**NOTES OF LESLIE PIERPONT REGARDING HISTORY RELATING TO LAMY, NEW MEXICO**

Transcribed and Edited by Connie Doughman

*In preparation for filing the nomination to the New Mexico Historic Division for designation of Our Lady of Light Mission Chapel building as an historic property Leslie and I wrote responses to the questions contained in the nomination. The responses are a combination of our findings but were compiled by Leslie and written mostly by her. I found her handwritten notes in her OLOLHF files after she died in June, 2007. In 2010 the Board of OLOLHF turned over what Leslie and I and also Dominique Revelle had prepared to a grant writer who was paid to complete the almost finished nomination. It was approved in 2010.*

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**Handwritten notes (three pages) on stenographers note paper.**

1969 Robert O Anderson bought 37 acres of downtown Lamy.

1889 New Mexican, T B Mills “One church, Two Hotels.

Fire – June 6, 1907 and March 24, 1909.

* Church, school, store, depot and grocery and several homes rebuilt but was never what it was before.

*The Lamy, New Mexico Story* – F. Stanley – 1966.

* Final work being completed the building (OLOL? CD) in the early 1920s

*Lamy, the Town a Railroad Built* – 1972 – Esperanza Pub., Santa Fe, NM.

Silver painted bell

Richard Chang – 5/24/1998 – The New Mexican – *Restoration Means Lamy Church Will See the Light of a New Day.*

1983 – Quilt (made by Lamy residents to raffle at Kite Festival – won by Carmen McGinnis mainly because Prudy Denton bought so many tickets so she could make sure Carmen got it. CD)

5/25/1994 – Chapman quit claim and deconsecrated.

June 8, 1988 – Reporter commentary.

1820 – Rancho de Nuestra Senora de la Luz land grant – community grant.

1879-80 – Railroad reached Rancho de Nuestra Senora de la Luz referred to as Bishop’s former property in Horgan’s *Lamy of Santa Fe*.

*Place Names Book* – Lamy settled by people who used to live in Canoncito or Hornos about 4 miles away. Archbishop Lamy took land claim in trust for Roman Catholic church on September 29, 1857 (16,546.85 acres).

1926 – Date of construction according to Carmen. Historic Building Inventory Form records this date.

1929 – Date of construction according to Archdiocese – of Santa Fe as relayed in a letter from Marina Ochoa in 1987.

1884 – Attended by Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe (SF) (see History section CD)

1886 – All without church (see History section CD)

1887 – 1890 – No reference to w/o church or chapel.

1891 OLOL Chapel, Lamy Junction.

*Windmills and ?* – (Article or book about history of area)

**Handwritten notes (eleven pages) on 8 ½” x 11” typing paper.**

1924 – According to Tony Sanchez in 1998, there was a flash flood in Lamy in July or August of 1924 that caused a freight train derailment. He said the flooding forced residents from their homes to the hills above town overnight.

1 History 12 (I believe this number referred to the numbered section of the application)

The land surrounding Lamy holds reminders of the many people and animals that came before us. Fossils from marine creatures like ammonites, brachiopods and crinoids can be found throughout the canyons and hills, recalling Lamy’s underwater days. Dinosaur bones have been found and donated to the Natural History Museum in Albuquerque. Ancient Native American communities, some dating back more than 800 years were located in the Lamy valley near the Galisteo Creek.

The Galisteo creek bed provided part of the main Indian route between Zuni and Pecos. Later in 1540, Coronado took the same route to Pecos. Comanche Indians came through here to raid and trade in central New Mexico. Archbishop Lamy who had a retreat in Lamy described one of those raids in a letter (August 1, 1855). “This year the last of the month of June, they [illegible] some property which belongs to the church 15 miles [“cing lieves”] from Santa Fe. They killed a shepherd, took his young brother prisoner, and stole a number of valuable animals.”

This same route through Lamy was also taken by Confederate soldiers in 1863, on their way to Glorieta after they captured Santa Fe. The battle at Glorieta was the largest battle of the Civil War fought in the Southwest and has been called the “Gettysburg of the West.”

~~[Between 1879 and 1880 the AT&SF Railroad built a rail line along the same route, the city of Santa Fe built its own 18 mile spur line to connect to the main line. Lamy began to prosper.]~~

In 1889 Lamy was described by T B Mills, a US Treasury expert, as having a population of 100, with stone quarries, stockyards, charcoal ovens, fields for farming and grazing, 2 hotels and 1 church. According to M. Wallis, the charcoal ovens eventually employed 30-40 families.

2 History

Between 1879 and 1880 the AT&SF Railroad build a spur line along the same route, by passing the city of Santa Fe for a shorter gentler route through Apache Canyon to the Rio Grande. In response the city of Santa Fe built its own 18 mile spur line to the main track. At the junction of the spur line and the main line grew the small town of Galisteo Junction, renamed Lamy in 1880 in honor of Archbishop Lamy of Santa Fe.

Early Lamy had a reputation as one of the wildest towns along the AT&SF line. Periodically, Fred Harvey would travel to Lamy to rid the town and his hotel there of gamblers, con men and outlaws. By 1900 Lamy had settled down to a prosperous community of over 500 citizens. The town was strongly impacted by several large town fires and floods in the Galisteo Creek between about 1880 and 1925. There was a major flood in 1877 which changed the course of the creek, then a fire March 23, 1890 which destroyed the depot. In 1907 (6/6) and 1909 (3/24) there were two more large fires. The Santa Fe New Mexican described an orange glow in the sky visible in Santa Fe from the 1909 fire. According to F. Stanley (*The Lamy, New Mexico Story*, 1966), the church, school, store, depot and several homes were rebuilt, but the town was never what it was before. There was another flood in Lamy in 1924. It caused a train derailment and long-time resident Tony Sanchez recalled the whole town fleeing their homes to spend the night up on the hills around town, safe from the flood waters.

The decline in the population of Lamy began in the 1930s when more powerful diesel locomotives replaced steam engines. By 1940 the population fell to 195 and by 2000 it was recorded as 137.

3 History

#1 According to an article in the Santa Fe New Mexican (5/6/1971) several thousand people lived in the area just north of Lamy village from 1100 or 1200 AD until about 1300.

#2 In the early 1800s the area around Lamy was an enormous ranch (65,546) known as El Canon. It belonged to Carlos de Herrara “lost 500 sheep which he took on shares from the Confraternity of Our Lady of Light in the year 1818 and paid for them by will …” By 1856 the property was known as El Rancho de Nuestra Senora de la Luz land grant and Archbishop Lamy’s retreat had welcomed many weary travelers from the East. On September 29, 1857 the Archbishop took the land claim in trust for the Roman Catholic Church. Over the years to come the sale of much of the land helped pay for the construction of Saint Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe, just as Lamy’s mountain, Cerro Colorado, was the source of much of the stone for the cathedral’s construction.

#4 According to records at the Archdiocese in Santa Fe, parishioners in Lamy were originally attended to by N S de Guadalupe Church Parish in Santa Fe. From 1884 to 1886, the records specify attended without a church. From 1887-1890, the records do not specify whether or not there was a church or chapel, then in 1891, the first reference to OLOL Chapel at Lamy Junction appears. There is a stone from an earlier building carved with the inscription NS de la Luz 1900, perhaps the date of completion. After the fires in 1907 and 1909 and the flood of 1924, the present church building was completed – “final work being completed on the building in the early 1920s” according to M. Wallis in *Lamy, the Town a Railroad Built*. According to the Historic Building Inventory form – Mission Church Survey on the building

4 History

dated 7/18/1986, the date of construction was 1926, and a letter from the Archdiocese (9/21/1987) states that the building was built in 1929 according to the files in the archives of the Archdiocese.

The present church, Our Lady of Light Chapel, sits just at the edge of the traditional community, with Cerro Colorado across the Galisteo Creek/River to the south. Our Lady of Light Chapel was built by members of the parish, using stone from the Cerro Colorado quarries. Mayordomos were elected or appointed to collect for feast day, clean the church, prepare the altar for Mass, light the wood stoves in winter, and to collect diezimos and primicias. During feast day festivities (date?), vespers and high mass were sung, and all the parishioners were invited to the home of the mayordomo to share a meal prepared with the contributions that had been collected. Lamy’s last and long-time postmistress, Carmen McGinnis, remembers when OLOL mission church used to be open every Sunday for mass. Father Otto Kirsche gave the sermon, and residents came in from the hills and valley and celebrated together. “I used to see everyone there“, said McGinnis. “It was so pretty inside, it’s a beautiful place to worship.” Carmen was baptized at the church in 1926, she married there, and funeral masses for both her parents were held there. Her father, Eusebio Muller, used to take care of the church and maintain the surrounding premises. Many others have strong connections to the church as well, and often during the restoration volunteer days people have shared their memories of serving as altar boys of weddings, first communions, and funerals. The sound of the church bell rang out in many memories, calling the people to church and alerting them in case of fire and other town emergencies.

As diesel engines replaced steam engines, people moved away from Lamy and the number of parishioners dwindled. By the 1970s services in the chapel

5 History

Were infrequent and by the 1980s, they had decreased to 1 or 2 a year. The community used the building for meetings during those years, but in \_\_\_\_ the building was closed to visitors due to roof safety concerns, although the Lamy community continued to raise money for church maintenance with its annual Kite Festival. In 1992, the Theron T Chapman Trust purchased a large amount of land in Lamy center from Tom Denton, including the Legal Tender Restaurant and the land on which the church stands. In 1993 the Chapman Trust brought a quiet title suit against the Archdiocese and many Lamy residents to gain title to lands in question. The Trust prevailed in court and in November 1996 the church was put up for sale. This intended sale was an enormous surprise to the Lamy community as well as to the Archdiocese whose intention was that the church building be used for and by the community. The community mobilized and with help from the Archdiocese, Cornerstones Community Partnerships, and the law firm Potter, Mills, and Bateman were able to reach an agreement with the Theron T Chapman Trust and Santa FE Southern Land Holdings Ltd. Company in March 1997. The Lamy community committed to form a 501 3c organization (Our Lady of Light Historic Foundation, Inc.) to hold title to the building, and to restore and maintain it for the benefit of the citizens of Lamy. They also agreed to put $75,000 worth of materials and labor by July 1, 2000. In late June 2000 this goal was met, and the restoration work continues to the present day. In addition to volunteering to work on the building, the community has

No page number History

Also enjoyed 2 concerts in the building in the past several years and look forward to more such events.

#7 History

Future research question – During our restoration work we found a brass plaque attached to a wood base (possibly horizontal piece to a cross) with the inscription:

En Memoria de Jose D Sena

E Isabel G de Baca

Y Jose Clothier y Juanita Beaubien

Who were these people and what was their relationship to the Our Lady of Light Church and the Lamy community?

*In 2015 I compiled research information I discovered into a document called The Plaque which I have forwarded to the History Committee which addressed who each of the people named on the plaque are. Still the mystery remains as to their connection to Lamy. CD*

No number (Description of building and setting – CD)

Site – on a small hill on west side; main road (CR 33/Old Lamy Trail) into Lamy at the south end of the village; oriented SE – NW; entrance faces Cerro Colorado, site of traditional Good Friday Climb.

Apse – trapezoidal; 43’ D; (Sanctuary) – 24’ narrowing to 14’ at back; step up; gate and railing

Sacristy – 16’ x 12’

Nave – c. 70’ L x 34’ W – high - ? c. 20’; walls plastered; pressed tim ceiling; floor wood; dougle swinging wooden doors with spindles and glass ? above; choir loft extends along back wall about 9’ H x 22’ L – extends 8’ out from wall and supported by 4 posts.

Vestibule – 7’ D x 22’ W; arched double doors; concrete steps.

Bell Tower – 8’ x 8’ and ? 40’ H; bell removed by Archdiocese when church deconsecrated

The boundary of the nomination contains the church building and contiguous land.

No Number

these double doors, in the west wall (vestibule CD), is a single door to the wooden stairs leading up to the bell tower and down to the crawl space.

#9 Continuation sheets Interior

Through arched wooden double doors one enters a narrow vestibule with a second set of double doors, these with glass lights at eye level, leading to the nave. The nave is approximately 70 feet long, 34 feet wide and 20 feet high. The walls are plastered, the ceiling is pressed tin panels in a stylized floral pattern, and the floor is wood. The choir loft balcony is located across the back wall of the nave, surrounded by a wood railing, extending out from the wall about 8 feet and measuring 22 feet long. The balcony is supported by 4 squared posts about 9 feet above the floor, and is reached by a wooden staircase rising along the west wall of the building. At the front of the nave is a wooden railing and gate with 2 steps leading to the raised sanctuary. The sanctuary is trapezoidal, measuring 24 feet wide at the front and narrowing to 14 feet wide at the back. It is about 13 feet deep with wood floor and pressed tin ceiling. There is a door to the sacristy to the right of the sanctuary. The sacristy is about 16 x 12 and has 2 windows and a door to the exterior. There are also some built in storage cupboards in the sacristy and it too has a pressed tin ceiling.

No Number (Bibliography CD) 13

Stanley, F; The Lamy, New Mexico Story; Pep TX; np; 1966

Wallis, Michael; Lamy: The Town the Railroad Built;p.4, col 3 Santa Fe; Esperanza Publications; 1972

Destroyed by Fire … Lamy Nearly Wiped Out; Daily New Mexican; Dec 27, 1898; p. 4, col. 3

New Mexican Article 5/6/71 – population 1100-1300 AD

Sebastian, Niki; Pardner Don’t Tangle with Lamy; SF Reporter; 6/8/1968; pg 6 (I don’t think the Reporter had been founded by then – Niki lived in Lamy in the 70s so I bet it is 1978. CD)

Mills, T B; New Mexico; np; 1889

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; Windmills and Dreams: A History of the Eldorado Community and Neighboring Areas; ?; 1997

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 Providence Guarded Bishop Lamy’s Caravan; 9/30/1955 NM Register

 Indians Added Hardship to Caravan; 10/11/1955 NM Register

 Fr. Machebouf Escorted Group; 10/28/1955 NM Register

Indian Raids Harassed Travelers’ Haven, Aroused Indignation of Archbishop Lamy; 12/9/1955 NM Register

New Mexico Place Names