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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

Ala. Historical Commission

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 18). 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 The City of St. Jude Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 2048 West Fairview Avenue, also see Section 10 - NA not for publication
city, town Montgomery verbal boundary description NA vicinity NA
state Alabama code AL county Montgomery code 101 zip code 36108

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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.

M. J. ... May 7, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
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:)

Chester Shull 6-18-90

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

RELIGION/religious structure

RELIGION/church-related residence

HEALTH/hospital

OTHER/social services

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

RELIGION/religious structure

RELIGION/church-related residence

VACANT/not in use

OTHER/social services

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Italian Renaissance

OTHER/Utilitarian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Terra Cotta

other Stone

Asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The City of St. Jude Historic District is a well-defined campus of functional Romanesque institutional, residential, and administrative buildings located on approximately 40 acres of land on the north side of West Fairview Avenue (US Hwy. 31) in the City of Montgomery, Alabama. It is just west of and visible from the Interstate 65 and Fairview Avenue interchange. Founded by Father Harold Purcell in 1934, the City of St. Jude includes a church, a school, a hospital, a social center and residential buildings for the teaching and nursing staffs, as well as an administration building and a gymnasium. It is surrounded by residential development to the north, commercial development to the east and west, and commercial and educational development to the south.

In physical appearance St. Jude's is an institutional campus, with five contributing buildings constructed between 1937 and 1953. Three later buildings, which were constructed after Father Purcell's death, do not contribute to the district. During his lifetime, Father Purcell worked with architects William Callahan of New York and Joseph Maschi of New Jersey and Alabama to exercise strict control over the design and development of the City of St. Jude. A consistent theme of Romanesque elements and Catholic symbols is embodied in the functional architecture of the contributing buildings and gives the campus a clear identity.

Repeated use of Romanesque elements, Moorish patterns, red brick, corbeled cornices, hipped tile roofs with gable projections, limestone embellishments and groups of three windows as well as the execution of teachings in stone bas relief and statuary serve to physically unify the City of St. Jude.

The main entrance to St. Jude, off West Fairview Avenue, is lined with tall pines and leads to the front of St. Jude Catholic Church which was the first built of the campus structures. Directly behind the church and finished a few months after it, is the old Social Center which is now known as the "old convent." To the west of the church is the Rectory.

St. Jude Hospital, easternmost of the buildings, also faces West Fairview. Although it has a separate, semicircular drive, it is linked to the rest of the campus by hedgerows, paths and covered walkways. To the west on the same line is the school, originally called the Educational Institute, which is surrounded by generous yards and playing fields.

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)
ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black history
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1937-c. 1965

Significant Dates
1937, 1938,
1940, 1946-7,
1949-51, 1953,
1965

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Callahan, William P., Architect
Maschi, Joseph C., Architect

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

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black

Established during a time when racial segregation was mandated by law, the City of St. Jude is significant for its role in pioneering nondiscriminatory health service, education and social services. At the time, the St. Jude Catholic Hospital was the only health facility in Montgomery to have both integrated staff and patients. Since Alabama's laws prevented the admittance of Black's to any of the White facilities, the hospital played a vital role during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s in providing quality health care for Blacks. The period of significance for the City of St. Jude Historic District extends from the construction of the first building (The St. Jude Church) in 1937 until the mid-1960s when segregation laws were dismantled. The five contributing buildings within the City of St. Jude complex have retained their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Criterion C: Architecture

The City of St. Jude (1937-1965) is significant for its architecture, cohesive planning, and outdoor statuary and landscaping. Drawn and blueprinted prior to 1933, the City of St. Jude was conceived by Father Harold Purcell to provide comprehensive social, educational, and medical services to Blacks in an atmosphere which asserted the dignity and worth of people through the scale and beauty of the buildings, landscaping and sculptures. Additionally, the City of St. Jude is a distinguishable entity whose Romanesque architectural elements, statuary, sidewalks, roads, and general landscaping define a readily identifiable and distinct historical environment.

During his lifetime, Father Purcell, working with architects William Callahan of New York and Joseph Maschi of New Jersey and Alabama, exercised strict control over the design and development of the City of St. Jude. A consistent theme of Romanesque elements and Catholic symbols is embodied in the functional architecture of the five contributing buildings and gives the campus a

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Archives, City of St. Jude, 2048 West Fairview Ave., Montgomery, Alabama.
- Cobb, William M., MD, PhD. Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro. NAACP, 1947.
- Coffman, Sister Mary Ruth. Build Me A City: The Life of Reverend Harold Purcell. Pioneer Press, Montgomery, AL, 1984.
- Durr, Virginia Foster. Outside the Magic Circle. University of Alabama Press, 1986.
- Montgomery County Clipping File, The State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

City of St. Jude Administrative Office

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Approx. 40 acres

UTM References

A

1,6	5,6,3,1,2,0	3,5,7,9,7,5,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

1,6	5,6,3,5,2,0	3,5,7,9,7,5,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

1,6	5,6,3,1,2,0	3,5,7,9,3,6,0
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D

1,6	5,6,3,5,2,0	3,5,7,9,3,6,0
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The SE quarter of the NE quarter of Section 23, Township 16, Range 17, bounded on the south by Fairview Avenue; on the east by Oak Street; on the west by Hill Street; and on the north by Stephens Street- as recorded in the Montgomery County Court House.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

These boundaries represent the historical boundaries of the City of St. Jude as purchased by Father Harold Purcell in 1935.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marilyn B. Sullivan and Linda Nelson: Melanie Betz/AHC Reviewer

organization N/A date January 10, 1990

street & number 3923 NE 45th Street, #209 telephone (206) 522-6686

city or town Seattle state Washington zip code 98105

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A Crippled Children's Center was added to the north wing of the hospital after Purcell's death as was a convent north of the center. The last additions to the campus, made during the mid-1960s, were an administration building north of all campus buildings and not visible from West Fairview and a gymnasium north of the Educational Institute.

While each service area of the City is distinct and has individual egress and parking, the campus is visually and functionally linked by careful landscaping which has produced hedgerows of evergreens and crepe myrtles, alleys of pine and pleasant stretches of lawn that are interspersed with an unusually fine collection of marble statuary and garden ornaments. Statues of Christ, St. Jude Thaddeus and the Virgin Mary grace the grounds while bas relief panels depicting religious and patriotic themes embellish the buildings. The focal point of the City's artistry, however, is the magnificent Carrara marble crucifixion scene mounted on the tower of the church.

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Inventory of Structures
Contributing:

1. St. Jude Church (1937-38)

Modeled after the Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, St. Jude's Church is a tribute to the Virgin, the "sorrowful Virgin" who Father Purcell chose as his special patroness. It is cruciform in shape, with shallow transepts. It is raised over a half-basement and prominent step construction approaches the richly pedimented central entry which is defined in part by Moorish brick patterns. On either side of the towered entry, arcades lead from the side steps to the doorway. The church is distinguished by a magnificent 105-foot bell tower. The square tower is punctuated at the top by trios of Roman arches supported by limestone columns. Centered on the southern face of the tower is a Carrara marble crucifixion scene carved by contemporary sculptor Palladio Palladini. A shallow denticulated cornice supports the tower roof in the center of which is a delicate metal cross. The church roof is blue glazed, clay tile, the Virgin's color.

The nave of the church is eight bays long. Conceived as a place of teaching as well as worship, the interior of the church is richly embellished with text and symbols. The west windows contain the seven sacraments and explanatory texts in stained glass, while the east windows contain the Apostles' Creed. Finished inside in plaster, the flat ceiling is relieved by horizontal beams on each of which is carved one of the Ten Commandments. Along with other inscriptions on the altars, lecterns, and over thresholds, the church interior is a constant source of religious instruction for the worshippers. The chancel clerestory contains six narrow, roundhead windows set in groups of three. Overhead is a carved pendant wheel-within-a-wheel representing the Trinity.

The original oak furnishings were chosen specifically by Father Purcell. Wood paneling has been applied to the plaster walls to about two-thirds of their height. Cobalt blue carpeting covers the transept aisles and chancel. Otherwise the marble and oak flooring is exposed. Niches in the transepts contain hand-carved statues of Black saints and others, including the patron St. Jude Thaddeus. Also significant are the silver angels in the sanctuary lamp created by Giuseppe Moretti, well known for his statue of Vulcan which overlooks Birmingham, Alabama.

Architect: William P. Callahan, New York

Stained glass: Edward J. Byrnes Studios, Carversville, Pennsylvania

Interior furnishings: Frank Fennick (possibly Feneck) & Co., Orange, New Jersey

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2. Social Center (the old Convent) (1938)

Completed only a few months after the Church, this two-story red brick building sits behind the church across a small courtyard which is the burial place of Father Purcell. The front and rear entries are characterized by a Roman arch executed in limestone. Sills and other simple ornamentation are also limestone. Red clay tile covers the low hipped roof which has gable projections at the entries. A fanlight over the central entry has "St. Jude Social Center" inscribed in limestone above it. This building is the prototype for the later school, hospital and rectory.

Architect: William P. Callahan

3. Educational Institute (1940-47)

Begun in 1940, construction of the St. Jude School was interrupted by World War II. Construction resumed in 1946 and the building began service in 1947. The two-story red brick building has a red clay tile roof which is hipped. The 330' building faces south toward West Fairview and has projecting pavilions at each end. A central gable projection provides the main entrance to the school. It is characterized by a limestone Roman arch centered under a limestone name panel. Highly decorative cast- and wrought-iron lamps stand at each side of the entrance. Above the entrance is a series of round arched windows typical of the St. Jude buildings. A circular stone medallion fills the gable and a cross rises above the gable. The motifs of the entrance are repeated in slightly altered form at either end of the long central mass. Windows are multipaned metal sash. Notable interior features include an impressive marble staircase in the entrance foyer behind a bronze statue of Christ by noted Black sculptor Richmond Barthe. Architect: unknown at this time but research suggests a Black designer.

4. St. Jude's Catholic Hospital (1949-51)

St. Jude's Catholic Hospital is a three-story cruciform building set on a full basement. It faces south toward West Fairview Avenue and is constructed of hollow-core tile, steel and concrete. It is clad in textured red brick. The building echoes the functional Romanesque style of other campus buildings. It takes the form of a cross which is 253 feet long and 240 feet across the arms. The longer shaft of the cross extends north away from the central entry. The building's shallow roof is hipped except for the central projection which is gabled. Semicircular metal vents are spaced regularly along the roof and a tall brick chimney rises from the center. Maintenance problems provoked the decision in 1987 to replace the red clay tile roof with red asphalt shingles.

The massiveness of this building is broken not only by the many windows but by the limestone trim, most notable of which is that surrounding the entrance. A limestone panel above the main entrance is inscribed "St. Jude's Catholic

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Hospital." Honoring the mother of the hospital's first and most generous contributor, the words "Catherine McNamara Memorial" are inscribed around the limestone archway over the double-door entry. The semicircular tympanum over the doors contains a bas relief of Christ, the Healer. Additional limestone embellishments include a course which visually divides the basement from the first floor, stone window sills, gable medallion and rectangular insets.

The rhythmic windows are 3-panel metal casements with one horizontal light across the bottom of the window. Windows in the "French" basement, only partially below-ground, are eight-paned with an operable center section. The only variation in the windows is found in the central bay. Arched window heads on the third floor, echoing the Roman arch over the main entry below, mark by their colored glass the location of the hospital chapel.

The eaves of the Hospital are shallow and guttered but corbeling at the eaves, one of the common elements among St. Jude's buildings, adds weight and textural emphasis to the cornice.

An addition to the north wing of the hospital made in 1958, is incompatible with the hospital and campus in style but is unobtrusive in placement and scale. The two-story Crippled Children's wing has a separate entrance and is a concrete and brick box with a flat roof and Moorish-like decorative panels. It is still a fully functional and highly respected center.

The building is surrounded by greensward and shade trees and rests imposingly on its elevated site above an ill-kept strip shopping center to the east. The service and emergency entrances are in this eastern elevation behind the cross-arm, as is the parking lot. A semicircular drive and smaller parking area are located at the front of the building. Approached from the west, the Hospital rests on a plain and in context with the whole St. Jude campus.

5. Rectory (1953)

The simplest of the five contributing buildings, the Rectory is two-story, red brick structure with a low hipped roof covered in red clay tiles. Like the other contributing buildings, the Rectory has a central entry defined by a Roman arch executed in limestone. The entry is slightly recessed to form a shallow covered stoop. Windows are metal-frame jalousies. An arcade at the rear connects to a four-bay garage, likewise with hipped tile roof.
Architect: Joseph C. Maschi, Montgomery.

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Noncontributing:

6. New Convent, Vincentian Sisters of Charity (1958)

The Convent is a two-story brick and concrete box with a flat roof. It employs Moorish-like decorative panels to relieve the north and south elevations and create loggia-like recesses. Located north of the hospital, the convent is provided privacy by its siting on a gentle incline to the east, a brick courtyard and abundant plantings. The siting, the landscaping and the vague Moorish detail assuage the impact of this building and it actually rests comfortably, if not compatibly, on the St. Jude campus.

7. Father Raleigh Memorial Cafeteria and Gymnasium (1963)

A brick box, the gymnasium/cafeteria is linked to the school by a long open breezeway.

8. Father Jacobi Memorial Administration Building (1966)

A one-story concrete and brick box, this building houses St. Jude's administrative offices and social service center. It has an asymmetrical entrance from a central recessed loggia which is supported by thin square columns made of brick.

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clear identity despite the three architecturally incongruous buildings which were built on the campus after Father Purcell's death. Few physical changes have been made to the campus, and generous plantings assuage the impact of the newer additions so that the integrity of the City of St. Jude as a historical entity is uncompromised.

Criteria Exception A

Although the buildings in the City of St. Jude complex are owned by a religious institution, they are eligible under Criterion Consideration A, for the significant role the Catholic Church had in providing quality health service, education, and social services for Blacks during a time when these services were not readily available elsewhere in the city.

Criterion Exception G

Although many of the buildings in the City of St. Jude complex are less than 50 years old, the district is historically significant (ethnic heritage/black) until the mid 1960s when segregation laws were dismantled. Furthermore, the district is architecturally significant until 1953 because all of the contributing buildings (which date from 1937 to 1953) were designed in accordance with Father Harold Purcell's c. 1933 master plan. These buildings are visually linked by common architectural elements including Roman arches, red brick veneer and corbelling, limestone embellishments, and stone bas relief and statuary.

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Historical Summary

Born in Pennsylvania in 1881, Father Harold Purcell, was the youngest son of an Irish coal-mining family, destined to observe first hand the difficulties and sufferings of the miners' lives and the Catholic faith that sustained them through every kind of deprivation. He left Catholic High School at age 15 to enter training for a vocation with the Passionist congregation, an order dedicated to the spiritual nourishment of the laity through intensive missions and retreats. A significant aspect of the Passionists' work in America was support of the Faith in isolated environments that were not infrequently hostile to the Catholic Church. Significant, too, was the fact that Passionists generally supported their ministries by questing for their funds and supplies.

Entering the Passionist order in 1897, Father Purcell spent the first period of his priesthood in missionary work throughout the United States. Earning a reputation as an accomplished writer, preacher and apologist, he was recruited to edit a new Passionist publication in 1921. The terms of his acceptance of this position with The Sign included permission for him to address social and economic issues and to call his readers to social responsibility in living their faith. His biographer, Sister Mary Ruth Coffman, says that "he became a molder of Catholic opinion in the United States in the turbulent decades of the twenties and thirties."

In fact, Father Purcell missed few opportunities in the next thirteen years to comment on racism and social injustice. He challenged the church to deal with racism in its own ranks and he questioned openly the likelihood of the "Scottsboro Boys" receiving a fair trial in Alabama. A regular column in The Sign, "Toasts of the Month" typically featured people who had resisted racial injustice or labored to create better working conditions for Blacks.

Father Purcell wrote in 1930 that "the Church has the plain duty to discuss public affairs. There are so many things in our social and economic life that touch intimately the needs of the people that the Church has a strict obligation to raise its voice about them. There is nothing in the letter or spirit of the Constitution against fulfilling that obligation. It is in absolute harmony with the teaching of the Gospel." Particularly interested in the plight of Blacks, Purcell noted and deplored incidents of racial and religious bigotry.

Father Purcell's growing desire to act rather than write on behalf of justice is evidenced in his editorial of August, 1932. He wrote, "There is no such thing as nationality with God; neither does he draw any color line...If I really love Jesus Christ, I will do what I can for the salvation of all

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souls...Nor will I count the cost...nor will I be disappointed if the results of my work are meagre...There is a certain something that I can do for Him that no one else can do..."

By early 1933, visitors to Father Purcell's office recall seeing on his wall "a blueprint and painting" of his dream which would be a "city" of educational, medical and social services for Blacks. He called his dream "The City of St. Jude" invoking the aid of St. Jude Thaddeus, the "helper in cases despaired of."

Architecture had apparently been of great interest to Father Purcell for some time. As early as 1925, he had taken an active role in designing The Sign's new building. Purcell's biographer suggests that in many ways the financing, design and construction of The Sign's headquarters in New Jersey were a rehearsal for his later buildings for the City of St. Jude.

The parallels are evident. Father Purcell held a bazaar and sold bricks and stones from a demolished building to raise money for his project rather than waiting to be subsidized. It was built as a two-story brick building trimmed in limestone with an above ground basement. Most notably, a Roman arch, which became the architectural symbol of St. Jude, provided an imposing entry for the office. An inscribed limestone slab provided a nameplate across the face of the building. The architect of that building is unknown at this writing but it is known that both architects who later worked with Purcell on the St. Jude were from New York and New Jersey.

In 1934, when Father Purcell petitioned his superior for permission to go to Alabama to build a city "for the religious, charitable, educational and industrial advancement of the Negro people" his sense of urgency was, no doubt, increased as the Depression exacerbated the already severe difficulties of Black people. Feeling an inner compulsion to do mission work among them, he had only to find the right place to build his city. This turned out to be Montgomery as a result of Bishop Toolen's invitation to locate the enterprise in Alabama. Purcell left the magazine in 1934 but continued to appeal to its wide readership for financial assistance as he began to realize his dream.

Montgomery, in 1934, had a population that was 43% Black. The one Black hospital that had operated in Montgomery since 1899, was built solely through the efforts of a former slave, Anne Hale. Additionally, there was a Black clinic called the Fraternal Hospital operated by a Mrs. Scott. Alabama's laws prevented the admittance of Blacks to any of the White facilities although the City's largest hospital, a Catholic institution, had a frame cottage behind the hospital where Blacks could be "kept."

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The statistics of the period are self-explanatory. Between 1932 and 1935, 84% of all White women had a doctor in attendance during childbirth. However, only 24% of all Black births were attended by a physician. In Montgomery County, 30% of all births to Black women attended by a midwife were stillbirths.

While nearly all diseases which showed disproportionate mortality rates in Blacks were considered preventable, such as tuberculosis, maternal and infant mortality, and venereal disease, a 1947 medical needs assessment in Mississippi, for instance, declared that "the demand for medical service among this group [Blacks] may fall below the requirements for the White population." Indeed, nationwide in 1947, a Black's life span was expected to be ten years shorter than a White's and there were only 112 Black hospitals in the United States, 25 of which were certified.

Educational statistics were comparable. A 1932 study revealed that only 62% of the school-aged Black children in Alabama were enrolled in school. 77.5% of the comparable White population was enrolled. For the period 1933 to 1935 in Montgomery, the expenditure was 30 cents per day per pupil for White students and 7 cents per day for Black students.

Of 13,909 White teachers in Alabama in 1943-44, 37% received monthly salaries below \$120.00. Of the 6,133 Black teachers in the state, 94% received monthly salaries less \$120.00.

Blacks were trapped in a social quagmire. A poor education severely limited their earning capabilities and rendered them unable to register to vote. "Proof of literacy", as interpreted by the particular registrar, was required for voter registration as was payment of a poll tax. In Alabama, the poll tax was retroactive to age twenty-one regardless of the age one registered. This effectively disenfranchised the poor of every race.

Furthermore, the "laws" of segregation prevented Blacks from acquiring the more lucrative jobs even if they got the training. Thus, any public educational, medical and social services were administered by an oligarchy of, most often, middle and upper income White men. Public care facilities for the indigent were virtually unknown.

There were Black parishes in the Mobile Diocese to which Father Purcell came in 1934. In fact, the Josephites had established one in Montgomery in 1908, which by 1934, included a church and a school. They were not integrated, however, and St. Jude records indicate that there was no comprehensive social service center for Blacks in the State.

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Father Purcell's biographer states that in 1934, "no group or individual in Alabama, or "indeed in the South, had yet built as comprehensive an institution for Blacks as Father Purcell envisioned". The fact that he could build what he envisioned at the time and in the social climate he did, led one reporter, who visited the campus in 1947, to describe the City of St. Jude as a "comparatively unknown and unpublicized miracle of the Southland."

Upon arriving in Montgomery in the summer of 1934, Father Purcell immediately rented temporary facilities on Holt Street. Here he established a medical clinic and chapel.

Both Father Purcell and Bishop Toolen were aware that their actions in operating St. Jude on a nondiscriminatory basis were at best risky. The Bishop wrote to Father Purcell in 1935, "I hope there will be no difficulty about white nurses taking care of the Blacks. There is some law in Alabama in regard to this, and if some bigots find out what we are doing, they may make trouble, but it is worthwhile."

In 1939, Father Purcell wrote about the experience: "As we came, strangers among strange people, naturally we were looked upon with suspicion by the colored as well as the whites. Through the ministrations of the nurses and a very excellent colored physician, we soon began to win the confidence of our poor people. I am happy to say that I think this confidence has not only continued but increased. My own friends and perfect strangers, whom I solicited through the mail, very generously answered my appeals with the result that we have bought and paid for on the edge of a great Negro population, but within the city limits of Montgomery a tract of 40 acres which many regard as the finest spot in the whole city."

The "great Negro population" where St. Jude located was described by one of the City's priests, Father Joseph Jacobi. "...in the territory rear to St. Jude's, I came into streets sometimes alleys, lanes, hill paths. Along these perhaps twenty thousand colored people lived, but no white people. Only two paved streets came within a mile of St. Jude at the time [1943]. Gravel and clay, mud and dust, never a sidewalk describe these streets. There were neighborhood faucets from which women and children-'toted'-water, but city mains and sewers were lacking."

Father Purcell's correspondence further describes the first building campaign. "A year ago last October [1937] we began the building of a combination church and school. The church is a copy of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome...Below the church, but above ground, we have eight splendid classrooms and temporary quarters for our Sisters...I was always disgusted with the saying, 'oh, anything is good enough for niggers'. I decided that the Negroes were a

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worthwhile people...that their past history proves splendidness of character and their ability at self-improvement. It was because of this conviction that I decided to give them a good building. The result is that there are few 'white' churches in the State of Alabama that can compare with St. Judes..."

In all campus construction, Father Purcell insisted that Black craftsmen and laborers be employed whenever possible. Since most unions would not allow Black members, there were no electricians or plumbers. There were, however, many brickmasons, carpenters and roofers, one of whom, Otis Smith, distinguished himself to the point that he was chosen construction supervisor for the St. Jude School.

St. Jude's second building was completed in 1938, a few months after the Church. Called the Social Center, it housed an auditorium/dining room, a medical clinic, a kitchen and a social services office for the collection, storage and dispensation of food, clothing and household goods. The Center also included residential space for the priests. The Social Center clinic was open 24 hours a day.

Father Purcell seems to have wavered about which facility in his master plan should follow the Social Center. Correspondence indicates that he was already approaching donors about "furnishings for operating and delivery rooms" and that he was collecting donations for a hospital as early as 1939. But the fact is that by 1940, he had undertaken the construction of the Educational Institute. World War II interrupted the construction as materials became scarce and it was not until 1946 that construction could continue. The St. Jude Educational Institute opened in 1947, again shunning discrimination on religious or racial grounds and responding to community needs by opening in 1949 Montgomery's only night and weekend training school for returning veterans.

Finally with the war over and the school finished, Father Purcell turned his attention to the most ambitious of his dreams, construction of a hospital. Certainly not coincidentally Alabama's Senator Lister Hill of Montgomery cosponsored the Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946 (the Hill-Burton Act). This new federal law was created to aid in the construction of "modern" hospitals nationwide, placed according to need. The law also required the first standardization of hospital plans since drawings had to be reviewed before Hill-Burton money was allocated.

The extent of contact, if any, between Hill and Purcell, is uncertain but it was announced in 1949 when ground was broken for the hospital that solicitations for the St. Jude Hospital were being matched by \$500,000 of Hill-Burton funds. According to newspaper announcements concerning the dedication of the

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St. Jude Hospital in 1951, Senator Hill was to be present for the occasion.

St. Jude Hospital opened in early 1951, as the "most modern" medical facility in central Alabama but more significantly, according to newspaper accounts, as the first fully integrated hospital in the Southeast with both Black and White patients and staff. Of course, in local newspapers separation of the races within the hospital was emphasized, while in other accounts outstanding care for all who entered was the primary concern. The idea of a hospital where anyone could receive treatment without regard to color, "worthiness" or ability to pay was truly phenomenal.

Exemplary of the Hospital's dedication to meeting community needs, the young St. Jude Hospital assumed responsibility during the polio epidemic of 1953. The Hospital acquired iron lungs, rocking beds and other therapeutic equipment, organized a staff of volunteers and became the region's polio treatment center.

Furthermore, according to hospital records, St. Jude helped organize the county's first public prenatal care program, the first school of practical nursing in Montgomery, and the first drug and alcohol treatment center in Alabama.

Father Harold Purcell who had long suffered from diabetes and arthritis died in 1952, in the hospital he built. Shortly before his death, however, he received two honors that foretold his place in history. The Black Community honored him with a testimonial dinner in the summer of 1951 and the following spring he was honored at Tuskegee Institute where the John A. Andrews Clinical Society recognized Father Purcell's "...unyielding faith in hopeless causes ...untiring efforts to elevate the health, spiritual and educational levels of all racial groups...The institutions that he built are the nucleus for the complete racial harmony of tomorrow."

Years later, Mr. E. D. Nixon, organizer of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, said of Father Purcell, "It took me by surprise to see a white man stand up and defend Black people. It made a whole lot of people see the light. It was such people who made it possible for the Civil Rights Movement to happen."

A year after Father Purcell's death, his friend, architect Joseph Maschi, drew one last building for the City of St. Jude. A rectory was built in 1953 to the west of the church.

Subsequent additions to the City after Father Purcell's death included the Crippled Children's wing of the hospital in 1958, a convent for the Vincentian Sisters of Charity also in 1958, a gymnasium in 1963 and an administrative-

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social services center in 1966.

Open racial tensions and hostility characterized Montgomery from 1955 to 1965. An incident in the early 1950s illustrates the atmosphere in Montgomery and the role that St. Jude played. There were two groups of United Church Women, one Black and one White. The two groups decided to form an integrated prayer group. They met in Black churches or at St. Jude where they prayed, sang and had tea. According to one member their last meeting was at St. Jude. She remembers that a Retired Admiral, of an old Montgomery family, took all the license numbers of cars at the meeting and published the names and addresses of all the attendees. She states "the women began to get terrible phone calls at night and were threatened in other ways. That broke the group up."

By 1965, St. Jude had become such a powerful symbol of racial desegregation and social harmony that organizers of the Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March, a massive and successful show of support for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, requested permission to terminate the march at St. Jude. Dr. Martin Luther King and 2000 supporters met and camped there for the night before rallying at the State Capitol. According to witnesses of the event, the great crowd held a rally on the St. Jude athletic fields, slept in and camped about its facilities and benefited from emergency health services at the hospital.

In welcoming the Marchers, St. Jude placed itself at great risk because the Selma-to-Montgomery March was generating so much opposition in Montgomery. The Hospital was further publicized when the dying Viola Liuzzo was treated there after having been shot while shuttling participants in the March between Selma and Montgomery.

The divisions in Montgomery's civic life surrounding the Voting Rights March resulted in a mass resignation from the Hospital of its white medical staff. While a significant loss to St. Jude, it was not so critical in the long run as the changes in number of patient referrals that occurred following legislation that culminated the Civil Rights Movement in the late sixties and simultaneous construction of two more major hospitals in Montgomery.

A confidential assessment of St. Jude's situation written in 1968 tells the tale. Writing to the Archbishop, Director, Father Mullaney, stated that the 165-bed hospital was averaging 51 to 80 patients. Considering the number of charity patients, Father Mullaney continued, "annual incomes persist in falling far short of expenses." He went on to make suggestions about improving St. Jude's local image which "has become somewhat distorted as a result of its identification...with such events as the 'Selma March'."

It was also about this time that St. Jude began seeking participation in the

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Great Society Programs of the Sixties and early Seventies which enabled the City to broaden its social service efforts with preschoolers in the Head Start Program, young people in the Neighborhood Youth Corps and adults in the Adult Literacy and Vocational Training Program. These services were offered in addition to those traditionally offered by St. Jude in helping people meet the basic needs of life.

But the Hospital could not compete. Its financial crisis was beginning to threaten other St. Jude programs and services. In 1975 it was leased to a group of doctors but finally had to close its doors in 1985.

The City of St. Jude weathered the great social changes that it helped create celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 1984. Meanwhile, the City continues a vital program of social and spiritual services and the Board of Directors is seeking to rehabilitate the Hospital as housing for the elderly.

In March of 1990, St. Jude will again attract national attention as the site of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Selma-to-Montgomery March.

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Photographs

All photographs are taken of the City of St. Jude at 2048 West Fairview Avenue in Montgomery, Montgomery County, Alabama. Unless otherwise noted they were taken by Sullivan/Verneuille during December, 1989. The negatives are deposited with the Alabama Historical Commission.

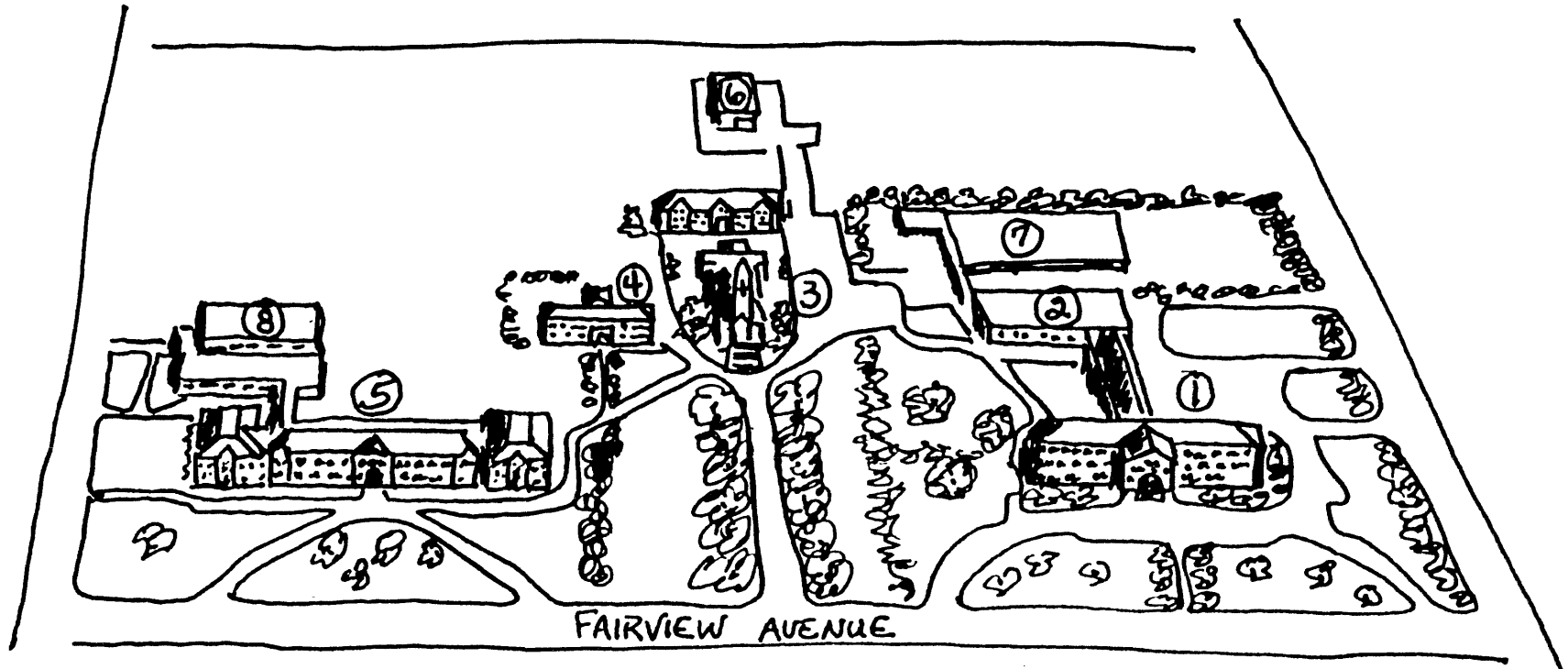
1. St. Jude Church.
Viewed from West Fairview Avenue. Camera facing north.
2. St. Jude Church.
Detail of front entrance. Camera facing north.
3. St. Jude Church.
Detail of tower.
4. St. Jude Social Center.
Viewed from the Church. Camera facing north.
5. St. Jude Social Center.
Detail of entrance. Camera facing north.
6. St. Jude School.
Viewed from the entrance gate. Camera facing northwest.
7. St. Jude School.
Detail of central gable projection. Camera facing north.
8. St. Jude School.
Detail of southern elevation. Camera facing north.
9. St. Jude School.
Detail of southern elevation. Camera facing north.
10. St. Jude Hospital.
Viewed from Fairview Avenue. Camera facing north.
11. St. Jude Hospital.
Detail of entrance. Camera facing northeast.
12. St. Jude Hospital.
Viewed from Oak Street showing Crippled Children's wing to the far right. Camera facing west. Nelson September 1989
13. Father Purcell Memorial Crippled Children's Center.
Viewed from the northeast showing statue of St. Jude

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14. St. Jude Rectory.
Viewed from the south.
15. St. Jude Convent.
Viewed from the Church. Camera facing northeast.
16. St. Jude Gymnasium.
Viewed from the east.
17. St. Jude Administration Building.
Viewed from the southeast.
18. Statue of St. Jude Thaddeus.
Viewed from the southeast.
19. Father Harold Purcell's grave with statue of the Virgin Mary.
Viewed from the east.
20. Statue of the Virgin Mary.
Viewed from the south.
21. Unidentified statue.
22. Unidentified statue. Nelson September 1989
23. St. Jude Church.
Viewed from the school lawn. Camera facing northeast.
24. St. Jude campus.
Typical landscaping. Nelson September 1989
25. St. Jude campus.
Typical landscaping. Nelson September 1989



NORTH ↑

CITY OF ST. JUDE

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. HOSPITAL | 6. ADMINISTRATION |
| 2. CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S ADDITION | 7. CONVENT |
| 3. CHURCH | 8. GYMNASIUM |
| 4. RECTORY | |
| 5. SCHOOL | |