

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **11 SEP 1979**
DATE ENTERED **NOV 15 1979**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. Michael's Church Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same

LOCATION

LA 44

STREET & NUMBER

Highway 44 (River Road), 7 miles downriver from Sunshine Bridge

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Convent

VICINITY OF

8th - Gillis Long

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Louisiana

022

St. James

093

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

St. Michael's Church

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Convent

VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. James Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Convent

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

The St. Michael's Church Historic District consists of eight buildings (six of which are at least fifty years old) a cemetery, and the remains of an asphalt playground. The district is an irregular rectangle, set behind the Mississippi River levee. The boundaries encompass the eight buildings and other features, along with the open spaces which form their setting. The boundaries were drawn so as to exclude modern tract houses to the north and unassociated buildings to the south. The large open field to the east and the open land flanking the cemetery driveway, were included because they preserve the rural character of the district.

1) The Church (ca. 1875) The church is a cruciform basilica with a five-bay, aisled nave, and a massive altar set in a great niche whose back wall is cut through with a colonnade screen. The church is entered through a vestibule set in the base in a single central tower. In the ornate nave, multishaft columns rise to foliated capitals which support sets of Romanesque double arches. The exposed truss roof features King posts and foliated hanging pendants.

The building is constructed of brick laid up in common bond.

The exterior features the verticality, pinnacles, buttresses, and multiple arches of the Gothic style. Yet the numerous semicircular arches and blind arcading are Romanesque. Despite the mixture of styles, the blend is entirely harmonious and elegant.

At one time there was an octagonal spire; however, it was blown down in the 1965 hurricane.

2) The Rectory (ca. 1875) The five-bay, two and one-half story, central hall plan rectory has full galleries front and rear and common bond brick construction. The side balconies were added later, probably around the turn of the century. Although the building is essentially Greek Revival, most of the detailing reflects the Renaissance Revival taste. The only recent alteration has been the construction of a raised walkway which runs from the back gallery to the small school building to the rear.

3) Small School Building The small school building is apparently old but has been refurbished inside and re-sided on the outside. It has a gallery in the rear and old glass in the windows, which along with the structure, suggests a mid to late 19th century date for the building.

4) Large School Building (ca. 1900) The large school building has a "U" shaped plan with a courtyard in the rear. It is a frame, turn-of-the-century structure whose only distinguishing feature is its simple Doric portico.

5) The Cottages (Mid to late 19th century) Both cottages are small, frame Acadian style buildings with front galleries and pitched roofs. The one near the levee has been re-sided and is probably newer than the one in the rear, which is in almost original condition.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1833, ca. 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Michael's Church Historic District contains a number of examples of local building types which collectively have an impressive presence along the River Road. More important, however, are the buildings themselves as individual works of architecture.

The church is a large and handsome Victorian Church. It stands as a harmonious example of the grandiose blend of Romanesque and Gothic which typified the larger Roman Catholic churches in the later 19th century.

The rectory is a large and handsome example of a late Greek Revival residence, showing the Greek Revival just at the period when the first hesitant touches of the Renaissance Revival began to be applied. Finally, the Welham tomb, in the cemetery, is a fine example of a castiron tomb, an unusual type of tomb in Louisiana.

The first St. Michael's Church was built in 1809 about a mile from the present one. In the mid-1820's the church began to acquire the land which makes up the present district, and in 1827, the present cemetery was begun. In 1831, collection of funds to build a new church was started, and by 1833 the building which was later altered to produce the present church building was completed. The building cost \$19,445 and was built under the pastorate of Father Charles de la Croix, who directed the project. In the 1870's the church was enlarged and it basically attained its present appearance at this time. Two sacristies were added, along with the Lourdes Grotto to the rear of the church. In addition, a steeple was added, but it was blown down in 1965 by Hurricane Betsy.

The adjacent rectory was constructed in 1875. The cottage next to the church, which dates from the middle to late nineteenth century, was until 1975 the home of the nuns who taught at St. Joseph's and St. Michael's schools, both of which are also a part of the district. The small school building is the old St. Joseph's School for Negroes, which originally occupied a different site. The school began in 1867 and operated until the coming of integration to the parish in the late 1960's. The building, which dates from the middle to late nineteenth century, was moved to the church grounds in 1932 and continued to function as a Negro Catholic school. It may be the same building in which the school was inaugurated in 1867.

The large school building is the old St. Michael's School for white children, which operated from 1940 to about 1966. From 1966 to 1971 it was an integrated Catholic school. The cottage behind the church, which dates from the middle to later nineteenth century, is the old kitchen of St. Joseph's School.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Myrtle Ann Chauvin, secretary of St. Michael's Church, 20 June 1979.

Meiluta, Rev. George J., "St. Michael Parish Church History: 1722-1974,"
Typescript located in St. Michael's Church, Convent

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 23 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 7,0,9,8,6,0 3,3,2,2,0,6,0

B 1,5 7,1,0,0,2,0 3,3,2,1,8,9,0

C 1,5 7,0,9,5,4,0 3,3,2,1,5,9,0

D 1,5 7,0,9,5,2,0 3,3,2,1,8,2,0

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached dimensioned sketch map

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rev. Bernard Vogler

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

St. Michael's Church

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Convent

Louisiana 70723

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Bernard Vogler

TITLE State historic Preservation Officer

DATE 8/15/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol O'Shield

DATE 11-15-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Beth Guerson*

DATE 11/15/79

CLERK OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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St. Michael's Church Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

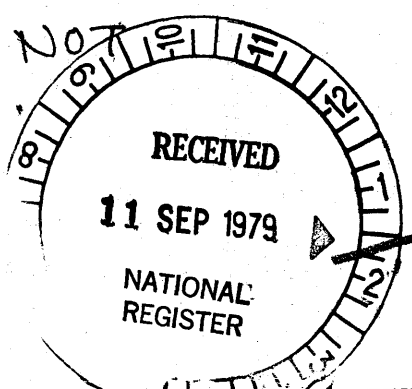
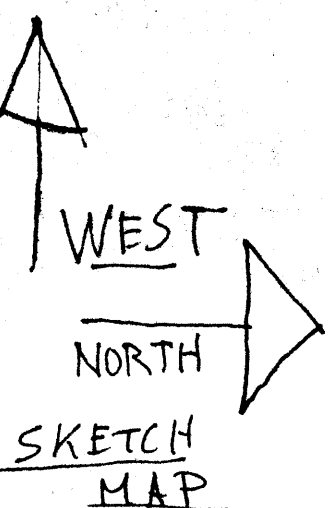
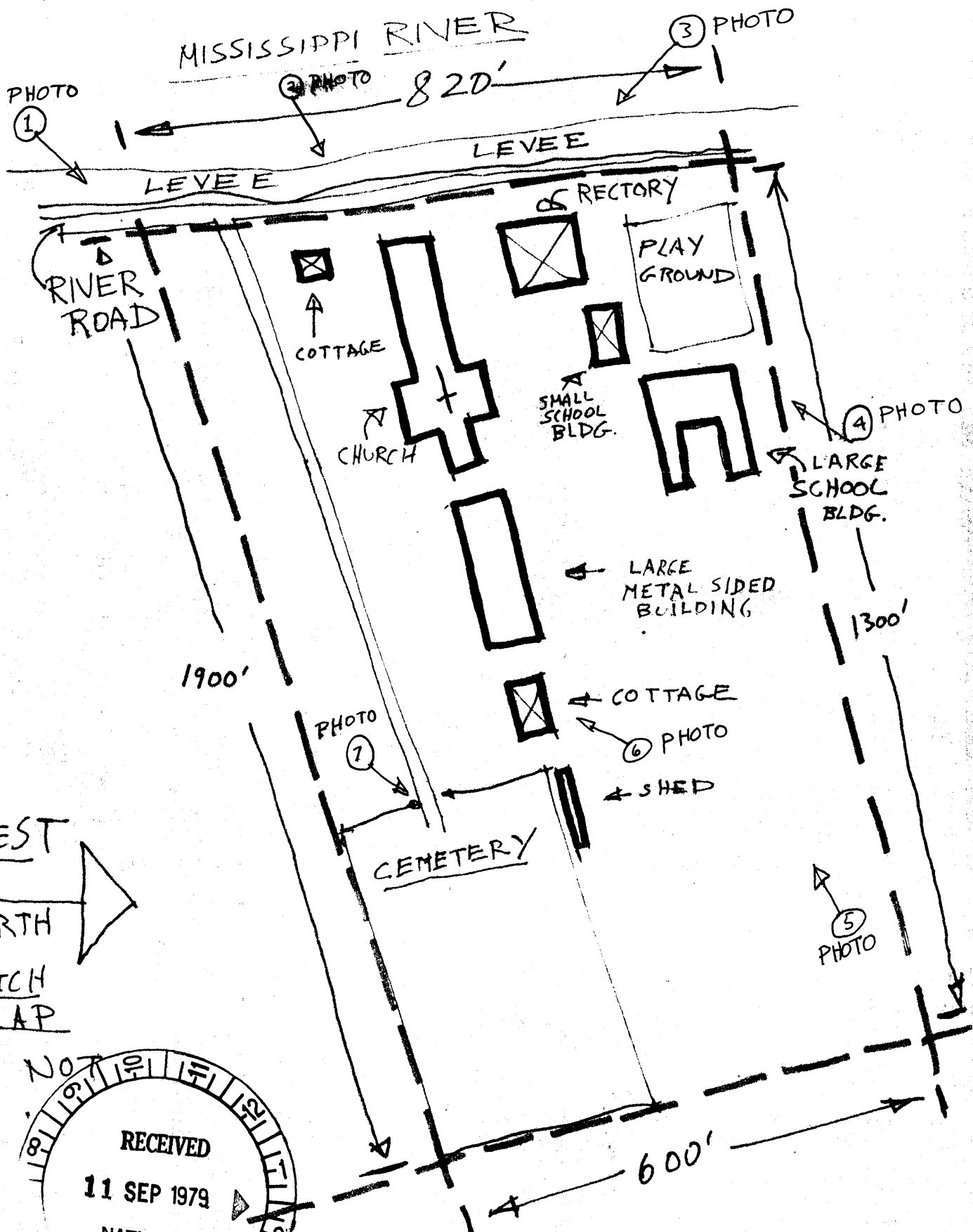
6) The Shed (early 20th century) The shed is a greatly enlarged lean-to type roof, frame building with clapboard siding.

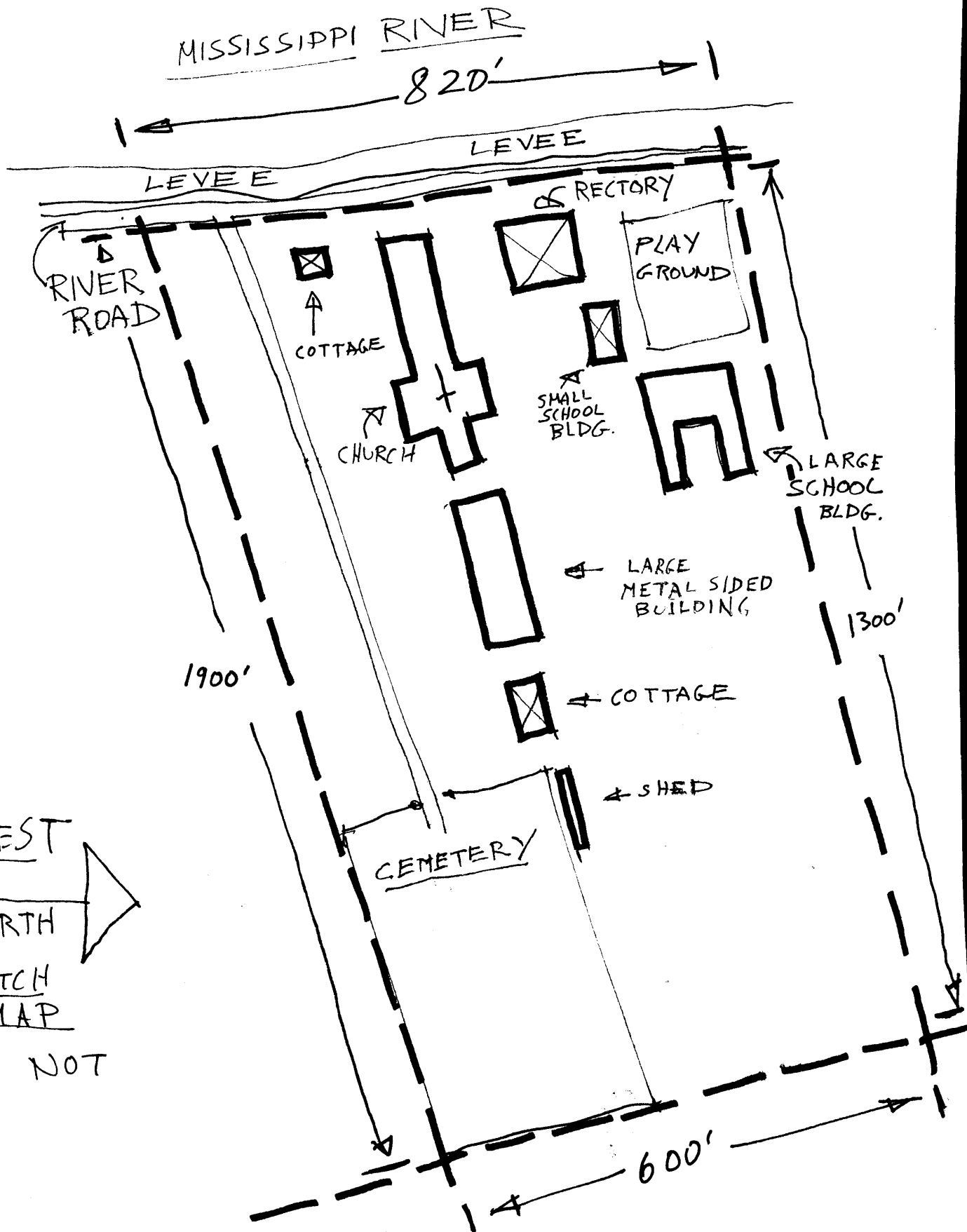
7) The Cemetery Consisting mainly of fairly ordinary above-ground tombs, the cemetery is noteworthy for three high style Renaissance Revival tombs near the entrance. The Welham tomb is particularly significant with its castiron vermiculated quoins and arches.

The large metal-sided school building (ca. 1950) is a major intrusion but there was no way to draw the boundaries so as to exclude it. The only positive aspect of the building is that it cannot be seen from the River Road which is the most architecturally significant view of the district.

ST. MICHAEL'S
CHURCH

PHOTO MAP





WEST

NORTH

SKETCH MAP

NOT