**1. NAME**

**COMMON:**
Socorro Mission

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**
Mission Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion del Pueblo de Socorro

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Socorro

**STATE CODE COUNTY CODE:**
Texas 048 El Paso 141

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Private</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Public Acquisition:</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
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**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Industrial
- Military
- Religious
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:**
Diocese of El Paso, Catholic Church

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
1012 North Mesa

**CITY OR TOWN:**
El Paso

**STATE CODE:**
Texas 048

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**
El Paso County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**
El Paso

**STATE CODE:**
Texas 048

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**
Texas State Historical Survey

**DATE OF SURVEY:** 1964

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**
Texas State Historical Survey Committee

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
108 W. 15th Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Austin

**STATE CODE:**
Texas 048

(See continuation sheet #1)
The present mission church at Socorro was built after the 1829 flood which changed the course of the Rio Grande and destroyed the mission and the pueblo (this date given in Binion, An Introduction to El Paso Landmarks). The present church was probably constructed during the next decade. The Historic American Buildings Survey records the date 1840 in their measured drawings done in 1936.

The structure, which is of adobe covered with whitewashed adobe plaster, is nearly H-shaped in plan, and is 117 feet long, 72 feet wide on the entrance (south) facade, and 67 feet wide at the transept. The foyer is flanked by the baptistry on the east and a mortuary chapel on the west. These three elements combine to make up the long, flat south facade of the church.

The south facade has a central doorway with statuary niches flanking the entranceway and appearing on center above it. A stepped parapet surmounts the front wall and supports an espadana or wall belfry. Similar stepped parapets terminate the east and west end of this facade. The effect of these stepped elements capping the wall is similar to abstract Indian geometric designs used to decorate domestic articles.

There is a choir balcony above the foyer containing a finely carved turned balustrade. The finest feature of the mission church are the finely painted and decorated vigas or beams which support the ceiling. These beams, which measure roughly 8 by 10 inches, were salvaged from the eighteenth century Socorro mission and reused. Above the beams, the ceiling is made up of round saplings, 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 2 inches in diameter, laid in a herring bone pattern. The decorative pattern generally consists of three sticks stained black, then five white, then three black, etc. The beams themselves are decorated in geometric patterns with red, black and yellow staining.

The transept or crucero is 60 feet wide on the interior and the width of the east and west transepts are 15 feet, 9 inches, and 15 feet, 11 inches respectively. With the exception of the vigas, little of the original interior woodwork remains. The segmental arch which separates the sanctuary from the nave is also not contemporaneous with the circa 1840 structure.

The entrances into the transept and the large transept windows have unusual architectural details and frames with flanking pilasters and flared decorative lintels which also incorporate the semi-circular head of the apertures. These (continued)
1. (contd.)

Historic American Buildings Survey
1936 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington DC 008
decorative frames on the two doors and two windows were originally of whitewashed adobe. These have in recent years been replaced with concrete frames which more or less follow the same design. Adjacent to the transept and flanking the sanctuary are the east and west sanctuaries. These chambers are differentiated from the principal spaces of the church by a considerable reduction in ceiling height. The baptistry and mortuary chapel, being subsidiary spaces, also have lower ceilings. The walls of the structure vary considerably in width. The wall between the foyer and baptistry is 5 feet, 6 inches, wide, and the wall on the east side of the sacristy is 2 feet, 10 inches, wide. Generally, however, the nave and transept walls are about 4 feet thick and are covered on the interior and exterior with adobe plaster, whitewashed.
Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion del Socorro was founded in the spring of 1682 as the third pueblo in the resettlement of the New Mexico Indians who fled with the Spanish during the Popé Uprising (Pueblo Revolt). The pueblo and mission at Socorro were founded to serve the displaced Piro, Tano and Jemez Indians of New Mexico. Architecturally, Socorro and Ysleta are displaced New Mexican missions, much the same as the Indian population which they served. The massing, materials and use of native decorative elements in these mission churches, particularly Socorro, show a strong kinship to the architectural traditions which evolved in the seventeenth century in Spanish New Mexico. The history of these missions was also, for a century and a half after their establishment, more closely related to New Mexico than Texas.

Franciscan missionaries established the Socorro pueblo and mission on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, seven and a half leagues south of Ysleta. Because of an uprising among the Indians in 1683, the original site was abandoned and a location one league from Ysleta was chosen. This closer site was selected to allow a degree of protection for the Spanish missionary in charge.

In 1760 Bishop Tamarón visited Socorro, as well as the other missions in the El Paso del Norte area, and left the following account: "From Isleta to Socorro was about one league east. This mission and pueblo, like the others, was near the river and had its resident missionary. There were 46 Zuma families with 182 persons living in the pueblo. A small settlement called Tuburcio, made up entirely of Spaniards, formed part of the mission. There were 82 families with 424 persons in Tuburcio. The mission church was 36 varas long (one vara = 33.33 inches) and seven wide, with a transept 14 3/4 varas from end to end" (Our Catholic Heritage, p.235).

According to Bishop Tamarón's description, the original church at Socorro was somewhat larger than the mission at Ysleta, the nave was about 5 to 6 feet wider, and the transept (see continuation sheet #3)
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


(See continuation sheet #4)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
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<td>SE</td>
<td>31° 39' 25&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>31° 39' 25&quot;</td>
<td>106° 18' 06&quot;</td>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 11 acres

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Wayne Bell, Project Director
Gary Hume, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: Texas State Historical Survey Committee

DATE: 12-13-71

STREET AND NUMBER: 108 W. 15th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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:

National □ State □ Local □

Name

Title State Liaison Officer

Date December 16, 1971

Chieft of the National Register

ATTEST:

Date MAR 16 1972

Keeper of the National Register

Date MAR 9 1972
8. (contd.)

was more than 15 feet wider than at Ysleta. This church was
destroyed by flood in the first decades of the nineteenth
century. According to local tradition, the mission, which was
rebuilt about ¹₂ mile from the flooded site, on the location of
a legendary miracle, was similar to the destroyed structure and
the new church reused some of the old materials. The third
site of Socorro mission occupies the location where a miracle
concerning the transport of a Spanish statue of Saint Michael
is reported to have occurred.

"According to the legend, Indians were taking the statue to
a mission in New Mexico. But the heavy wheels of the cart
creaked to a halt in the sandy soil of the El Paso lower Valley...
the phenomenon was finally explained as a sign from heaven that
the statue of Saint Michael should remain where it was, and a
small chapel was built to protect it." (Binion, An Introduction
to El Paso.). This same statue of Saint Michael is on the altar
in the west transept.

The present church was constructed circa 1840 and, excluding
the replacement of windows, doors and some interior decoration,
the fabric of the structure is basically unchanged. The Socorro
Mission has served the surrounding community since its establish-
ment in 1682 and continues to be an active religious institution.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark - 1964.
9. (Contd.)

ReceiIT Entry
Annual Edition Entry
REGISTRY ENTRY 5-2-72
Annual Edition Entry
MAR 16 1972 Card MAR 16 1972

WARKING NUMBER 12/28/71.3

Richard C. White
March 16, 1972

Loc

El Paso County, Texas
Cast facade, showing low-ceiling baptistry and east transept

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
1. NAME

**COMMON:** Socorro Mission  
**AND/OR HISTORIC:** Mission Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion del Pueblo de Socorro

2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery  
**CITY OR TOWN:** Socorro  
**STATE:** Texas  
**CODE:** 048  
**COUNTY:** El Paso  
**CODE:** 141

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Texas State Historical Survey Committee  
**DATE OF PHOTO:** November, 1970

4. IDENTIFICATION

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:**

East facade, showing low-ceiling baptistry and east transept.
March 16, 1972

Title: Senora Mission

Loc: El Paso County, Texas

Interior view looking toward main entrance

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
### 1. Name

**Common:** Socorro Mission  
**And/or Historic:** Mission Nuestra Señora de la Concepción del Pueblo de Socorro

### 2. Location

**Street and Number:** Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery  
**City or Town:** Socorro

**State:** Texas  
**Code:** 048  
**County:** El Paso  
**Code:** 141

### 3. Photo Reference

**Photo Credit:** Historic American Buildings Survey  
**Date of Photo:** 1936

**Negative Filed At:** Texas State Historical Survey Committee  
**108 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78711**

### 4. Identification

Describe view, direction, etc.

Interior view, looking toward main entrance
March 16, 1972

Title: Soroco Mission

Loc. El Paso County, CO, South facade showing main facade with espada.
# National Register of Historic Places

## Property Photograph Form

**Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph**

### 1. NAME

**COMMON:** Socorro Mission

**AND/OR HISTORIC:** Mission Nuestra Señora de la Concepción del Pueblo de Socorro

### 2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery

**CITY OR TOWN:** Socorro

**STATE:** Texas

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
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<td>El Paso</td>
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### 3. PHOTO REFERENCE

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Texas State Historical Survey Committee

**DATE OF PHOTO:** November, 1970

**NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Texas State Historical Survey Committee

108 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78711

### 4. IDENTIFICATION

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:**

South facade showing main facade with espadana
Title: Lecano Mission
Loc.: El paso County, Israel
Entire view, looking toward main altar
1. NAME
COMMON: Socorro Mission
AND/OR HISTORIC: Mission Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion del Pueblo de Socorro

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery
CITY OR TOWN: Socorro
STATE: Texas
CODE 048
COUNTY: El Paso
CODE 141

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE OF PHOTO: 1936
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Texas State Historical Survey Committee
108 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78711

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIPTIVE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Interior view, looking toward main altar
March 16, 1972
San Porno Mission

El Paso County, Texas
Detail of Architectural Frame of Transcept doorway

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
1. NAME

COMMON: Socorro Mission
AND/OR HISTORIC: Mission Nuestra Señora de la Concepción del Pueblo de Socorro

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery
CITY OR TOWN: Socorro
STATE: Texas

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Texas State Historical Survey Committee
DATE OF PHOTO: November, 1970
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Texas State Historical Survey Committee

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: Detail of architectural frame of transept doorway
**Texas**

**El Paso**

**Socorro Mission**

**Socorro**, Texas 048

**Socorro Mission**

**Mission Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion del Pueblo de Socorro**

**Moon Road and FM 258, north of cemetery**

**United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey**

**1:24000**

**1955 (revised 1967)**

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.
## ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

### STATE

<table>
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<td>Socorro Mission</td>
<td>Socorro</td>
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<td>First National Bank of San Antonio</td>
<td>San Antonio Bexar County</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Also Notified

- Hon. John G. Tower
- Hon. Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr.
- Hon. Richard C. White
- Hon. Henry B. Gonzales

### Director, Southwest Region

HR  NRowland:mm  3/13/72

### State Liaison Officer

State Liaison Officer
Mr. Trustt Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Survey Committee
Post Office Box 12276
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711