

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000843

Date Listed: 7/3/91

Stone Street Cemetery
Property Name

Mobile
County

ALABAMA
State

Historic Roman Catholic Properties in Mobile MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

GA
Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

7/16/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 7: The nomination was modified to clarify the fact that the dates for the Cruzat monument (1847) and of the Rapier Mausoleum (earliest 1837) represent the dates of death, rather than the dates for the erection of the monument.

Section No. 8: Criterion Consideration A (for religious properties) and Landscape Architecture (as an area of significance) were added. The period of significance was amended to end in 1928.

These changes were confirmed by phone with the Alabama SHPO (7/11/91).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

SEP 14 1990
SEP 20 1991

Ala. Historical REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stone Street Cemetery
other names/site number Old Catholic Cemetery

2. Location

street & number 1700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. NA not for publication
city, town Mobile NA vicinity
state Alabama code AL county Mobile code 097 zip code 36603

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> objects
			<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Roman Catholic Properties in Mobile, Alabama, 1848-1928
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 5-21-91
Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Patrick Andrews 7/13/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls NA

roof

other Stone/marble, granite

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Catholic Cemetery consists of two adjacent cemeteries, one historic and one non-historic, in Mobile's Toulminville community. The historic burial ground, commonly referred to as the Old Catholic Cemetery, consists of two sections. The oldest section is a circular cemetery while adjacent to this is a more typical grid pattern burial ground, with mostly late 19th century graves. To the east of these lies the New Catholic Cemetery, opened in 1948. Only Old Catholic Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Old Catholic Cemetery lies on the northeastern side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. It is bordered to the southeast by the Roger Williams Housing Project and Three Mile Creek, to the north by Cemetery Lane and to the east by the New Cemetery. Old Catholic Cemetery lies on land purchased in 1848 by Bishop Michael Portier and in 1866 by Bishop John Quinlan. The lands to the east were added in 1903, 1910 and 1921.

The circular plan is platted in three concentric rings (with parts of a fourth to the southwest and northwest) surrounding a square plot. Overall this plan is traversed by four lanes, dividing the whole into eight pie shaped pieces. The original entrance gates are oriented to this plan, and stand on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. They consist of four stone pylons with iron gates. They are no longer used for main access. The area is lightly planted with live oaks, cedar and magnolias, mostly between the second and third rings. The ground here is very uneven. Though the entrance, center and west half are fairly level, the ground falls off sharply to the east and southeast. Here the markers give way to a weeded "free land" bordering the housing project. There are many unmarked burials here, most of them fever victims. The eastern border is overgrown and there is a brick wall between the cemetery and the project. A chain link fence runs along the length of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

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This circular cemetery consists of mostly family plots, many with coping and several with iron fences. Most of the burials are antebellum. The center is dominated by the Sisters of Charity plot which features a brick wall border and marble step with "Sisters of Charity" engraved. A marble monument in the center is to the memory of two sisters who perished during yellow fever epidemics while administering to the sick, in 1853. There are about sixty sisters buried here, marked by flat grey marble slabs.

The form and variety of funeary sculpture is impressive. Many plots feature elaborate stone coping with curved entrances and decorated corner markers. Individual monuments worthy of mention include: Don Jose Y. Cruzat (1847) which features a marble slab with a Spanish inscription and an iron cross at the head, the Rapier Mausoleum (earliest 1837, latest 1914) a stuccoed brick tomb with engaged square columns at each corner, entablature and stepped roof, Anna Cullen (1856) an obelisk with winged head carving, Ellen O'Conner (1854) a round top headstone with bas-relief of an angel and woman surrounded by a wreath. There are several above ground marble false tombs, many crosses, obelisks, urns, flat stones and round top stones. Some of these are signed by noted local marble cutters, including Jarvis Turner, Thomas McDonald and William March. The stones to the south and east tend to be more modest, and because the land falls away are not visible from the Blvd. There is a little cluster on a small grid in the southwest corner, consisting of mostly turn of the century graves. Though adjacent to the circular burials, these graves are not part of the ring.

All these stones reflect the cosmopolitan nature of Mobile's Catholic population. Many inscriptions are in Spanish or Italian and many of the graves note the particular county in Ireland where the deceased was from. There are some veterans markers and Woodmen of the World stones, but all of them are in various family plots. Other than the Sisters of Charity, there are no veterans or association plots as in Magnolia Cemetery. The most important distinction of the people in this cemetery is that they were Catholic. Though secular cemeteries often provided special plots for the members of various associations (indeed this was often a membership benefit), Catholics were provided sacred ground free of the trappings of secular life.

The integrity of this circular cemetery is excellent. It is well maintained and the grass is carefully trimmed around the stones. There has been some upheaval by roots and some minor vandalism.

Immediately adjacent on the north side of the circular cemetery lies the remainder of Old Catholic Cemetery. The ground here is gently rolling and treeless, and the mausoleums, tombs and

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various grave markers present the appearance of a large Necropolis. The cemetery is bordered on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., south by the circular cemetery and east by the New Cemetery (1948). Cemetery Lane forms the north border. A one story frame maintenance building stands roughly between the two sections of the old graveyard.

In contrast to the circular plan to the south, most of Old Catholic Cemetery is laid out on a classic grid pattern. There is a central main road off of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. and intersecting cross streets. The area is large, somewhat over fifteen acres. As in the oldest section, most graves are in family plots, which are bordered by brick or stone coping. There are group plots for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Little Sisters of the Poor, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph and the Josephite Fathers. Individual graves in these plots are unexceptional, most of them marked by plain white crosses.

Though there are a scattering of antebellum burials, most are late Victorian and early 20th century. The variety of markers include flat stones, crosses, obelisks, round and flat top standing stones. Irish symbols abound including harps, clover and celtic crosses. Notable examples of funeary sculpture include: Hazel Scott stone (1904), a child's grave featuring a small angel with folded hands, the Mary Pepper monument (1872), a statue of a robed woman leaning on an anchor, Constantine Lauretta, Jr. grave (1904), a small angel at the foot of a cross and the Dominick Oliver Grady marker (1871), a large carved cross and anchor. Two mausoleums are of note; the Arata Family tomb (c. 1900) and the McDonnell Family tomb (c. 1915), both being stone with gable roofs and classical details. The latter features a stained glass window at the rear. Some stones are signed by their craftsmen including Jarvis Turner, William March and Thomas McDonald. Some stones bear Philadelphia and New Orleans stamps.

The most famous persons buried in this cemetery are Raphael Semmes (d. 1877) and Father Abram Ryan (d. 1886). Semmes achieved fame as the commander of the Confederate privateer "Alabama" and Ryan was the poet-priest of the Confederacy.

This cemetery was in active use until the 1940s, and though the new section was opened in 1948, some few burials still take place here. Overall integrity is excellent and the grounds are well maintained. A perpetual care program has recently been instigated. Before this each family was responsible for its own plot and there was much neglect. As in the oldest section, there has been some minor vandalism, but the cemetery gates are shut and locked at dusk.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art

Period of Significance

1848-1940

Significant Dates

1848

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Various

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Criterion C: Architecture

Stone Street-Old Catholic Cemetery is significant under National Register Criterion C for its high-style funerary art by a variety of local and out-of-town craftsmen. The earliest section of the cemetery is further significant for its circular plan, unique in the state and highly unusual along the Gulf Coast.

* * * * *

Historically Roman Catholics have been buried in their own graveyards, consecrated by the church. While this was not always possible in areas with small Catholic populations, Mobile's Latin heritage and large Catholic population made such an exclusive cemetery an inevitability.

Mobile's first Catholic graveyard was located under and around the present Cathedral downtown (built c. 1845). Many of the dead were fever victims, and most of the graves were unmarked. With the City's growth the old burial ground was built over, though some few of the dead were relocated to the Church Street Cemetery in the 1820s. By 1836 the City had opened Magnolia Cemetery and some Catholics were buried there.

Nevertheless, by the 1840s Mobile's Catholic population was over 5,000 and an exclusive cemetery was once again desired. In 1848 Bishop Michael Portier purchased several acres of land on the North side of Stone Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.) and west of Three Mile Creek for a Catholic Cemetery. The land was then leased to a caretaker who was responsible for general upkeep and grounds duties. The caretaker was given permission to sell liquor from the site, "though in quantities of not less than a demijohn." This precluded a retail establishment.

The salient feature of this cemetery is the circular plan. Three concentric rings (and portions of a fourth) of graves are oriented feet the center, where a small square plot contains the graves of the Daughters of Charity, a prominent order of nuns. Most Christian burials, since the early Middle Ages at least, are oriented feet to the east and the rising sun. Historically this eastward orientation has not been universal in the Catholic Church and indeed, most burials that deviate from it (excepting folk burials) are usually Catholics.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Rev. Oscar H. Lipscomb. "The Administration of Michael Portier, Vicar Apostolic of Alabama and the Floridas, 1825-1829, and first Bishop of Mobile, 1829-1859." PhD Dissertation. The Catholic University of America. 1963.

The Catholic Week. 25 November 1979.

Mobile County Deed Books, Various.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Mobile Historic Development Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Approximately 30

UTM References

A 116 397140 3397900
Zone Easting Northing

C 116 397160 3397360

B 116 397400 3397660
Zone Easting Northing

D 116 396990 3397650

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Begin at a point on the N side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (MLK) where it intersects with Cemetery Lane. Thence proceed NE 1053' to a point, thence SE 1056' to a point, thence SW 1500' to a point on the N side of MLK Blvd., thence along the N line of said Blvd. in a NW direction 1155' to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to capture all of the 19th and early 20th century burials in Mobile's Catholic Cemetery. This includes all of the original 1848 land purchase and a large percentage of the 1866 land purchase. All of New Catholic Cemetery (opened in 1948 on land purchased earlier) was excluded.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Sledge/Architectural Historian; Steven Kay/AHC Reviewer

organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date 1 October 1990

street & number P.O. Box 1827 telephone (205)438-7281

city or town Mobile state Alabama zip code 36633

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The circular plan may have been Portier's idea, inspired from examples in his native France. He had a very capable architect in his entourage, Cluade Beroujon, who had designed the Mobile Cathedral. Whether or not Beroujon laid out the plan is unknown, but it is highly unusual, if not rare. Some of the first to be buried in the new cemetery were members of the Daughters of Charity, who had come to Mobile in 1841 and by 1851 were managing the City Hospital. Several of them died of Yellow Fever while administering during epidemics in the port city. Canon Law requires that priests and nuns be buried apart from the laity. The early deaths of these Daughters of Charity while selflessly serving the community no doubt led to their placement at the center of the circle. To date some sixty members of the order lie in the plot.

One of the most prominent citizens to be buried here is Timothy Meaher. Meaher was a local man of affairs who smuggled in the last shipload of African slaves in 1859 aboard the *Clotilde*. The navy discovered the slave ship and gave chase up the Mobile River, where the *Clotilde*'s crew scuttled the ship and escaped. The slaves were settled in an area that became known as Africatown. Meaher's grave is suitably impressive and located in the inner ring. Other stones reflect the cosmopolitan nature of Mobile's Catholic population. Spanish and Italian inscriptions are not uncommon and many of the dead were native Irish. Some of these stones were carved by prominent local and out of town artisans including Jarvis Turner and Thomas McDonald of Mobile and J. Stroud of New Orleans.

Most of the burials in the circular cemetery are antebellum, though a few are post Civil War. As this section filled up more grave sites were drawn off adjacent the circular plan. These plots were drawn off in a common grid pattern, like Magnolia Cemetery, with intersecting lanes. In 1866 more land was purchased for expansion to the east. The most famous grave in this grid section is that of Raphael Semmes, the Confederate naval hero whose exploits aboard the "*Alabama*" terrorized the North. Semme's died in 1877 (his stone is a modern one). Also buried in this section is Father Abram Ryan, the famous poet-priest of the Confederacy who died in 1886. As in the circular burial ground, stones in the grid section were craved by a variety of craftsmen and high Victorian fashion is evident in the cherubs, furniture and inscriptions. This section also includes the graves of members of several religious orders including the Sisters of Mercy and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

In 1948 a new Catholic Cemetery was opened on the remainder of the 1866 purchase (and later purchases in 1903, 1910 and 1921). Referred to as New Catholic Cemetery, this burial ground could only be reached by passing through the grid portion of the Old Catholic Cemetery. As the circular portion was off to the south, and there was no provision for perpetual care at the time, this area became overgrown. More aggressive cemetery management and maintenance in the 1970s and 80s reclaimed the overgrown portions and the entire area is now well maintained.

Criterion Consideration (Exception D)

Stone Street-Old Catholic Cemetery is of significance because of its high degree of funerary art, because of the unusual circular plan in the earliest section.

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1. Old Catholic Cemetery
1700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
2. Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama
3. John Sledge, photographer
4. April 1990
5. MHDC Negative File MB #181/182

Description (Frame #)

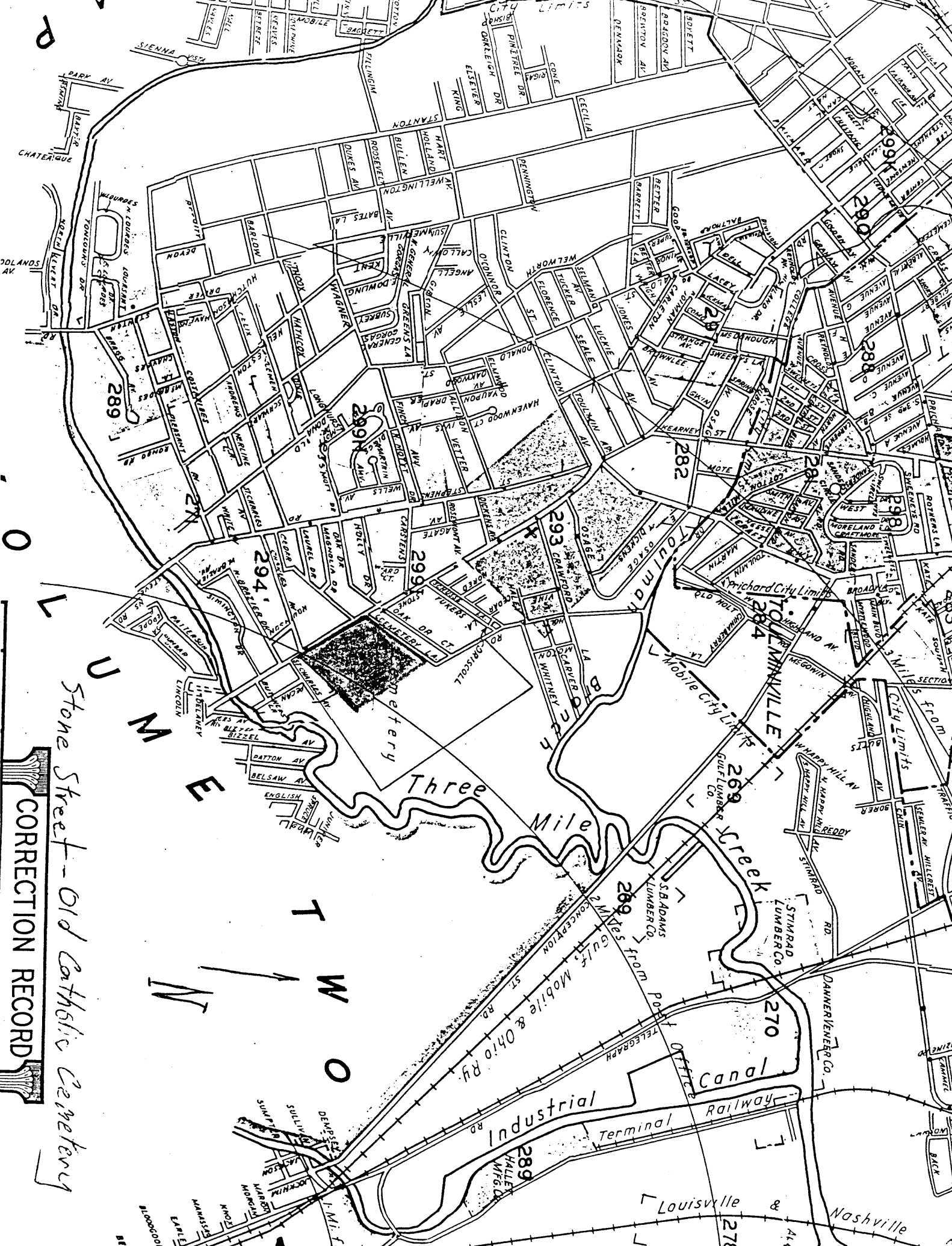
1. Gates to circular portion, camera facing NE (181/10)
2. General, circular portion, camera facing SW, Daughters of Charity plot at center (181/19)
3. General, circular portion, camera facing W from gates (181/12)
4. General, circular portion, camera facing S, gates rear center (181/25)
5. Detail, circular portion, Meaher monument, camera facing SW (181/33)
6. Detail, circular portion, Cruzat slab with iron cross, camera facing SW (181/35)
7. Detail, circular portion, camera facing NW, Rapier mausoleum (181/30)
8. Grid portion, general, camera facing SE from rear (182/20)
9. Same, general, camera facing NW (182/4)
10. Same, general, from entrance, camera facing N (182/1)
11. Detail, grid pattern, Arata mausoleum, camera facing NW (16)
12. Detail, grid pattern, funerary sculpture, camera facing E (182/3)



N. CARLA
1848
1848

Stone Street - Old Catholic Cemetery

CORRECTION RECORD



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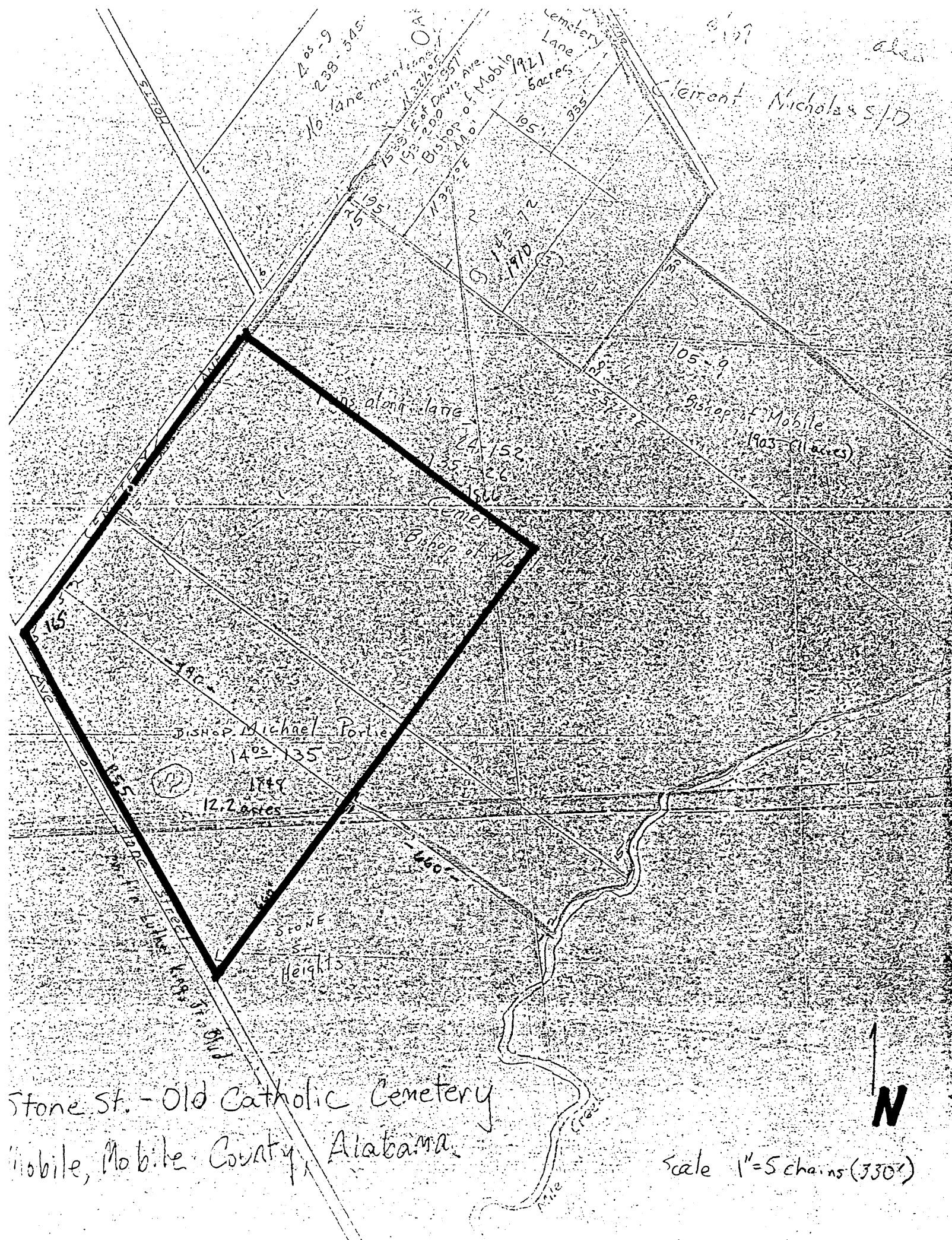
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Stone St. - Old Catholic Cemetery
 Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.

↑
N
 Scale 1" = 5 chains (330')