

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7 (and 8)

Page 15

NAME: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

LOCATION: ~~FM Road~~ 1383
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas

OWNER: Most Rev. Charles V. Grahmann, D. D.
Catholic Diocese of Victoria, Texas
P. O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903

ARCHITECT: John F. Bujnoch BUILDER: John F. Bujnoch

INTERIOR CRAFTSMAN: Unknown

SPECIFIC DATES: 1917 (construction)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: Acreage of nominated property: less than one acre
UTM reference: 14/707020/3296900

Verbal boundary description: Beginning northwest of the church, at the intersection of the barbed wire fence with the road, proceed south along the road's edge to its intersection with the graveled parking area (approximately 174'), thence 90' east, along the edge of the parking area and in a direct line beyond, to a point along a line parallel with and 20' east of the church's easternmost wall, thence north along that line to its intersection with the barbed wire fence, thence west along the fence line back to the starting point (approximately 250').

DESCRIPTION:

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, a 1918 statement in wood of the Gothic Revival style in rural Fayette county, stands out as the community's most significant building. The steeply gabled, rectangular form includes a polygonal apse projecting from its east end, and a soaring spire rising from a tall bell tower marking the central entrance at the west end. Prominent corner buttresses project from the front corners with lesser buttresses marking the remaining facades. Gabled and buttressed pavilions emphasize the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7 (and 8)

Page 16

side entrances. The walls are pierced with lancet windows occurring both singly and in pairs. The Gothic theme is carried further by steeply pitched ventilation dormers with louvered trefoil openings and ridge ornaments. Corner buttresses adorn the bell tower, the upper section of which is punctuated with louvered lancet openings and a lancet jigsaw detail applied in a manner that emulates corbeling. The octagonal spire rises dramatically from a profusion of pinnacles and dormers incorporating trefoil motifs and cross-and-trefoil ornaments. Today the church is covered with asbestos siding. Yet the upper level of the bell tower reveals the original wood siding which is assumed to be intact under the asbestos.

While the exterior of St. John's is not unusual among the many Gothic Revival churches across the state, its distinct interior is outstanding for several reasons. Structurally the ceiling is composed of an unusual combination consisting of a high-pointed vault springing from two lesser, coved vaults. Aside from the unique structure of the ceiling, the church contains decorative painting which is more purely ornamental than any of the other churches in the thematic group. It incorporates stenciling, infill, freehand, and marbling techniques. The painting is executed with a simple color palette, and is dominated by one hue, a warm pink, which is offset by woodwork painted white. Rectangular panels defined with simple wooden dividers emphasize the ceiling's structural form, and the walls are divided into distinct horizontal sections. The rectangular panels of the ceiling are further defined by floral and foliate frameworks skillfully executed in varying shades of pink and bluegreen. Simple stenciled borders fill in the structural beams of the ceiling. The upper wall is decorated with a large-scale motif that includes circular and interwoven leaf elements set against a diagonal lattice. Garlands hang below this. Stylized floral motifs are stencilled onto the wall in two distinct bands at dado heights. As is typical, the apse spandrel and the walls of the side altar bear the religious motifs. Two small cherubs flank a chalice as the focal point of the spandrel, with palm fronds and blossoms (including lilies) painted around them. Palm fronds also occur on the walls above the side altars. The pilasters along the walls are painted to produce the appearance of marble.

SIGNIFICANCE:

A good example of early 20th-century Carpenter Gothic architecture, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church is an impressive visual monument to the Czech pioneers who settled in the area around Ammansville. The third church to occupy the site, it bespeaks the dedicated determination of these European immigrants. The handsome building is further distinguished with decorative interior painting, designed and executed by highly skilled artisans.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7 (and 8)

Page 17

Andrew Ammann brought his family to the area in 1879, and was soon followed by other Czech settlers. The community, named Ammansville in his honor, was soon established as an agricultural center for the surrounding farmlands. These early settlers were primarily Catholic, and first attended mass at nearby Hostyn, and later at a local residence, before erecting their own church. A small, frame edifice was completed and dedicated in 1890 on land donated by three parishioners, but was destroyed by a hurricane in 1909. The congregation decided to reconstruct, and hired the Matuscik Brothers as architect and builder. This larger, more elaborate frame church, designed in the Gothic Revival style, was dedicated in November of 1910, only to be consumed by fire in 1917. Undaunted, the congregation chose to build a third church and engaged John Bujnoch as architect and builder. The church was dedicated on December 22, 1919, and stands today as a charming example of Carpenter Gothic architecture. Though simply detailed, the church rises above the surrounding countryside, and is an impressive architectural landmark in this rural region.

Interior painting, primarily decorative in intent, adorns the walls and ceiling of the church. The intricacy of design, sophisticated use of color, and skilled craftsmanship, indicate the work of professional artists. Warm pink is the dominant hue, and is used as a base color covered over with designs applied in varying values of pink and blue-green. It is interesting to note that the motifs are chiefly ornamental in inspiration, drawing heavily on foliated and floral forms, with only occasional subtle ecclesiastical references occurring in the apse and in the areas of the side altars. Little is known of the history of the painting, although it is believed to have been executed soon after completion of the structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 2

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Churches with Decorative Interior Painting Thematic Resources
State Texas

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 1. Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 2. Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 3. Church of the Guardian Angel
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 4. Church of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 5. First Baptist Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 6. First United Methodist Church
Substantive Review
Keeper Beth Grosvenor 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 7. Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 8. Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 9. St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____
- 10. St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Entered in the National Register
Keeper Delores Byers 6/21/83
Attest _____

7/10/83
P. [unclear]
District 12/12/76

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church (Churches
with Decorative Interior Painting TR)
Fayette County
TEXAS

Working No. MAY 9 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 6/9/83 - 6/23/83

Action: ACCEPT 6/21/83

Entered in the RETURN

National Register REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition:		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting

Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas

Carol Kennedy

October, 1980

Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas

Exterior, Southwest oblique (camera facing
Northeast)

Photo #19 of 98



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, overall view toward altar

Photo #20 of 98



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of wall and ceiling above
side altar

Photo #21 of 98



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of upper wall and
ceiling

Photo #22 of 98



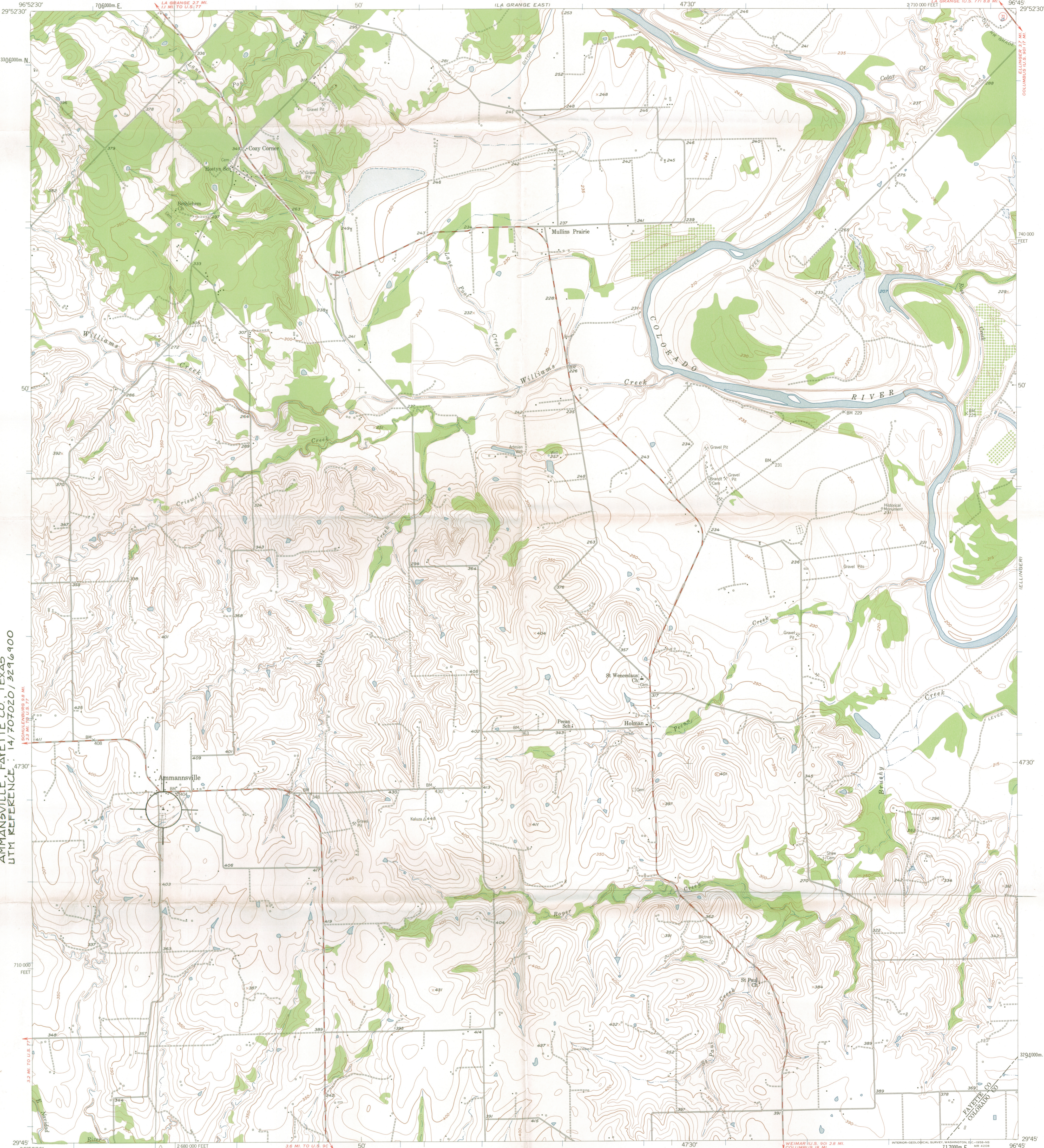
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of ceiling panels
over side aisles

Photo #23 of 98



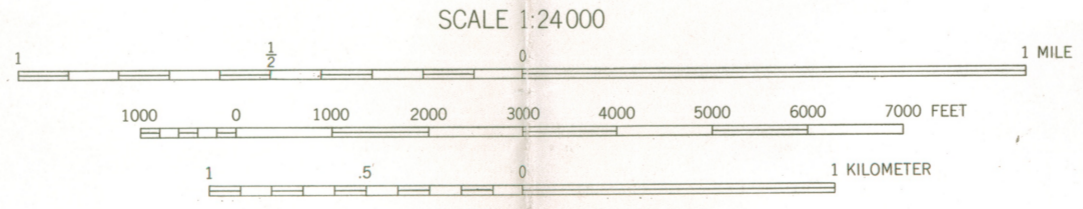
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Ammansville, Fayette County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of wall dado

Photo #24 of 98



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
F.M. HIGHWAY 1303
AMMANNSVILLE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14, 707020 / 3296100

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
and by plane-table surveys 1957. Aerial photographs taken 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum.
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
south central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
State Route	

AMMANNSVILLE, TEX.
N2945—W9645/7.5

1957
2996-331 12

JUL 27 1970

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 2, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D.C.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST