efforts of many members and a rather unique bit of financing helped build our present church with its garden and cloisters. The Church bought a piece of land, subdivided it, and sold enough lots to furnish the nucleus of a building fund. This, with contributions made by members and interested friends, made our church possible. The old church property was sold and is now the property of the American Legion, located on McFarlane Road. It is now a center of many activities.

s history is
community
ve and has
rs whose names
alph M. Munroe
The records
years were
ounts the entire
ncluding the
s left was paid
regation, a
D an organ was

The rocks to build the church are a type of flat rock found principally in the section on Sunset Road just south of Cocoplum Plaza. The stonework was done by one man only --- a Spaniard by the name of Feliz Rebom. His tools were a hatchet, trowel, T-square and a plumb-line. Plans were adapted from pictures and plans of a Mexico City mission church. The work was started in June of 1916 and completed in August of the following year. Many leading architects have declared it the finest specimen of Spanish architecture in the South.

May 1, 1901.
n September of
revealed in the
women, with
uppers for
schooners.
ch that makes

Today, sixty-seven years from the time of its founding, our congregation has grown large and its ministries are expanding every day. This constant growth and expansion brings with it Christian challenges -- challenges to be met today and in the future by dedicated men and women with a dream of what our church could be.

HISTORY

DA 0390

In 1837, A FRAIL Methodist minister came to Coconut Grove to enjoy his retirement in a balmy climate. The Rev. James Bolton, a New Englander according to hazy memory, although his exact origins have never been firmly established, discovered that life was dull and aimless off the pulpit.

When a group of Coconut Grove pioneers urged Rev. Bolton to establish a church, he was eager to oblige. He wrote a letter to the Methodist Mission board and urged its support. He was turned down on the grounds that a Methodist church had already been chartered in nearby Miami.

Someone suggested that a Congregational Board of Missions might be eager to gain a frontier post in South Florida since the Congregationalists did not have a church in the vicinity.

Rev. Bolton decided theological differences were minor in face of Coconut Grove's need for a church. He wrote the Congregationalists and received, on the next mail steamer, a mortgage commitment for a building plus missionary aid for the support of the minister and his wife.

According to a church history compiled by Mrs. J. D. Overstreet, the earliest written records of Union Congregational Church begin March 2, 1901, when a meeting was held to "present a historical sketch of the church and to reorganize the church on a more solid basis."

The three years before had been a struggle. A small chapel had been erected on land donated by Commodore Ralph M. Munroe. The collections during the three founding years amounted to \$33.22, \$90.56 and \$40.78.

Through additional donations, the chapel had been built at a cost of \$1,300 and it was equipped with a handsome new organ valued at \$100.

From the beginning, Union Congregational Church was a fashionable house of worship, though no less sincere for its glittering array of Coconut Grove First families. Mrs. Harlan A. Trapp and James Waller, along with the Rev. Bolton and his wife, were the four founding members.

Rev. Bolton was obviously a forceful letter writer. Through his diligence in answering correspondence, he found his own successor and also provided the church with its first authentic Congregationalist minister, Solomon G. Merrick.

Solomon Merrick was a native of Maryland. His wife, Aletha Fink Merrick, was the daughter of a Pennsylvanian who had made a fortune selling a patent medicine labeled, "Fink's Magic Oil."

The Merricks were married young and in the late 1820s. Solomon was assigned to a church in Duxbury, Mass. This was the heart of Congregationalist country and considered to be a choice parish.

The Congregationalists first came to this country in the 1620s. Pilgrims founded Plymouth Colony and Puritans established Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Congregationalists traced their history back to the reformation in England. They firmly believed in a separation of church and state. Congregationalists, however, were always active in community work and frequently founded charitable and educational institutions which were not bound to the church.

Some early American congregationalists were John Adams, second president of the United States, and John Hancock, a wealthy merchant credited with financing the American Revolution. Mrs. Adams (Abigail Smith) was the daughter of a Congregationalist minister.

Harvard College was founded by a Congregationalist in 1636. Yale, Amherst, Williams, Smith, Wellesley, Elmhurst, Grinnell, New College, Beloit, Carleton and others are historically associated with Congregational churches.

Some Congregationalists were not so broad-minded and academic. The Cottons and the Mathers of Salem, Mass., burned witches.

It was this spirited religious lineage that produced Solomon Merrick. The Merricks had seven children, among them a set of twins. During a cold winter in New England, one of the twins died of the croup. Merrick was beginning to experience sieges of ill health and he decided to give up his peaceful, well-established parish to move to a mild climate.

His original source of reference when it came to pioneering, was the Congregational Church Directory. Merrick leafed through it and discovered James Bolton, Coconut Grove Mission, Florida.

Merrick wrote to Bolton asking if farm land was available in the area. Bolton searched carefully, sensing a large addition to his membership if he could satisfy Merrick. Rev. Bolton recommended a 100-acre homestead four miles from Coconut Grove that could be purchased for \$1,100. The property included a small frame house.

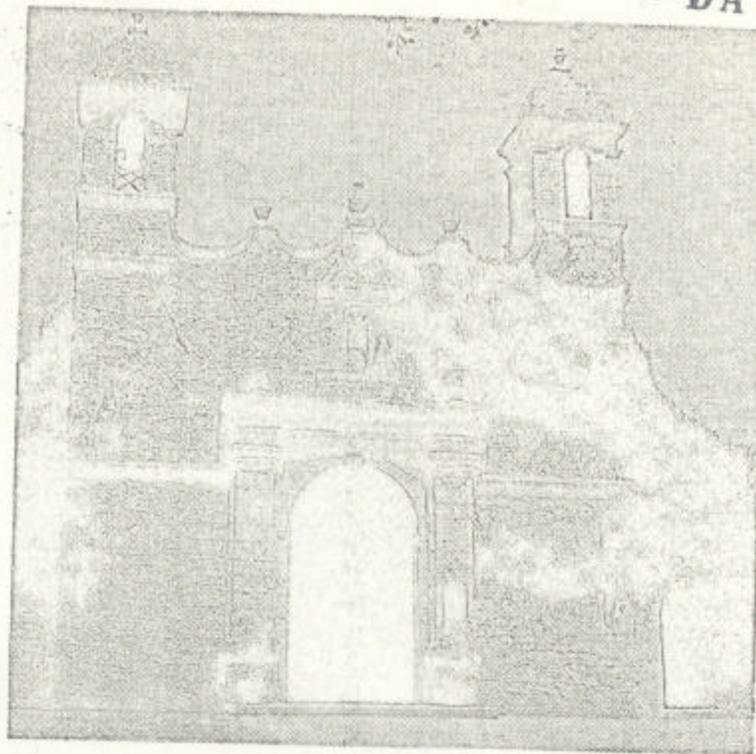
Solomon Merrick was so impressed with Bolton's description that he mailed a check and bought the plantation sight unseen. Then he headed south with his son, George. It was a long trip. The Merricks were delayed in Jupiter when typhoid hit Miami

Grove to enjoy his re-
on, a New Englander
ver been firmly estab-
it.

to establish a church,
sion board and urged
thodist church had al-

by
agnes ash

PLYMOUTH:
"Finest
Spanish
architecture
in the South"



A Vine Place To Get Married

and the area was quarantined. Eventually, father and son landed at Peacock Inn. The Peacock's daughter, Eunice, eventually became Mrs. George Merrick.

Merrick and his 13-year-old son immediately began farming the land. Then they built a two-room cottage and sent for Mrs. Merrick. She arrived with Ethel, Medie, Helen and Charles in 1900. The youngest son, Richard, now a professor of art at the University of Miami, was born the following year.

Merrick prospered and soon became the grapefruit king of the southeast. He found a lot in common with his Congregationalist friends. The Trapp family had developed a superior grade of avocado and were making a comfortable profit shipping it north.

In 1901, Rev. Bolton resigned his pastorate because of declining health and Solomon Merrick became pastor. The church had been located at what is now Grand Avenue and Virginia Street. During Merrick's pastorate, a larger structure was erected at McFarlane Road, now the site of the American Legion hall.

Mrs. Merrick organized a woman's society in September, 1901, almost the moment after she unpacked her teapot. The women gave suppers and held sewing bees until they managed to raise \$300 to pay off the church debt. Most of the deficit was incurred by the increasing cost of coal oil used for lamps which illuminated evening services.

The major portion of the church entertaining was done at the lavish new Merrick estate, Coral Gables, built in 1906. The Merrick mansion, still standing at 907 Coral Way, had an indoor bathroom, a mammoth porch geared to large gatherings of church women who sipped tea and sewed for charity, seven bedrooms and an independent power system. It was the first home in the area to feature acetylene lights.

This elegant "parsonage" gave Union Congregational Church social prestige. The membership grew rapidly as did the church's reputation as a fashionable parish.

Rev. Merrick relinquished his pastorate because of failing health in 1910. He died soon after. Rev. Harry H. Jones became pastor in January of 1911 and served for two years. During his leadership, a parsonage was built.

Rev. Harley Core of Goulds was the next pastor. He drove a distance of 17 miles each Sunday to conduct the services. In 1915 he was succeeded by Rev. George B. Spaulding of Key West. He led the church for six years, and his pastorate was a productive one.

Rev. Spaulding was a businessman. He urged the membership to engage in real estate speculation. The church bought

a piece of land in Coconut Grove, laid it out in a small subdivision and sold enough lots to fatten the building fund. This nest egg, along with contributions from parishioners, supplied cash to begin the church building which now stands at Main Highway and Devon Road.

George Merrick, already busy designing and subdividing the Spanish-flavored city of Coral Gables, supervised the architectural concept of the new church. A nationally-known church architect, Clinton McKenzie drew the plans. They were adapted from a Mexico City mission church.

Merrick engaged Felix Roborn, a Spaniard, to set the stones for Plymouth Church. With a hatchet, trowel, T-square and plumb line, he completed the job almost single-handedly within 18 months. His chief assistant was a Negro laborer, George Williams.

Several architects have stated that it is the finest specimen of Spanish architecture in the south, despite the fact that churches in St. Augustine predate it by centuries.

The stones were all donated by the Fin Pierce and Irving J. Thomas Co. The flat surface rock came from a piece of property on Sunset Road south of Cocoplum Plaza.

Dr. J. Deitman Kuykendall succeeded Rev. Spaulding in 1921. During his pastorate the manse was built and a small frame parish house was acquired. The same architect designed the manse. George Merrick supplied the matching rocks.

Mrs. Arthur Curtiss James and W. J. Matheson were heavy contributors to the church during that period.

The front door of the church was a present from Mrs. James. In 1923, she imported them from an old monastery in the Pyrenees mountains. The hand-carved doors are of walnut backed with oak. The original, hand-wrought iron fittings were preserved and installed.

Dr. Kuykendall was pastor for 22 years. He was followed, in May 1942, by Dr. Forrest C. Weir. Rev. David Justin Davis replaced Dr. Weir in 1947.

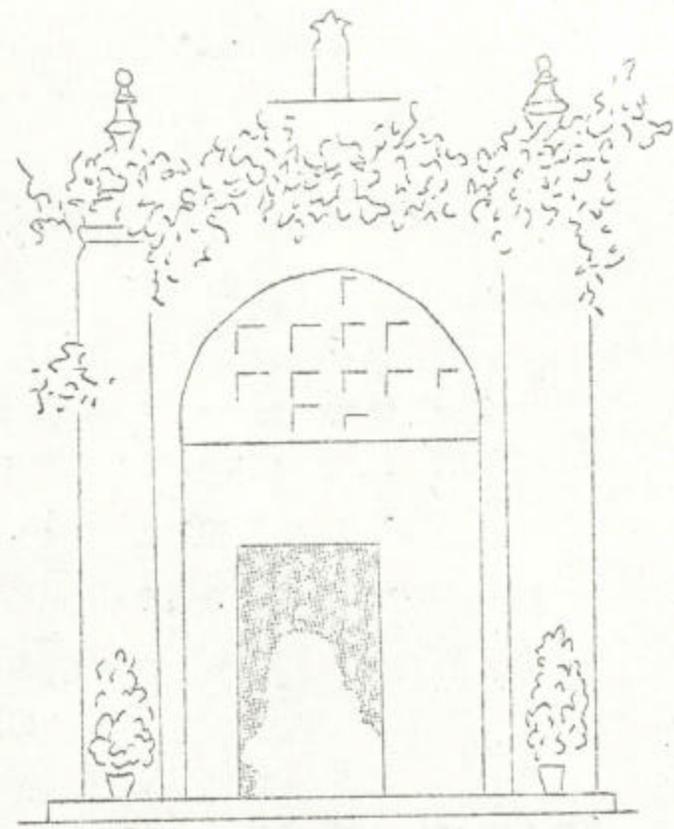
Pastor Davis is an energetic, warm-hearted man who has such a dynamic personality that he has increased the church membership from 8,417 to 17,033.

Plymouth Church has become known as "the Bride's church." The most socially prominent families merge at the altar. Dr. Davis will marry couples who do not hold church membership and he conducts his own ecumenical movement by inviting the pastor of the bride's own church to participate in the ceremony. June is a heavy month for weddings. This month, about 15 weddings will take place in the romantic, vine-covered church.

Stanley Selick

DA 0390

THE HISTORY
OF
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH



*
Coconut Grove
Miami, Florida

Content of folders

DA 0390

By Laws and Amendments (170) minutes

Letter dated 3/25 - to Robert Law West - pertaining to
Expansion plans of church building.

Amended Charter of Plymouth Cong. Ch. 1/24/47

See 1 Record of original charter.

3/27/98 - Corporation Record Book 4 page 57

Amendments to Art. I, II, IV - IX. .. Book 1 - p 44

" " X 2 p 77

" " VI, VII, X - 38 p 507

" " I, VI, VIII, X (Jan 8 to 6 records)

See Record - Book 57 - p 141, 142, 143, 144

" 56 Reception of Members -

Covenant members - joining

" " Church members present

RH J --

By Laws of the Women's Society
7/14/56

DA 0590

PLYMOUTH CHURCH - "The Church in the Garden"
A History from 1897 - 1950

Written by
Mrs. J. D. Overstreet
Church Historian

* * *

The past history and origin of Plymouth Congregational Church is a colorful story. It is a dream come true. It covers the life of the Coconut Grove community. It is not only in time that the church history is synonymous with the community life, but the organization has had a large influence in creating Coconut Grove itself; and has drawn within its influence many of the pioneers whose names are known to the whole Miami territory.

Handwritten initials

Plymouth Church was formerly known as Union Congregational Church, and was organized November 15, 1897, with four members. One of these was the Rev. James Bolton, who became the first pastor. The other three were Mrs. Bolton, Mrs. Harlan A. Trapp and James L. Waller. Mrs. Trapp is still a member - still loyal and devoted as in the days when she had to be janitor, Sunday School Superintendent, and also had to go out and gather in the members herself each Sunday.

The fact that the church belongs to the Congregational denomination is due to a fine spirit of Christian fellowship on the part of Mr. Bolton, who was himself a Methodist. Commodore Ralph M. Munroe presented the ground for a union chapel, with the understanding that it should be used by whatever denomination should accept it. Mr. Bolton suggested that the Congregational Board of Missions would be in a position to undertake the task of establishing a church, and on his recommendation the matter was taken up with the board. The result was that a grant and plans were made for a building, and missionary aid was granted for the support of the minister; and the church became affiliated with the Congregationalists. The earliest written records of the church begin March 2, 1901, when a meeting was called "to give an historical sketch of the church . . . from its start . . . and to reorganize the church on a more solid basis."

Mr. Bolton remained as pastor until 1901. The records show that the collections for the three years were \$33.22, \$80.56 and \$40.78. Out of these amounts the entire expense of operating the church - including the cost of coal oil for the lamps - was taken, and what was left was paid to the pastor. The amount which he received was \$76.45. In spite of the smallness of the congregation a church costing \$1,300 was built, and an organ bought at a cost of \$100.

Rev. Solomon G. Merrick became the pastor on May 1, 1901, in which relationship he continued until 1907. Mrs. Merrick organized the Woman's Society in September, 1901, and nothing reveals better the achievements of a determined people than the one incident alone of the payment of a \$300 debt on the church by four women, in one year, whose suppers were given and whose sewing was done when they had only a wilderness around them and when their supper patrons had to travel down the coast in schooners. It was a record breaking example of the faith that makes all things possible.

Rev. Merrick was compelled to relinquish the pastorate by ill health; and the pulpit was variously supplied until January 1, 1911, when the Rev. Harry H. Jones became pastor. He remained for two years, and during his pastorate the church gained much strength. During this period a parsonage was built.

Following Rev. Jones, the Rev. Harley Core, who was living at Goulds, became acting pastor, in which relationship he continued for two years - 1913-1915. He drove a distance of 17 miles each Sunday to preach, and later to teach in the Sunday School. During this time a debt of \$1,100 on the parsonage was paid. He is still deeply interested in Plymouth and his fine Christian character has endeared him in the hearts of all who know him.

He was succeeded by the Rev. George B. Spaulding of Key West, who led the church for six years, 1915-1920; and accomplished the building of the beautiful structure which is an outstanding landmark in Greater Miami. The old church property was then sold and is now the property of the American Legion, located on McFarlane Road, and a center of many splendid activities.

Mr. Spaulding accomplished, by a rather unique bit of financing, and by his persistent effort, the building of the present church and its garden and cloisters. At his suggestion the church bought a piece of land, laid it out into a small subdivision, and sold enough lots to furnish the nucleus of a building fund. This, with contributions made by the members and other interested friends, made possible the erection on the land which was retained, of what many leading architects have declared is the finest specimen of Spanish architecture in the South.

The rocks to build the church were given from property owned by Mr. Fin Pierce of the Irving J. Thomas Co. It is a type of flat rock that is found principally in that section of Dade County, and is surface rock only. This property was on Sunset Road just south of Cocoplum Plaza.

The stone work was done by one man only - a Spaniard by the name of Felix Rebom. Mr. George E. Merrick, developer of Coral Gables, and whose father was a former pastor, secured the services of this master mason. His only tools were a hatchet, a trowel, a T-square and a plumb line. The work was started in June of 1916 and completed in August of the next year. The nationally known architect, Clinton McKenzie, drew up the plans. They were adapted from pictures and plans of a Mexico City mission church.

Dr. J. Delman Kuykendall was called as pastor to succeed Mr. Spaulding on January 1, 1921. During his pastorate the Manse was built and the small frame Parish House acquired. It was good fortune to have as contributors to the church people like Mrs. Arthur Curtiss James and Mr. W. J. Matheson. Mrs. James was more than generous, and made it possible to complete the Manse in conformity with the church. The rocks for the Manse were given by Mr. George E. Merrick. The services of the same architect, Mr. McKenzie, were secured.

The building of the Manse was undertaken in 1926 - before the crisis that came in the financial affairs of all Floridians - bank failures, the destructive hurricane, and the "burst" of the real estate boom. Through the generosity of Mrs. James, Plymouth Church was able to carry on. The Manse was beautifully furnished with her aid - most of the furniture being imported.

The pipe organ was given by Mrs. James. The cushions in the original pews were given by Mr. W. J. Matheson, who had also contributed substantial sums for the work of the church. On his death a \$2,000 bequest was received. The piano in the church was given by the Woman's Society in 1917 in memory of Rev. Bolton, the first pastor. Many of the hymn books were the gift of Mrs. M. L. Stimson; the jardinaires were given by Mrs. E. E. Bartlett; and the flags were presented by Dr. & Mrs. A. T. Hutchinson. The velvet hangings for the altar and the picture of "The Last Supper" in Plymouth Hall were contributed by the Emily B. Stimson Circle. The cross and candlesticks were gifts from Mr. Roy Yeats in memory of his father. Through the generosity of Mr. Frank J. Dick the beautiful new pews were presented to the church in February, 1949, in memory of his wife, Hattie A. Dick.

The ancient front door of the church was presented by Mrs. James in 1928. It came from an old monastery in the Pyrenees Mountains and is about 350 years old. It is made of hand-carved walnut, backed with oak and with the original hand-wrought iron fittings.

Upon the organization of the Coral Gables Congregational Church many members and workers in Plymouth Church transferred to the church in their own community - this was in 1924.

Dr. Kuykendall continued as pastor for 22 years - leaving in May, 1942. To him should go much more credit than shows on any of the records. He truly helped the church through a crisis that would have been fatal to other churches of like size. He was faithful in the discharge of his many duties, and assumed many tasks which did not come within the range of ministerial duties. It was during his pastorate that Plymouth, even though small of membership, increased its prestige in the community and became an important element in the religious and cultural life of Coconut Grove.

Dr. Forrest C. Weir followed Dr. Kuykendall as pastor - coming to Plymouth on November 1, 1942, and continuing through January, 1947. Under his able leadership and organizational ability the church enjoyed one of the best periods of its history. There was probably never greater earnestness and devotion on the part of the members and friends than during the period Dr. Weir was pastor. Due to the war there was a great influx of service men, working people, and families, and the church grew. All departments were reorganized; and Dr. Weir proved no effort was too great if it helped make his work more effective. The acquisition of the large house across the street (the present Manse) was his most notable achievement for the church.

A Christian Endeavor Society was organized at the home of Miss Olga Kent on February 25, 1915, and this organization was active for many many years. Plymouth Neighbors was another active group for many years. All adults of the church attended its affairs - whether they were "rainbow teas", reading plays, or putting on pageants. The Yonarco Club was organized in 1930, with Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fitch Smith as its leaders. The Pilgrim Fellowship was organized in 1937 with Leona Peacock Cayton as its first president. In 1948 the Plymouth Laymen's Fellowship was organized with Mr. Charles Nelson as the first president. In 1949 the Triune Club was formed for young adults between ages 20-30 with Mr. R. Grady Barrs as president.

The history of the Woman's Society is a joy to read. Its work has been the most gratifying story of all the great work that the women of Plymouth have done in a charitable, social and financial way for the good of the church. It has been the one organization that allowed no interruption of its splendid activities, regardless of conditions. The fact, for instance, that it lost its funds totaling \$400 in a bank failure in 1930, did not hinder this organization when it was asked to do the needed things - whether it was presenting a flag to the Boy Scouts, filling baskets for the needy, or raising money to repair a leaky roof. It has come a long way since the days of Mrs. Eva Bolton when she came to "Ladies Aid" in a buggy pulled by her horse, Johnny Booker.

Rev. David Justin Davis followed Dr. Weir, coming to Plymouth on March 15, 1947. No change of ministers had ever happened so naturally. Mr. Davis followed no former pattern, but in his own quiet way went about his work in an efficient and alert manner, but with warmth and friendliness. Under his excellent guidance the interest and devotion of the entire membership continued to expand.

The most outstanding event of his first year was the 50th Anniversary celebration of Plymouth Church. This event received wide publicity and was attended by hundreds of members and friends of the church, together with early pioneers and builders of Coconut Grove. Mrs. Trapp, the only living charter member, was guest of honor. That occasion will long be remembered in the hearts and minds of everyone who attended.

As Rev. Davis' fame as a friend and preacher spread the attendance at church increased. The total attendance for 1947 was 8,417; in 1948 it was 10,227 and in 1949 it was 12,926. In 1947 he secured 44 new members; during 1948 there were 59, and in 1949 were added 67 members. It was necessary to inaugurate two identical services each Sunday during the winter months to accommodate the crowds.

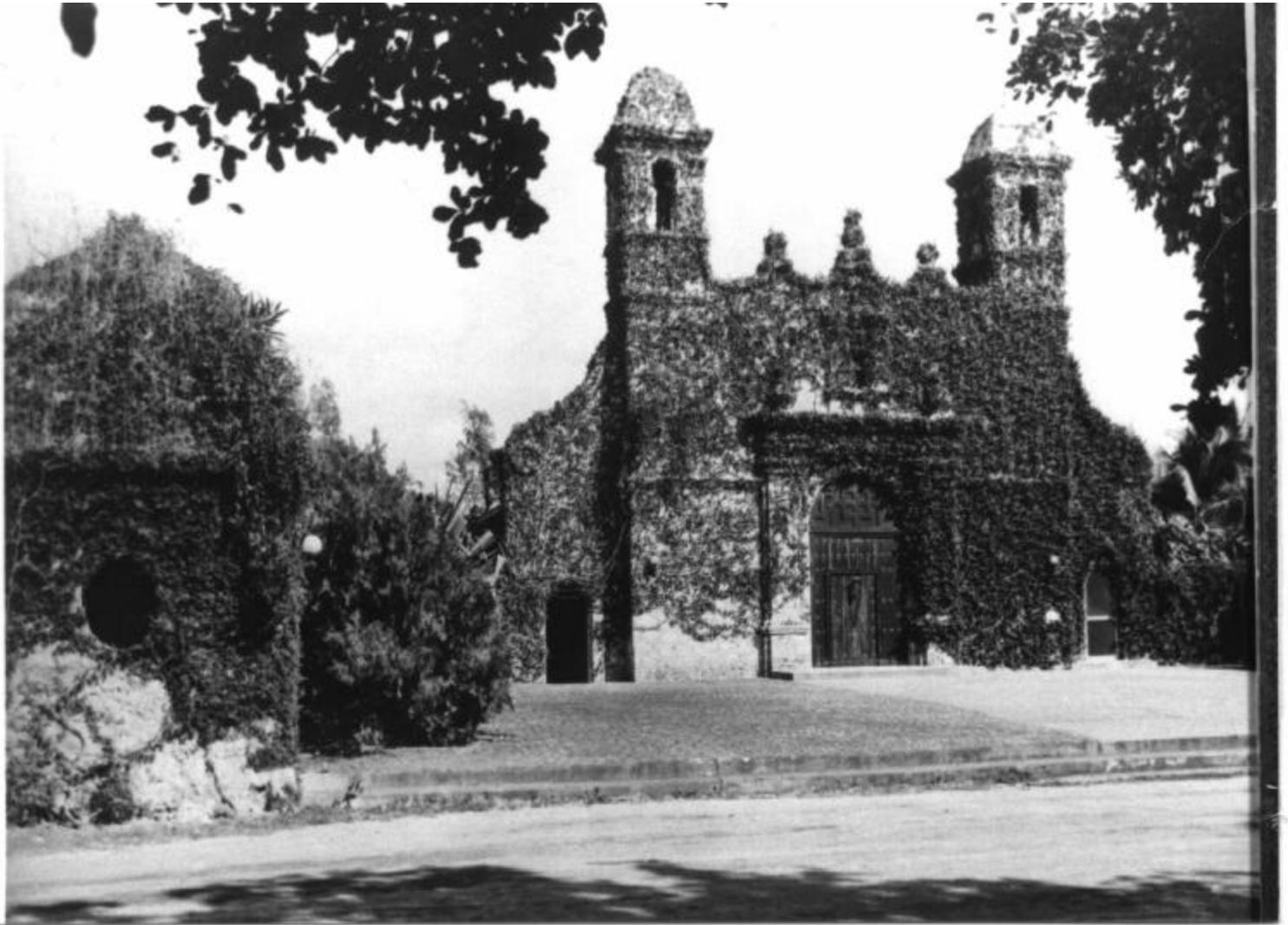
The need for a social hall and addition to the church, plus Sunday School facilities, became very urgent. With an enrollment of 110 pupils, 11 teachers, a pianist, a secretary-treasurer, and a superintendent, it became apparent Plymouth Hall would have to be remodeled. Greatly needed alterations are now being made, and a complete plan for the future development of the church buildings and grounds will be presented to the entire church membership at an early date.

DA 0390

Page 5

Plymouth Church is looking forward to a period of even greater achievement in the coming years. The dream of four people in 1897 has developed into "A spot of peace and beauty, where people can rest their spirits, and can find some refreshment of mind and soul in the physical surroundings and in the ministry of music and preaching."

Plymouth Church still has a great work to do and will do it.





PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Miami's most historic church, in lovely Coconut
Grove. Founded in 1897; built of native coral
rock. Famous as "The Church in the Garden".

8DA390

CURTEICHCOLOR® 3-D NATURAL COLOR REPRODUCTION (REG. U. S. A. PAT. OFF.)

P



PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Miami's most historic church, in lovely Coconut Grove. Founded in 1897; built of native coral rock. Famous as "The Church in the Garden".

3429 Devon Rd.

Miami, Fla.

8p A390



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

1. NAME

COMMON

AND/OR HISTORIC

NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

Plymouth Congregational Church

2. LOCATION

STATE

Florida

COUNTY

Dade

TOWN

Coconut Grove

STREET AND NUMBER

3429 Devon Road

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

DATE

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Mary K. Evans

March, 1972

Div. of Archives, History
and Records Management

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

West elevation.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Plymouth Congregational	Church	
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Florida	Dade	Coconut Grove
STREET AND NUMBER		
3429 Devon Road		
3. PHOTO REFERENCE		
PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Mary K. Evans	March, 1972	Div. of Archives, History and Records Management
4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		

Main facade; southwest elevation