

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

For NPS use only

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

received AUG 15 1986

date entered SEP 11 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel

and/or common Chapel of the Blessed Virgin of the Seven Dolors/Cemetery Chapel

**2. Location**

street & number 519 Losey Boulevard South \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town La Crosse \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county La Crosse code 063

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership  | Status  | Present Use                                   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public                    | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied      | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both                      | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                          | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government           |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered          | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial           |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military             |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum               |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                 |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence    |
|   |  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific           |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation       |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:               |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Catholic Diocese of La Crosse

street & number 3710 East Avenue South

city, town La Crosse \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54601

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. La Crosse County Courthouse

street & number 400 North Fourth Street

city, town La Crosse \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54601

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Intensive Historical - Architectural

title Survey, City of La Crosse has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date 1984 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53706

# 7. Description

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                              | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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

Located in the Catholic Cemetery, the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin of the Seven Dolors is a one-story rectangular building with a tin roof and a cut stone foundation. Built in 1891, it stands some one hundred feet opposite the main gate. Twenty two feet wide by thirty feet long, it has a steeply-pitched roof with a steeple rising from the center. Broad bands of white stone moulding and articulated voussoirs surround the pointed arches over windows and doors. Ornamental buttresses, cross gables with stone pilasters, stained glass windows with rose windows at the gable ends complete the exterior design.

Visible to all entering the cemetery and to motorists passing by, the chapel is encircled by roads that lead in all directions to the various areas of the extensive grounds. Adding further to the sacred nature of the place are the grottoes and Stations of the Cross, designed and constructed by Erhard Reisinger, first full-time sexton, who served from 1883 to 1916. They were constructed of rough stone hauled from the nearby bluffs in horse-drawn wagons. Repaired and repainted in 1962, three of the grottoes, as well as the Stations of the Cross, remain today.

The most elaborate of the grottoes, which was approached by a bridge spanning a pool, was removed in recent years to make way for the present mausoleum, which houses a new chapel. Dedicated in August, 1978, by Frederick W. Freking, Bishop of La Crosse, the original mausoleum had two Garden Crypts added to it.

The interior of the Chapel is characterized by the use of oak. At the east end is a carved wooden altar with a four by eight foot painting of the Crucified Christ as its focal point. The altar frame rises above it in a pointed arch with a "Ω" (Omega) at its center. Two small pedestals hold foot-high statues of angels on either side of the painting; a painting representing the flames of Hell appears below it directly above the altar table. Altar accessories, such as the candelabra, the tabernacle, framed Mass cards, and a book stand are of matching oak. The book stand holds a daily Mass book, Missale Romanus, in the Latin language, 1869 edition.

The chapel's original stained glass windows are almost intact, some pieces having been replaced because of vandalism that occurred in 1953. Framed by solid oak, the twelve windows include a double one on each side wall which is flanked by two singles, two singles on either side of the altar, and two singles on either side of the entrance door. With the exception of four windows, medallions on the upper sashes bear church symbols such as the Scales of Justice, the Crown of Thorns, and the Hour Glass of Time. Extending above the windows and the door are pointed arches of stained glass, the one above the door pointing to a rose window identical to the one at the opposite end except for the Greek letter "Α" (Alpha) at its center.

Standing at the south side of the entrance (on a visitor's right upon entering) is a combination "Holy Water" font and collection box.

The walls and ceiling of the chapel are trimmed with stenciling. Trailing vines of flowers and leaves are imprinted around the windows and doors, and the blue ceiling is studded with stars. Walls are of the original ecru, and the stenciling of rose tones and green. Early in the spring of 1985, the Haines Decorating Company of Arcadia, Wisconsin, was hired to clean the stenciling, paint the walls and ceiling, and refinish the doors and floor.

The chapel was built as a burial place for the bishops and priests of the La Crosse Diocese, and for that purpose twenty spaces were provided in a crypt below the altar. A ground-level entrance at the rear provides access to the vault of white glazed brick. The remains of nine Diocesan priests are still interred in the crypt, others having been removed over the years.

## 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/<br>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              |   |  |

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|                       |                   |                          |   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Specific dates</b> | 1891 <sup>4</sup> | <b>Builder/Architect</b> | Schick and Stoltze, Architects <sup>5</sup> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---|

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel derives primary significance from its architectural distinction as an example of Gothic design. Important historically for the Diocese as a burial chapel for the bishops of the Diocese, the chapel constructed in 1891 also is architecturally significant because it has retained the full character of its Gothic Revival style. When the St. John the Baptist Church on the Northside is demolished as planned in the near future, Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel will be the only 19th century Gothic Revival Church maintaining its original form, exterior materials, and architectural details to remain in the city of La Crosse.<sup>1</sup>

(Note: The St. John the Baptist Church was razed in March, 1985.)

### Architectural Distinction

The importance of church architecture in La Crosse is made evident by the inclusion in the 1984 Intensive Survey of thirteen churches which were built in the city in the late 19th century. Elements of the Greek Revival style had begun to disappear by the 1850's, and Catholics and Episcopalians were turning to the Gothic Revival style with other groups favoring the Romanesque or early Renaissance. Though "the Gothic Revival influenced the earliest extant church, the eclectic St. Paul's Universalist Church in 1865 at 724 Cass Street, Gothic style churches in La Crosse generally appeared later in the century and were influenced by the High Victorian mode of the style which was characterized by constructional coloration."<sup>2</sup>

"Constructed as a burial chapel for the bishops of the Diocese, the small red brick Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel employs Gothic styled devices including a steeply pitched roof with a small steeple rising from the center of the roof, cross gables outlined by stone pilasters, a rose window in the gable end, painted arch stained glass windows with stone surrounds, pointed arch door and ornamental buttresses to create an archaeologically correct as well as picturesque effect." The "bichromatic effects such as brickwork banded with stone characterized all the late 19th century brick Gothic Revival identified in the 1984, Intensive Survey" in accordance with the "principles set forth by the Englishman John Ruskin."<sup>3</sup>

Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel was designed by the La Crosse architectural firm of Schick and Stoltze. Both Gustav Stoltze and Hugo Schick were immigrants to America, one from Germany in 1872 and the other from Austria in 1880. Both had had considerable architectural experience before coming to La Crosse, Stoltze in Boston and Minneapolis, and Schick in Vienna, New York City, Chicago, and St. Paul. Stoltze opened his own firm in La Crosse in 1885, and in 1887 joined in a partnership with Schick, which lasted until 1899.

"Among the many blocks erected by their firm may be mentioned the Heileman Company's brewing building, the shops of the Chicago, Burlington, and Northern Railway Department, a chapel and hospital for the Franciscan Sisters, the Tillman Brothers Block, and the residences of Stephen Gantert, J. J. Fruit, E. C. Daily, and many others.<sup>4</sup>

The actual construction of the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel was carried out by John Miller at a cost of \$3,000.00.<sup>5</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre  
Quadrangle name La Crosse, Wisconsin-Minnesota

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3       | 2 | 8 | 0 | 4        | 8 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| Zone |   |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

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|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated building in the Catholic Cemetery is roughly 150' east of Losey Boulevard and 120' south of Market Street, if Market Street were extended. (See enclosed map.) continued

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Genevieve G. Koenig

organization Chapel Restoration Committee date April 18 1986

street & number 2312 Hoeschler Drive telephone 608/788-3027


city or town La Crosse state Wisconsin

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

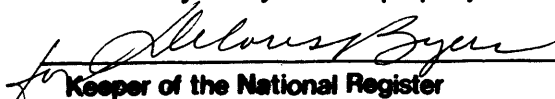
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title   date 8/19/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Entered in the National Register date 9-11-86

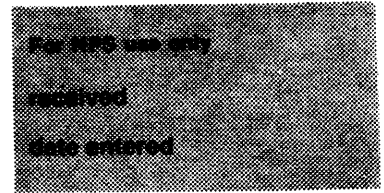
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:   date  

Chief of Registration

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Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel

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The interior of the Chapel must also be considered a significant and essential element of the overall importance of the building design. The rich gothic detailing (in wood) found in the ornately carved altar and altar railing, pews and window surrounds handsomely compliment the brilliantly colored stained-glass windows and the hand-painted wall and ceiling stenciling.

As well as being noted as a distinctive example of high-style Victorian Gothic exterior design within the La Crosse community, the Chapel should also be recognized for its significant and amazingly-intact example of late 19th century interior design on a small yet rich scale.

In 1985 the Chapel was officially designated as a City of La Crosse Historical Site, by the community's local landmarking Commission.

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Historical Background

The growth of the Catholic Church in La Crosse reflects its place in the community and its association with its first and largest cemetery. With the boundaries of La Crosse's original town site measured off by Nathan Myrick in April, 1842, it was as early as May, 1853, that Catholic Church services were held in the village, and by July, 1856, the first Catholic Church was built. Situated on the corner of Seventh Street and Cameron Avenue, the parish was called St. Mary's and numbered 25 families.

By 1887, six additional parishes had been established chiefly along the ethnic patterns of the Catholic population: St. Joseph's in 1863 for the Germans; St. Wenceslaus in 1883 for the Bohemians; Holy Cross in 1886 for the Polish; St. John's and Holy Trinity in 1887, one for the Germans of North La Crosse, the other for the Germans on the far south side; and St. James in 1887 for the French of the North Side.

The Diocese of La Crosse had been established in 1868, and it was the Right Reverend Michael Heiss, first Bishop of La Crosse, who had directed the parish expansion. Other projects he accomplished to strengthen the Catholic community were: the building of St. Joseph's Cathedral (1869); the establishing of the Franciscan Sisters in La Crosse and the erection of their convent, St. Rose's (1870); the building of the Bishop's Residence (1877); the founding of St. Michael's Orphan Asylum (1895); and the promotion of a Catholic School System.

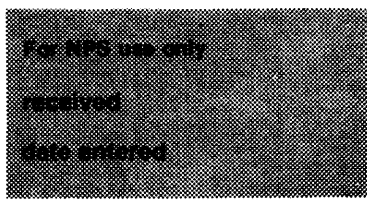
With the expanding presence of the Catholic community in the city, a cemetery became a necessity, and it was under the direction of Reverend Joseph Weidmann, pastor of St. Joseph's Cathedral from 1881 to 1895, that the present cemetery on Losey Boulevard was laid out. It was located about a mile east of the city's residential district near the bluffs and included about 44 acres of land. No exact date can be found for its beginning, but cemetery records show a great number of burials beginning in the 1880's. A few from dates as early as 1834, 1853, and 1855 are recorded, evidently included in the records once a formal burial ground had been established.

Because of an early fire that destroyed cemetery records, little source material is available for either the cemetery or the chapel, but documentation does exist for the association of the chapel with the Right Reverend Kilian Caspar Flasch, Second Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse. He had been appointed to succeed the Right Reverend Michael Heiss, and "assumed the duties of the Episcopate on August 24, 1881...He died on August 5, 1891, after a long and painful illness...The remains of the saintly prelate lie in a vault beneath the altar of the new Catholic Cemetery Chapel which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of the Seven Dolours on November 1, 1891."<sup>10</sup> Newspaper documentation also established the chapel as a "Place For Worship and A Resting Place For The Dead."<sup>11</sup>

Two marble plaques engraved at the top with a bishop's miter and a cross remain on the north side of the chapel's interior as memorials to him and his successor, the Right Reverend James Schwebach. Both of these prelates were originally interred in the crypt below the altar where the builders had provided "twenty places for holding burial caskets".<sup>12</sup> In 1962 their remains were moved to a crypt in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral

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at Sixth and Main Streets in downtown La Crosse. A third marble plaque on the south side of the interior lists the names of these two priests who were also interred in the crypt: Reverend Ludovici Lay, b. February 25, 1838, d. May 30, 1889; and Reverend Fidelis Bannworth, b. March 7, 1840, d. November 3, 1877. Their remains are still there along with those of seven others. Identities of the latter are available in current cemetery records.

<sup>1</sup>Rausch, Joan. Letter to Genevieve Koenig, Architectural Researches, Inc., La Crosse, Wisconsin, October 5, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>Rausch, Joan and Zeitlin, Richard. Historic La Crosse-Architectural and Historic Record (Summary of Intensive Survey Report), Architectural Resources, Inc., and Historical Researches, Inc., August, 1984. p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Rausch, Joan and Zeitlin, Richard. Intensive Historical-Architectural Survey, City of La Crosse, Architectural Researches, Inc., and Historical Resources, Inc., Madison, Wisconsin. 1984. p. 179.

<sup>4</sup>Biographical History of La Crosse, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties, Wisconsin, The Lewis Publishing Company, 1892. pp. 179-180.

<sup>5</sup>La Crosse Daily Republican Leader, October 14, 1891.

<sup>6</sup>Bryant, Benjamin F., Editor. Memoirs of La Crosse County, Western Historical Association, 1907. pp. 142-144.

<sup>7</sup>Catholic History of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Florence Crane, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1904. p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>Interview by Genevieve Koenig with Bernard Noelke, Carl B. Noelke Company, 529 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin, January 9, 1986.

(Note: Bernard Noelke is a relative of Reverend Joseph Weidmann and has information from family history.)

<sup>9</sup>Interview by Genevieve Koenig with Dale Rinehart, present cemetery sexton, January 17, 1986.

<sup>10</sup>Heming, Harry H., Editor. The Catholic Church in Wisconsin 1895-1898, Catholic Historical Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. October 9, 1896. pp. 759-760.

<sup>11</sup>La Crosse Daily Republican Leader, October 14, 1891.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

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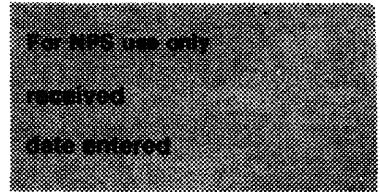
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Biographical History of La Crosse, Trempealeau, and Buffalo Counties, Wisconsin, The Lewis Publishing Company, 1892.

Bryant, Benjamin F., Editor. Memoirs of La Crosse County, Western Historical Association, 1907.

Catholic History of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Florence Crane, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1904.

Heming, Harry H., Editor. The Catholic Church in Wisconsin 1895-1898, Catholic Historical Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. October 9, 1986.

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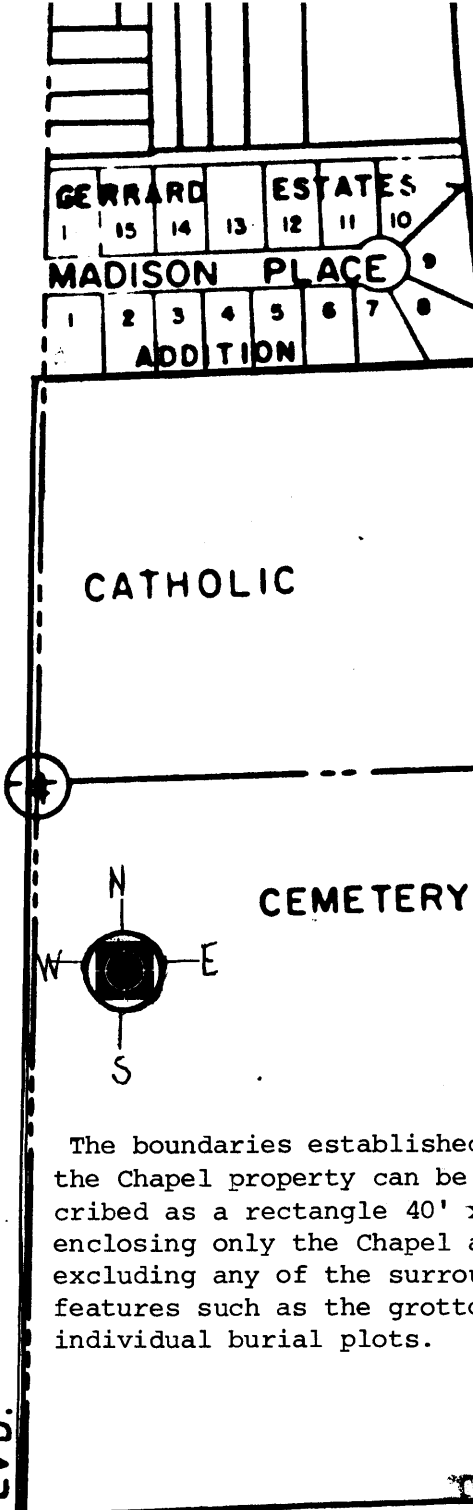
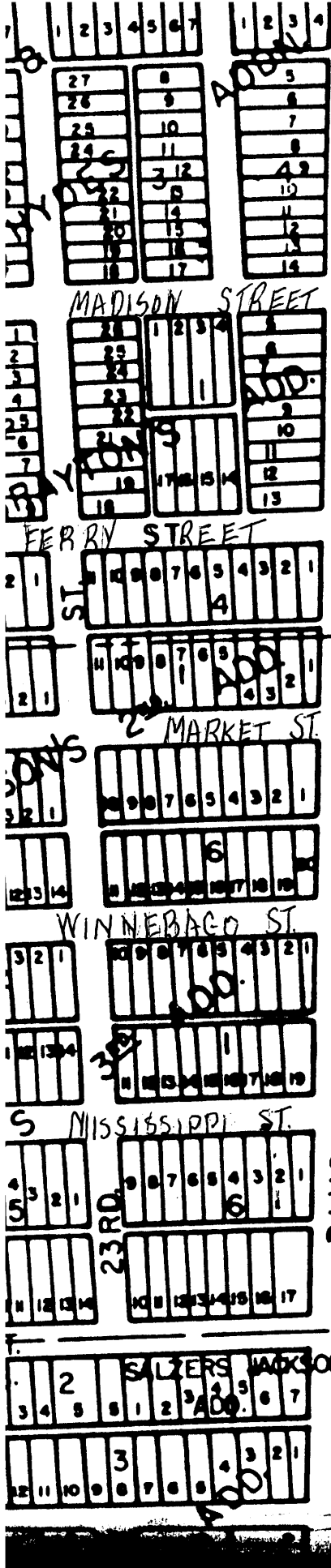
Rausch, Joan and Zeitlin, Richard. Historic La Crosse - Architectural and Historic Record (summary of Intensive Survey Report), Architectural Resources, Inc., and Historical Resources, Inc., August, 1984.

Rausch, Joan and Zeitlin, Richard. Intensive Historical - Architectural Survey, City of La Crosse, Architectural Researches, Inc., and Historical Researches, Inc., Madison, Wisconsin. 1984.

Rausch, Loan. Letter to Genevieve Koenig, Architectural Researches, Inc., La Crosse, Wisconsin, October 5, 1984.



MAP  
CITY OF LA. CROSSE  
KENNETH ROBERTS  
CITY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE



The boundaries established for the Chapel property can be described as a rectangle 40' x 60' enclosing only the Chapel and excluding any of the surrounding features such as the grottos, or individual burial plots.

