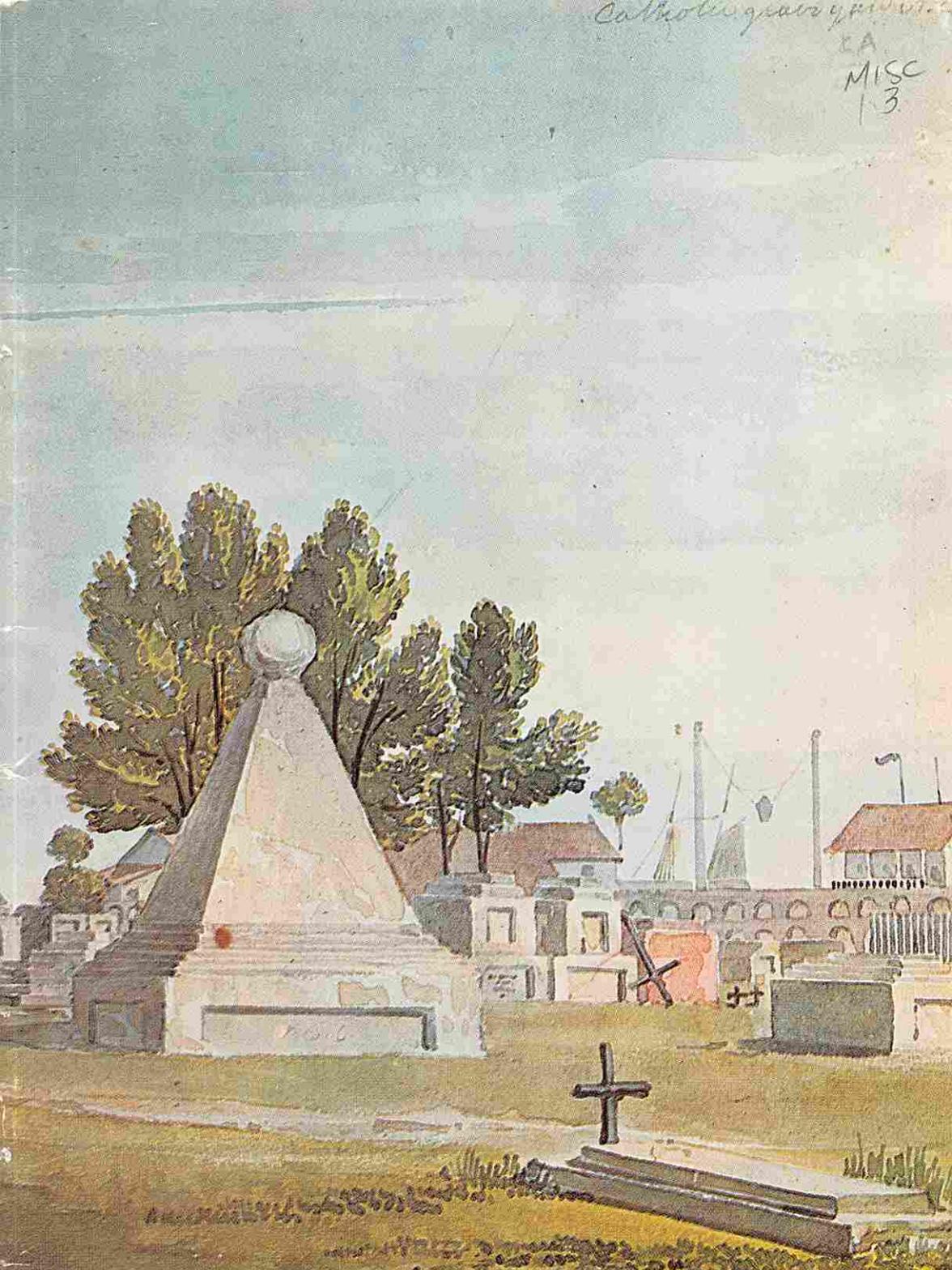


Catholic graves of New Orleans

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The St. Louis Cemeteries of New Orleans

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The St. Louis Cemeteries of New Orleans

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Conti Street Gate St. Louis Cemetery No. 1

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PART I

About the Cover

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 in 1834

Sketch by John H. B. Latrobe

Lent by Mrs. Ferdinand Claiborne Latrobe, II, of Baltimore

John H. B. Latrobe of Baltimore, attorney and historian as well as an accomplished artist, made this sketch when he visited New Orleans in November of 1834. His father, Benjamin H. Latrobe, architect of the Capitol at Washington and the Catholic Cathedral of Baltimore, was architect for the central tower of the St. Louis Cathedral of New Orleans in 1820. Both he and his eldest son Henry, also an architect, died in New Orleans of yellow fever and were buried in the Protestant burying ground behind St. Louis Cemetery No. 1.

The sketch shows the cemetery as it appeared in 1834 with schooners, tied up in the Basin of the nearby Canal Carondelet, clearly visible in the background. The pyramidal Varney monument still stands just inside the main gate. This location was once almost the center of the cemetery which then extended across the near side of Basin street and included the present neutral ground.



Varney tomb

In his notes John H. B. Latrobe says:

“We went to the Catholic burying ground. The tombs here are peculiar to the place. No grave could be dug of the usual depth without coming to water, and to obviate this difficulty in the sepulchre of the dead, the coffin is laid upon the surface of the ground, and a strong structure of brick built around it. This is then plastered and whitewashed. In some there are several bodies, and in others only one. On one side of the yard there is a range of catacombs, like the cells of a honey comb, in which the coffin is placed, and the mouth closed with a stone containing an inscription. I was informed that these cells were purchased for various lengths of time varying from 1 to 10 years and some were owned in perpetuity . . .”

(John H. B. Latrobe and His Times—1803-1891
by John E. Semmes, Baltimore, 1917)



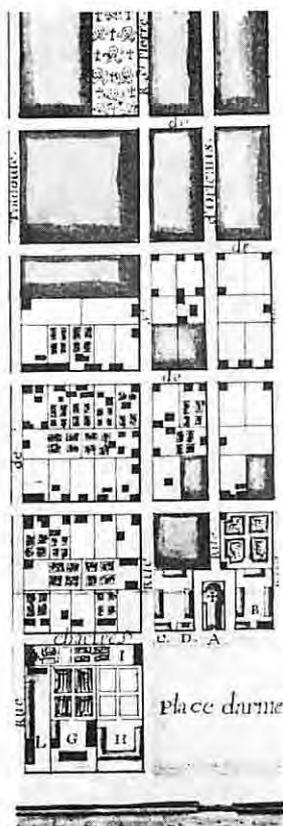
"Cities of The Dead"

Visitors to New Orleans are almost always fascinated by the strange, picturesque appearance of its cemeteries—so different from the green lawns, trees and the granite and marble monuments of conventional cemeteries in other parts of the country. In old cemeteries like the three St. Louis Cemeteries the dead are buried above ground in *tombs* resembling little windowless houses, built close together, row on row, giving the effect of a city of small dimensions.

In these cemeteries the old tombs are made of brick, plastered and whitewashed and their entrances are closed by marble tablets. Many are protected by iron fences with gates. The cemeteries themselves are surrounded by arched brick wall vaults which the Creoles called "fours" (ovens) since they closely resembled old-time bakers' ovens. These vaults, generally about twelve feet high and nine thick, serve the double purpose of enclosing the cemetery and of providing above-ground burial space at low cost.

What brought this unusual New Orleans burial custom into being?

The principal factors in the development of the ancient New Orleans cemeteries were the low, swampy character of the soil, the climate with its unusually heavy annual rainfall of about 64 inches and the customs which the French-Spanish inhabitants brought with them from Europe.



Detail showing first cemetery plan of New Orleans, 1725. (Samuel Wilson, Jr. Collection)



Gonichon's plan, 1731. (Samuel Wilson, Jr. Collection)

The First New Orleans Cemetery (1721)

When the French founded New Orleans in 1718, burials were made along the river bank. In 1721 Adrien DePauger, Royal Military Engineer, arrived to lay out the streets for the new town. The Vieux Carré, as we know it today, is essentially the town that he staked out. A cemetery was designated on the outskirts of the little settlement and an early plan of New Orleans, dated May 20, 1725, shows it as extending along the upper side of St. Peter Street between the streets now known as Burgundy and Rampart. At the time the cemetery was laid out the streets extended no farther back from the river than Dauphine Street. When the first efforts to fortify the city were made after the Indian massacre of the French at Natchez in 1729, a ditch, serving as a moat, was located along this street. This placed the cemetery outside the city limits and it was reached by a winding road from the end of Orleans Street as shown on the plan drawn by Gonichon in 1731.

Although it was stated in the Cabildo records of November 14, 1800 that an early cemetery was located in the square bounded by Bienville, Chartres, Conti and Royal Streets until 1743, none of the contemporary maps and other records of the French colonial period confirm this.

Inasmuch as New Orleans was then an entirely Catholic community, the first burial place was administered by the Parish Church of St. Louis.

Burial in the first cemetery was entirely below ground and because it was on a low and swampy site, the area was surrounded by ditches. The earth from the ditches was used to raise the level of the land and the cemetery was enclosed by a wooden palisade. The little cemetery was thus described by DePauger in a letter which he wrote on February 9, 1724.

Church Burials

Not everybody was buried in the cemetery in the early days. Prominent inhabitants were entombed within the Parish Church throughout the colonial period and interments took place occasionally in the small area of ground immediately adjacent to the church. When the engineer DePauger died in June, 1726, his remains were placed beneath the then uncompleted church which he had designed. Among the old records of the parish is an entry made in 1769 of "the burial of Mr. St. Martin which was granted freely within the church by virtue of the gifts which he had made to said church for repairing it." For the solemn service at his funeral, the church was draped in black and lighted by 272 candles.

On August 27, 1784, the Spanish Cabildo (governing body) "considering the danger to the public health . . . and especially knowing that the church and grounds are too small to permit further interments" ordered the wardens to refuse burials in the church other than those of distinguished inhabitants of the colony.

More About New Orleans' First Cemetery

In 1742, under the direction of Father Charles, Capuchin Rector of St. Louis Church, the cemetery was surrounded with a five foot brick wall. To build it, the wealthier had contributed money to buy bricks and mortar and the poorer classes their labor. The wall was dedicated with great ceremony on All Saints' Day, 1743. A large wooden cross was erected in the center of the area.

For nearly seventy years the St. Peter Street Cemetery served the city. During that time, in 1762, Louisiana passed from the rule of France to Spain and New Orleans grew from a village to a sizeable little city. 1788 was a year of calamity—the river overflowed, there was a great fire which destroyed 856 houses and laid waste four-fifths of the city, followed by a serious epidemic which brought death to many people. In that year the Cabildo, realizing that the cemetery was filled and urged by local physicians who feared another outbreak of pestilence due to the proximity of the cemetery to the city, ordered the cemetery closed to further interments and a new cemetery, further from the center of population, to be established.

The new cemetery was to be selected "in agreement with the Very Reverend Father Vicar General" who would also see that it be "duly blessed in accordance with the rites of our Holy Church and fenced with pickets at the expense of the City Treasury; burial in the said cemetery may be started immediately, from which time burial in the actual [old] cemetery is absolutely prohibited." Thus came into existence St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 which occupies the site between streets known today as Basin, Conti, Trémé and St. Louis. The site selected was at the edge of the city "in the rear of the Charity Hospital about 40 yards from its garden." It occupied a space 300 feet square and until officially approved, was designated as temporary. On August 14, 1789, a Royal Decree was issued in which "His Majesty was pleased to approve the construction of the new cemetery." The burial grounds were then designated as permanent and the authorities paid Antonio Guidry 523 pesos, 7 reales for "ex-

penses and personal labor for fencing the new cemetery.” The Royal Edict also decreed that the old cemetery “was to be [eventually] used as a site for the construction of houses.”

It is interesting to note that, despite the founding of a new cemetery, burials in the St. Peter Street Cemetery continued for some years. In 1797 when Don Almonester y Roxas was building a new church of St. Louis (the Cathedral) at his own expense, he thriftily made use of bricks from the wall of the old cemetery. The unfenced cemetery created an embarrassment for the Cabildo which ordered the old cemetery fenced with pickets but declined to censure the philanthropic Don Almonester for his action. It is quite possible that some of the bricks from the first cemetery are still in the present Cathedral of St. Louis which was largely rebuilt in 1850.

PART II

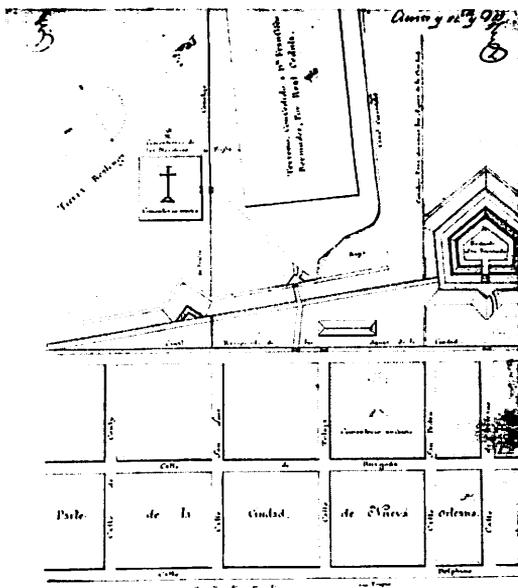
St. Louis Cemetery No. I (1789)



Basin Street entrance gates

When one visits this venerable place today, one stands in the presence of the almost forgotten dead of a century and a half ago; the realization grows that beneath the gray and often uncared-for ruins of once-handsome tombs repose the remains of men and women who were at one time the most illustrious of New Orleans.

The tombs in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 are arranged with little regard for order. The paths are tortuous; there is very little grass and only an occasional shrub or palm. The plastered brick tombs of every conceivable shape lean this way and that. These tombs were made of brick because there is no natural stone near New Orleans and the least expensive permanent building material at hand was the soft red brick—burned in local brickyards. To preserve the brickwork it was necessary to use plaster and whitewash; some marble, imported at considerable expense, was employed, mainly for nameplates and tablets. Unfortunately, from ex-



PLANO

de los Cementerios, Viejo, y antiguo Reducido, Baxo las dif-
 erencias de los Puntos Mas Nobles, del Mismo Barrio.

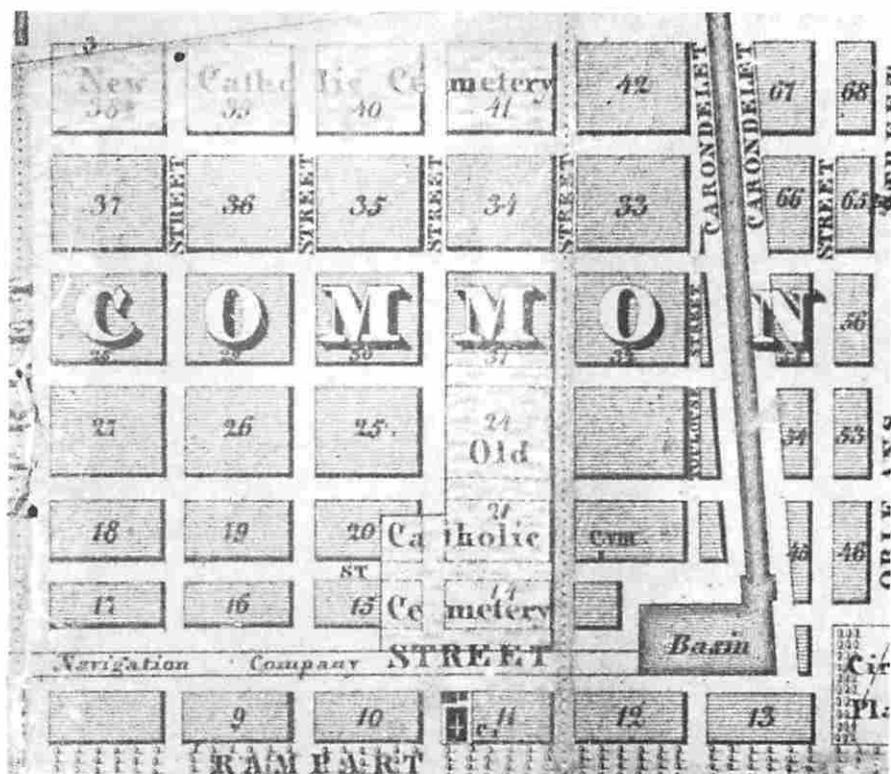
12 junio 1801 Carlos Trudeau

2 1/2"

Plan of the old and new cemeteries by
 Carlos Trudeau, 1801.

posure to the sun and rain of a century and a half, many inscriptions have become illegible and some of the slabs have become fantastically warped or have perished completely.

At the rear of the cemetery was a burial ground for non-Catholics. This was given by the City in 1805 to Christ Church (Episcopal), the first Protestant church in New Orleans. In the rear of the Protestant Cemetery was a graveyard for Negroes and apparently some Catholic burials took place outside the confines of the walls of the Catholic Cemetery.



Part of Charles F. Zimpel's map of 1834 showing St. Louis Cemeteries No. 1 and No. 2. (Richard Koch Collection)

St. Louis No. 1, being on semi-swampy land, frequently flooded after heavy rains and at least on one occasion, when the water of the Macarty Crevasse (1816) backed into the city, the cemetery had to be closed to funerals until the water receded and burials were made temporarily in a cemetery across the Mississippi. To remedy this situation, river sand was hauled into the cemetery from time to time.

The celebrated architect Benjamin H. B. Latrobe described the St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 in his journal, after a visit made on March 8, 1819:

"I walked today to the burial grounds on the Northwest side of town. There is an enclosure—for the Catholic Church—of about 300 feet square and immediately adjoining is the burial place of the Protestants, of about equal dimensions. The Catholic tombs are very different in character from those of our Eastern and Northern cities. They are of bricks, much larger than necessary to enclose a single coffin, and plastered over, so as to have a very solid and permanent appearance . . . They are crowded close together, without any particular attention to aspect

"In one corner of the Catholic burying grounds are two sets of catacombs [wall vaults], of three stories each . . . Many of the catacombs were occupied, but not in regular succession, and the mouths of some were filled with marble slabs having inscriptions. But more were bricked up and plastered without any indication of the person's name who occupied it.

"The Protestant burying ground has tombs of the same construction, but a little varied in character, and they are all arranged parallel to the sides of the enclosure . . . The monument to the wife, child and brother-in-law of Governor Claiborne is the most conspicuous and has a panel enriched with very good sculpture.

"There are two or three graves open and expecting their tenants; 8 or 9 inches below the surface they are filled with water and were not three feet deep. Thus, all persons here [who are interred in the earth] are buried in the water*."

*Impressions Respecting New Orleans, p .82.

The Protestant Section

Part of the Protestant section of St. Louis No. 1 was in the way of an extension of Trémé Street so in 1822 the City offered Christ Church a tract of land in the Faubourg St. Marie for a new cemetery. This was to be the Girod Street Cemetery; by 1838 most of the graves in the Protestant section were emptied and their remains removed to the new location. In 1840 what was left of the section on the west side of Trémé Street was sold for building lots. Today all that is left of the Protestant section is a small, desolate strip of land at the rear of the Catholic Cemetery, except for the tombs of the Thomas Layton family which has kept them in good condition. This section also contains the graves of two young Americans who died in the defense of New Orleans against the British in 1814 and of one of their companions-in-arms who died of fever. There is also here a notable monument designed by Benjamin Latrobe in memory of Eliza Lewis (1784-1804), young first wife of Governor William C. C. Claiborne; her child and her brother, Micajah Green Lewis, who lost his life in a duel defending the honor of his brother-in-law (1805).



Ledger slab of William P. Canby, USN, who was killed in a naval engagement preceding the Battle of New Orleans, 1814.

Some Pioneer Families in St. Louis No. 1



Tomb of Mandeville de Marigny

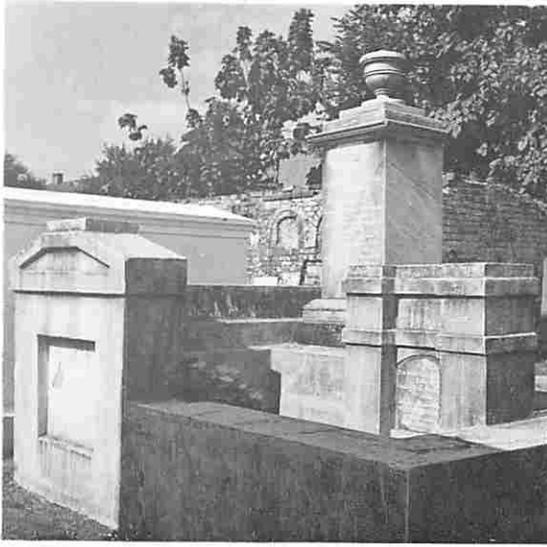
St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is the last resting place of a great many pioneer New Orleans families. Among the best known are: those of Etienne Boré (1741-1820), first mayor of New Orleans on whose plantation Louisiana sugar was first successfully granulated commercially; of his grandson, Charles Gayarré (1805-1895) the historian, who lies in the tomb

with his grandfather; of Daniel Clark (1760-1813), wealthy Irish-born merchant, American Consul in New Orleans during the last days of the Spanish regime and later Territorial Delegate to Congress; also of Myra Clark Gaines (1805-1885) who, as his daughter, claimed immense tracts of land from the City of New Orleans in one of the longest (65 years) and most complicated lawsuits of the nineteenth century; of Paul Morphy (1837-1884), in his time the world's greatest chess player; of Blaise Cenas (1776-1812), the first United States Postmaster of New Orleans;



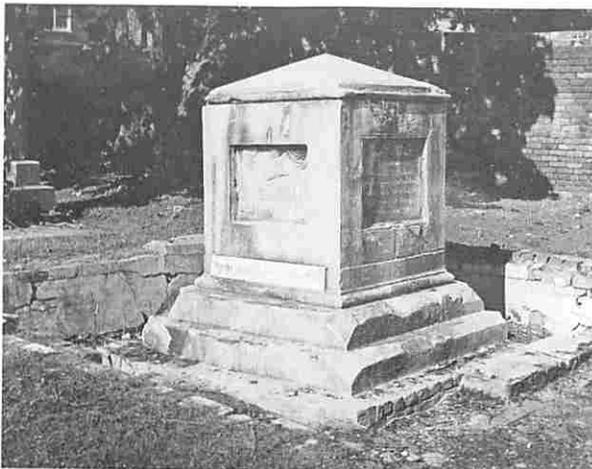
Supposed tomb of Marie Laveau, the Voodoo Queen.

de Marigny (1785-1868), whose family was at one time fabulously wealthy and whose pecadillos finally brought him to poverty in his old age; of Colonel Michel Fortier (1750-1819), Royal Armourer and soldier who fought with the Spanish under Governor Galvez to help capture Manchac and Baton Rouge from the British and who was later in life a member of the first City Council of New Orleans; of Dr. Joseph Montegut (1735-1819), a leading physician and chief surgeon of the Charity Hospital who came to New Orleans in 1769 and who was characterized in 1803 as a man "held in much respect in point of character, conduct, family and fortune"; of his grandson, Edgard Montegut (1806-1880), who was mayor of New Orleans from 1844-1846 and who also lies in the Montegut tomb; of Louis Moreau Lislet and Pierre Derbigny (1769-1829), jurists who worked together to draw up the Civil Code of Louisiana. Derbigny was Governor of Louisiana from 1828 until his accidental death on September 25, 1829, as a result of being thrown from his carriage by runaway horses; of Marie Laveau, one of New Orleans most notorious Voodoo queens whose remains, identified as those of the Widow Paris, reputedly rest in a tomb much marked for good luck by the chalked "x's" of visitors.



Monument of Clarisse Duralde, second wife of William C. C. Claiborne, first American Governor of Louisiana. This monument, made in Philadelphia, was erected here in 1811.

The oddly shaped tomb of Governor Claiborne's second wife, Clarisse Duralde, who died in 1809 at the age of 21, lies but a few steps away from that of his first wife. A tender epitaph, "For the virtuous there is a happy and better world" is engraved on the second Mrs. Claiborne's tomb; an almost similar inscription is on the tomb of the first Mrs. Claiborne.



Monument of Eliza Lewis, first wife of Governor Claiborne, and Micajah Lewis. Benjamin H. Latrobe, architect, 1811.



Sculpture by Franzoni on the Claiborne tomb. Latrobe describes the subject: "A female lies on a bed with her child lying across her body, both apparently just departed. A winged figure, pointing upward holds over her head the crown of immortality. At the foot of the bed kneels the husband in an attitude of extreme grief . . . The Governor's rank is indicated by the fasces at the head of the bedstead."

Notable Structures



Tomb of New Orleans Italian Mutual Benevolent Society

From an architectural point of view there are many interesting and several notable structures in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. A row of well designed Italian marble tombs, including those of the LeBaron, Mioton, Chiapella, Millaudon, Maspereau, Chrétion, Soniat-Dufossat, and McCall-Jones families, are almost hidden in the right hand part of the cemetery near the rear. In other sections, the tombs of Henry Dick and of Cesare Olivier and of the Pons family are noteworthy. Unfortunately, the Byzantine chapel-tomb of the Jesuit Fathers which once graced the cemetery has been destroyed.

Dominating the whole cemetery by its size is the tomb of the French Society which was erected in 1848. Another large "society" tomb is that of the Portuguese Benevolent Association which was built in 1850. The vaults of this tomb rise above each other in five tiers. A Spanish group, the Cervantes Mutual Benevolent Society's tomb, is surmounted by a tall rusticated obelisk. The vaults of the Orleans Battalion of Artillery are closed with iron shutters and the tomb is surrounded by a fence simulating old cannon and anchor chains, now falling into ruin.

The most striking society tomb in the cemetery is that of the New Orleans Italian Mutual Benevolent Society which was founded in 1848. The tomb, a baroque marble circular affair, has 24 vaults and a receptacle in its basement closed by an iron door. It was designed by Pietro Gualdi, architect, and erected in 1857 at a cost of \$40,000 under the presidency of Joseph A. Barelli who also built the unique memorial to his son in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. This tomb, which is surmounted by a female figure holding a cross, features two niches, one of which contains a large statue representing "Italia" and the other of a woman with children representing "Charity."



View of St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 from Conti St. made by Mugnier about 1885. Several of the tombs shown, including the Jesuit Byzantine chapel, have since disappeared. (Leonard V. Huber Collection)

The Oven Vaults and Tomb Burials



Row of wall vaults along Conti Street with spire of old Mortuary Chapel

Of great interest are the wall vaults, the ovens, some of which today are in a state of picturesque dilapidation, the lower rows having sunk to such a degree that it is not possible to open them. This latter condition was due to the improved drainage of the city which caused the vegetable matter of the underlying swamp to disintegrate; also because of the fact that through the years more and more filling was brought into the cemetery.

The Creole custom of using a single vault for a number of entombments is one that never fails to arouse the curiosity of visitors. As the occasion requires, the remains of the last occupant of the vault are gathered and pushed to the back of the vault, the decayed casket wood being removed and burned; the vault is then ready to receive another body.

In the private tombs, which generally consist of two vaults, one above the other, and a pit (caveau) or receptacle below, bodies are removed from the upper vaults and consigned to the receptacle to make room for further occupancy on the occasion of subsequent funerals. Thus a small, two-vault family tomb is used many times for the interment of several generations of its owners, a very practical and relatively inexpensive arrangement.



Two family tombs with fine iron gates

The St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 had been established for 15 years when the Louisiana Territory was bought from France in 1803 and New Orleans came under the American flag. At that time the population of the city was about 6,000 but due to the arrival of a large number of refugees from Santo Domingo and the influx of the Americans the number had swelled to 24,552 by 1810. The city grew by leaps and bounds; in 1815, at the time of the Battle of New Orleans, there were 33,000 persons and the St. Louis Cemetery was rapidly filling up. By 1817 the church wardens asked the City Council for permission to extend the boundaries of the cemetery south to Bienville Street. The population figure reached 41,000 in 1820 and Mayor Roffignac found the cemetery so overcrowded and conditions in it so unsanitary that he forbade burials during the summer months.

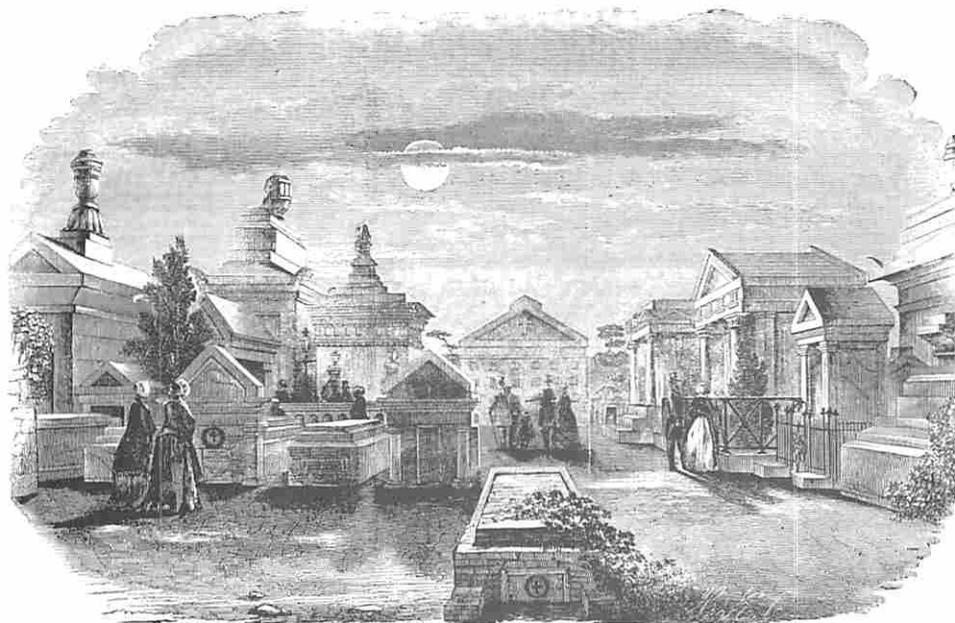


Wrought iron gate, lyre design, in front of the Grima family tomb.

PART III

St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 (1823)

SKETCHES IN LOUISIANA.



THE FRENCH CEMETERY, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

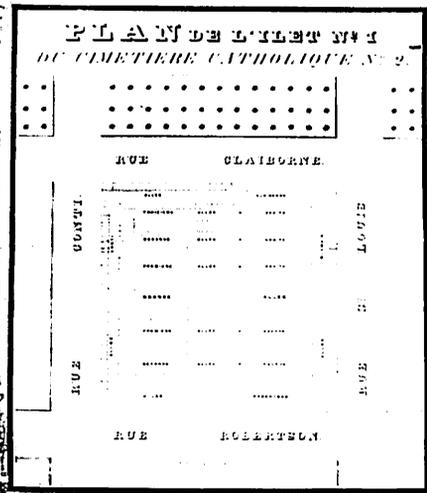
View of St. Louis No. 2 from a sketch made about 1855 (Leonard V. Huber Collection)

In 1820 the City Council, moved by the then current belief that contagion of yellow fever, cholera and other pestilential diseases were spread by "miasmas" emanating from cemeteries, determined to find a new site for a cemetery farther removed from the center of population. The site selected was along the Carondelet Canal, probably near present day Galvez and Lafitte Streets. The City Council had their surveyor estimate the cost of fencing the projected burial place but an injunction by C. Pontalba, who owned a tract of land nearby, and a prolonged controversy with the wardens of the Cathedral brought the plan to naught.

The Council insisted on locating a new cemetery at least 400 toises (2400 feet) from the city limits and the nearest practical site, on what is now Claiborne Avenue between Canal, St. Louis and Robertson Streets, was only about 300 toises (1800 feet) from Rampart Street. The matter was finally settled when, after an enabling act by the State Legislature, the City dedicated about four-fifths of squares 38, 39, 40 and 41 as St. Louis Cemetery No. 2, deeded it to the wardens of the Cathedral and fenced the site. The church consecrated it for burials in August, 1823.

Antoine Phillip LeRiche, a Parisian born architect-engineer, was appointed "Inspector of the Cemeteries" shortly afterwards. LeRiche carefully examined the soil of the cemetery and brought in a plan of the work that he proposed to do to start operations. In 1824 the wardens contracted with him to build 30 "tombs" (vaults) for white and another 30 for Negroes at \$50.00 each. That same year LeRiche requested and the City let him use the Negroes of the chain gang to fill and grade the main aisles. Records in the archives of the Cathedral indicate that considerable earth filling was added to the cemeteries from time to time and that numerous contracts for the building of wall vaults were made.

From contemporary city maps, the cemetery is shown as one continuous piece of property running from Canal to St. Louis Streets. The division of the cemetery into squares (as it exists today) was done when Iberville, Bienville, Conti and St. Louis Streets were cut through. A meticulously drawn plan of the cemetery on Square 41 dated July 31, 1847 exists in the city archives and is illustrated in this book. In 1937-1940 Joseph Carey, an engineer employed by the Cathedral, surveyed and drew accurate plans of the four squares of the St. Louis Cemeteries Nos. 1 and 2.



Plan of Square 1 of St. Louis No. 2, 1847. (New Orleans Public Library)

Four-fifths of Square 38, the once facing Canal Street, though fenced, was only used for a few scattered burials; it adjoined the property of Newton Richards, a builder of tombs and monuments who had bought it in 1840. In 1845 an individual with the improbable name of Increase Stoddard Wood bought out Richards and succeeded in getting the New Orleans City Council to sell him the rest of the square for \$11,400.00 in March, 1846. To do this, the Council had to annul the City's gift of the land, made twenty-three years previously to the wardens of St. Louis Cathedral on the grounds that to extend the cemetery to Canal Street at that time would endanger the health of the rapidly growing city. The City agreed to indemnify and furnish the wardens with "the means of establishing a cemetery of greater extent in a location less dangerous to the public health." Experts appointed by the City and wardens were to select and approve the location of the new cemetery which "ought to be beyond Bayou St. John."

Increase Wood built a cotton compress on his land and eventually sold it to a brewing concern which erected several large buildings on it, some of which were still standing in 1963.

Of the three squares which comprise the cemetery today, the burial places in the square between Iberville and Bienville Streets are almost exclusively owned by Negroes. The square between Bienville and Conti Streets contains the most elaborate tombs; the square between Conti and



Multi-storied mutual benevolent society tomb

St. Louis Streets is of lesser interest from an architectural point of view although there are several important tombs in it. All three of the squares are surrounded by wall vaults except one side of the middle square.

St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 is well laid out with a straight center aisle and parallel side aisles. Like St. Louis No. 1, this cemetery has a number of "society" tombs—multiple vaults built by mutual benefit groups for their members. Among the most important are those of the Cazadores de Orléans, a group attached to the Louisiana Legion, built in 1836, and the Iberian Society, built in 1845. Both groups are of Spanish origin. There are many Negro society tombs in the square between Iberville and Bienville Streets, some of them built five tiers high on a single lot.

St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 is also notable for the fine tombs designed by the talented architect, J. N. B. DePouilly who came to New Orleans in the 1830's from France. DePouilly, who designed the St. Louis Exchange



Tomb of The Orleans Cazadores, 1836. Probably designed by J. N. B. DePouilly.

Hotel and the present St. Louis Cathedral, had brought with him a book of scale drawings of the best known tombs and monuments in Père LaChaise Cemetery in Paris which, at that time, was at the summit of Greek Revival design in the field of cemetery memorials. Both this book and a scrapbook containing his sketches still exist and it is possible to trace the influence of the monuments in Père LaChaise on the work that DePouilly did for his clients in New Orleans. Among the best designed tombs in St. Louis No. 2, and which in turn influenced other builders who copied DePouilly's structures, are those which the architect made for the Plauché, Peniston-Duplantier, Miltenberger and Grailhe families. He also designed the McCall-Jones tomb in St. Louis No. 1, the New Lusitanos Society's tomb in Girod and the Irad Ferry and Maunsell White tombs in Cypress Grove Cemetery. DePouilly's mortal remains rest in a wall vault in the cemetery between St. Louis and Conti Streets.



Tablet from the wall vault tomb of the DePouilly brothers, architects.

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Advertisements from early city directories (Leonard V. Huber Collection)

Among the “marbriers” — marble cutters and tomb builders who constructed many of the more elaborate tombs in St. Louis No. 2 were Brand, Isnard Courcelle, Monsseaux, Newton Richards and Florville Foy.



Grailhe tomb, 1850, J. N. B. De Pouilly architect.



Chapel-like tomb of the Blineau and Carrière families, 1845.

The Mortuary Chapel



*From a photograph by Mugnier about 1885
(Samuel Wilson, Jr. Collection)*



Tomb of Joseph Guillot, one of the architect-builders of the Mortuary Chapel.

Closely associated with the history of St. Louis Cemeteries Nos. 1 and 2 was the mortuary chapel of Saint Anthony, now the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Rampart and Conti Streets. The chapel was constructed in 1826-27 by Gurlie and Guillot, architect-builders, to serve as a mortuary chapel when the City Council forbade the holding of funeral services in St. Louis Cathedral since it was feared that the taking of corpses to the larger church was a means of spreading disease. A simple structure of brick, plastered, with an open, arched loggia surmounted by a belfry and steeple, this little church was dedicated on December 27, 1827 by the beloved Père Antoine and until 1860 was used solely for funerals.

An interesting eye-witness account of a funeral service in the chapel and the subsequent burial services in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 was written in 1835 by Joseph Holt Ingraham who wrote under the nom-de-plume of "A Yankee." In a book called "The Southwest" he wrote:

"I entered Rampart Street . . . and as I passed down the street to where I had observed, not far distant, a crowd gathered around the door of a large white stuccoed building, burdened by a clumsy hunchbacked kind of tower, surmounted by a huge wooden cross.

"On approaching nearer, I discovered many carriages extended in a long line up the street, and a hearse with tall black plumes, before the door of the building, which, I was informed, was the Catholic chapel. Passing through the crowd around the entrance, I gained the portico, where I had a full view of the interior, [in] which was neither pew nor seat; elevated upon a high frame or altar, over which was thrown a black velvet pall, was placed a coffin, covered also with black velvet. A dozen huge candles, nearly as long and as large as a ship's royal-mast, standing in candlesticks five feet high, burned around the corpse mingled with innumerable candles of the ordinary size, which were thickly sprinkled among them, like lesser stars, amid the twilight gloom of the chapel. The mourners formed a lane from the altar to the door, each holding a long, unlighted wax taper, tipped at the larger end with red, and ornamented with fanciful paper cuttings. Around the door, and along the sides of the chapel stood casual spectators, strangers and negro servants without number. As I entered, several priests and singing boys, in the black and white robes of their order, were chanting the service of the dead. The effect was solemn and impressive. In a few moments the ceremony was completed and four gentlemen, dressed in deep mourning, each with a long white scarf, extending from one shoulder across the breast, and nearly to the feet, advanced, and taking the coffin from its station, bore it through the line of mourners, who fell in, two and two behind them, to the hearse which immediately moved on to the graveyard with its burden, followed by the carriages, as in succession they drove up to the chapel and received the mourners. . . .

"Leaving the chapel, I followed the procession which I have described, for at least three quarters of a mile down a long street or road at right angles with Rampart Street, to the place of interment. The priests and boys, who in their black and white robes had performed the service for the dead, leaving the chapel by a private door in the rear of the building made their appearance in the street leading to the cemetery, as the funeral train passed down, each with a mitred cap upon his head, and there forming into a procession upon the sidewalk, they moved off in a course opposite to the one taken by the funeral train, and soon disappeared in the direction of the cathedral. Two priests, however, remained with the procession, and with it, after passing on the left hand the "Old Catholic Cemetery" [St. Louis No. 1], which, being full to repletion, is closed and sealed for the "Great Day", arrived at the new burial place [St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. Here the mourners alighted from their carriages and proceeded on foot to the tomb. The priests, bare-headed and solemn, were the last who entered, except myself and a few other strangers attracted by curiosity.

"The cemetery is quite out of the city; there being no dwelling or enclosure of any kind beyond it. On approaching it, the front of the street presents the appearance of a lofty brick wall of very great length, with a spacious doorway in the centre. This gate way is about 10 feet deep; and one passing through it would imagine the wall of the same solid thickness.

This, however, is only apparent. The wall which surrounds, or is to surround the four sides of the burial-ground (for it is yet uncompleted) is about twelve feet in height and ten in thickness."

Ingraham then described the wall vaults, which he estimated numbered about 1,800. He continues:

"When I entered the gateway, I was struck with surprise and admiration. Though destitute of trees, from the entrance to the opposite side through the centre of the graveyard, a broad avenue or street extends nearly a mile in length (sic); and on either side of this are innumerable isolated tombs, of all shapes and sizes and description, built above ground. The idea of a Lilliputian city was at first suggested to my mind on looking down this extensive avenue. Many of the tombs were constructed alike and several were indeed miniature Grecian temples; many of them otherwise plain, were surmounted by a tower supporting a cross. All were perfectly white, arranged with the most perfect regularity and distant little more than a foot from each other. The whole cemetery was divided into squares, formed by these narrow streets intersecting the principal avenue. It was in reality a "City of the Dead."

"The procession, after passing two thirds of the way up the spacious walk, turned down one of the narrower alleys where a new tomb, built on a line with the others, gaped wide to receive its destined inmate. The procession stopped. The coffin was let down from the shoulders of the bearers and rolled on wooden cylinders into the tomb. The mourners silently gathered around; every head was bared; and amid the deep silence that succeeded, the calm, clear, melancholy voice of the priest suddenly swelled upon the still evening air, in the plaintive chant of the last service for the dead. "Requiescat in pace!" was slowly chanted by the priest—repeated in subdued voices by the mourners, and echoing among the tombs, died away in the remotest recesses of the cemetery.

"The dead was surrendered to the companionship of the dead—the priest and mourners moved slowly away from the spot and the silence of the still evening was only broken by the clinking of the careless mason as he proceeded to wall up the aperture of the tomb."

There was a terrible epidemic in New Orleans in 1832 and still another in 1833. During the plague of 1833, in September alone nearly a thousand people died.* The sexton of St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 was hard pressed to find space for new graves. Still another cemetery was urgently needed. The Council, holding a special meeting, authorized the opening of a plot of land for burials which had been given to the city by Don Almonester during the Spanish regime situated on "Leprous Road," a section on the outskirts of town once abandoned to lepers.



D'Aquin family tomb

*Soon after, the City Council made it mandatory by law under penalty of \$100.00 fine, to bury a dead person with 24 hours after death. This was the beginning of a custom of relatively quick burials which largely exists in New Orleans today.



Maignan-Rochereau tomb. A simple plastered brick vault surmounted by a beautifully designed and skillfully executed wrought iron cross.

A little over a year later (March 5, 1835) the Council passed an ordinance which required that "the burying of all persons dying in the city of New Orleans or in the vicinity thereof shall take place in the cemetery established on land purchased (in 1834) from Mr. Evariste Blanc, at the Bayou St. John." The ordinance exempted tomb and vault burials in existing above ground structures but forbade further interments in the ground in all other cemeteries.

Blanc's land extended from present day Broad Street along Orleans Street to Bayou St. John, a distance of more than a mile from the built-up section of New Orleans. Realizing that some means of transportation would have to be provided to reach this distant burial ground, an enterprising capitalist by the name of John Arrowsmith (who also owned land in the vicinity) proposed to build a railroad for the transport of corpses and mourners from St. Claude Street out Orleans Street along the banks of the then open Girod Canal to the cemetery at Bayou St. John. The City Council on March 23, 1835, authorized the mayor to enter into a contract with Arrowsmith to build the road and specified that he was to provide separate cars for the transportation of the corpses of white people, of free colored persons, and of slaves at fees which ranged from \$3.00 for whites to 50c for slaves; mourners were to be carried in other cars at 25c the round trip. During the next few years Arrowsmith spent \$12,000 in building his grisly railroad but the City Council failed to establish the cemetery on Blanc's land and the line failed for want of patrons, both dead and alive.

Notable Persons Who Lie in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2



Gothic tomb of the Caballero family and granite obelisk in memory of François Xavier Martin. Martin monument was designed and erected by Newton Richards, 1847.

Within the confines of St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 lie the mortal remains of a large segment of the New Orleansians who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. Among them are such notables as General Jean Baptiste Plauché (1785-1860), friend of Andrew Jackson who commanded the Orleans Battalion at the Battle of New Orleans (Plauché tomb, main cross aisle, middle cemetery); François Xavier Martin (1762-1846), jurist and author of the first history of Louisiana who is memorialized by a



Tomb of Dominique You



Granite monument to Alexander Milne. The tall tomb to the left is that of the De la Ronde family.



Tomb of Major Daniel Carmick, USMC, of Philadelphia.

stubby obelisk (main cross aisle, middle cemetery); Pierre Soulé (1801-1870), orator, diplomat, U. S. Senator, once Ambassador to Spain, and Confederate provost-marshal; Dominique You, pirate captain under Jean Lafitte who fought in the Battle of New Orleans, who later became a useful citizen. When he died in 1830 military honors were paid to his memory, banks and business houses were closed and flags on ships and public buildings were placed at half mast (main aisle); Alexander Milne (1744-1838), a philanthropic Scot who at one time owned more than 20 miles of land along the borders of Lake Pontchartrain and for whom "Milneburg" was named. Milne, who died at the age of 94, left a considerable fortune to found homes for destitute orphan boys and girls; his will is imperishably engraved on the surfaces of his ornate monument (main cross aisle, middle cemetery); Major Daniel Carmick (1772-1816), United States Marine



Unusual red brick tomb of the Freret family

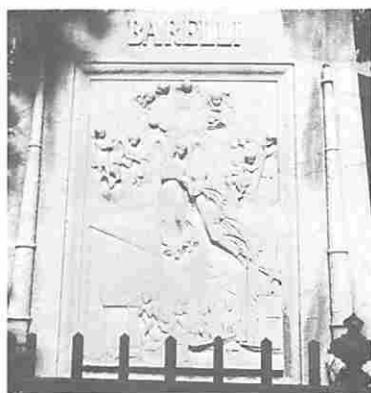
Corps, who fought in the Battle of New Orleans and eventually died of wounds received in battle (square between St. Louis and Conti Streets to the right of the main aisle); Jacques Pitot (1761-1831), who served as the second Mayor of New Orleans in 1804-1805; James Freret (1838-1897), distinguished architect whose tomb is near Major Carmick's; Claude Trémé (1759-1828), owner of the large tract in which the cemetery is located and which was developed into the Faubourg Trémé (main aisle, square between St. Louis and Conti Streets); John Davis (1773-1839), gambler, promoter, owner of the Théâtre d'Orleans; Louis Tabary, actor-manager who came to New Orleans in 1805 from Santo Domingo; J. C. de St. Romes (1791-1843), a native of Port-au-Prince and a refugee from the Santo Domingo slave uprising who came to New Orleans and became the peppery editor of *Le Courier de la Louisiane*; Oscar J. Dunn, an octoroon plasterer and house painter who rose to be Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana when Henry Clay Warmoth was the Reconstruction governor of the state; Nicholas Girod (1751-1840), mayor of New Orleans 1814-15, whose residence still stands (the so-called Napoleon House, Chartres and St. Louis Streets), finds his rest in a plain brick tomb; Charles Genois (1793-1866), mayor in 1838, lies in a much more elaborate granite tomb.



Tomb of Claude Trémé



Tomb erected by Joseph Barelli in memory of his son



Sculptured panel of the steam-boat explosion on the Barelli tomb

One of the most fascinating tombs is the Barelli tomb (near cemetery office, main cross aisle, middle cemetery) which was erected in 1856 by Joseph Barelli in memory of his young son who lost his life in the explosion of the steamer "Louisiana" in New Orleans harbor on November 15, 1849. The tomb is surmounted by five carved angels and its tablet bears a sculptured scene of the steamboat explosion showing the boy being lifted from the mortal flames into heaven by a sixth angel.



Tomb of Amable Charbonnet, refugee from Santo Domingo, who died in 1832.

The tomb of Amable Charbonnet (1790-1832) (cemetery between St. Louis and Conti Streets, to the left of Conti Street entrance) is particularly interesting both for its Greek Revival design, its excellent carving and for its iron fence. The tomb is exceptionally well preserved and still bears the name of its Paris maker, "Duvey-Marbrier, Rue St. Andre, Popincourt No. 2."



Baroque marble tomb of the Delachaise-Livaudais families whose plantations now form much of up-town New Orleans

The architecture and materials used in building the tombs in St. Louis Nos. 1 and 2 reflect both the cultural growth of the city and its increase in wealth. The first tombs were of whitewashed brick of simple design. In the 1830's, Italian marble was used and a number of skillful and able tomb builders appeared. In the 1840's the city began to import granite from Quincy, Massachusetts, and marble from Tuckahoe, New York for building purposes and these materials were also used in its mortuary architecture.

Among the more architecturally interesting tombs in the St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 are those of the Grailhe and Genoio families (Egyptian style), Peniston-Duplantier, Plauché, Burthe, Charbonnet, Lacoste, Bouigny, Miltenberger, Carmick, Carriere, Cezelar and Puig (Greek Revival style), Caballero (Gothic style), and Delachaise-Livaudais (Baroque style).

Wrought and Cast Iron Work

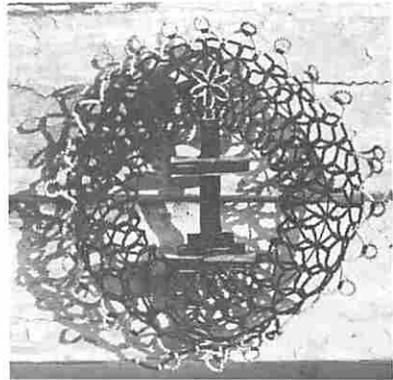
St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 also contains some of the finest examples of wrought and cast iron work in New Orleans. Little grilles enclosing vault fronts and tomb enclosures are scattered throughout the three squares and the cemetery is especially noted for the beauty of the wrought iron crosses which surmount many of the tombs, both private and "society." The nineteenth century smiths worked with a pure quality of iron and many of their creations have withstood more than a century of exposure with very little rust. Not only have they created permanent memorials but many of the designs of their crosses are graceful and appealing.



Lanusse family tomb with superb grille of wrought and cast iron

Immortelles

Immortelles, generally imported from France, once graced the vault slabs and tablets of many of the tombs in the St. Louis Cemeteries. These were fashioned of wire, beads and glass to form "everlasting" funerary ornaments. They so impressed Mark Twain, who wrote of them in 1883:



An immortelle

"The immortelle requires no attention; you just hang it up, and there you are; just leave it alone, it will take care of your grief for you and keep it in mind better than you can; stands weather first rate, and lasts like boiler iron."

Today the immortelles have vanished—victims of changing times.

PART IV

St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 (1854)



The entrance to St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 is ornamented by a set of very heavy gates typical of New Orleans cast iron work. These were made by Francis Lurges, a well known maker of ornamental iron in his day.

St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 had its beginnings in 1848 when an Act was passed by the Legislature in March of that year under which the City Council privileged the Cathedral wardens to establish a new cemetery. The next year, on June 8, 1849, the wardens bought from Felix Labatut a tract of land on Esplanade "two arpents wide by 14 arpents deep for one and 16 for the other arpent" near Bayou St. John. The price was \$15,000 and the wardens used money that the City had set aside for this purpose when they were dispossessed of Square 38 of St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 in 1846. The authorization by the City to establish the new cemetery was accepted by the wardens in December of 1850. It was not, however, until 1854 that the wardens advertised for bids for clearing the land and building fences and an entrance gate.

The plan for the first two "squares" of the new cemetery called for three main aisles, the center being named for Saint Louis and the other two for Saint Peter and Saint Paul; four smaller parallel aisles or allees were named after Saint Mary, Saint Joseph, Saint Magdalene, and Saint Philomene. After the cemetery was in use for some years, on April 14,

1865, a new plan was developed by J. A. D'Hemecourt, surveyor, which greatly extended the depth of the burial grounds. The main aisle was increased in width by 10 feet at the expense of the two side allees so that the cemetery presents a rather uncrowded appearance despite its multitude of closely built tombs.

The cross aisles for the new plan were named for bishops and archbishops of the diocese—Penalver, Dubourg, DeNeckere, Blanc, Odin (and later Perche and Leray). D'Hemecourt's plan envisioned a small cruciform chapel at the entrance. This was never built and the land was later sold as tomb sites. D'Hemecourt calculated that there were 2,580 "emplacements pour tombes" (sites for tombs) and room to build 5,176 wall vaults.

As in the earlier St. Louis Cemeteries, wall vaults were constructed. These give it a very picturesque appearance, as do the quaint tombs, many of which are now more than a century old. Among the "society" tombs in the cemetery are the tombs of the Young Men's Benevolent Association (1866), United Slavonian Benevolent Society (1876), Hellenic Orthodox Community (1928) and several tombs for priests and nuns.



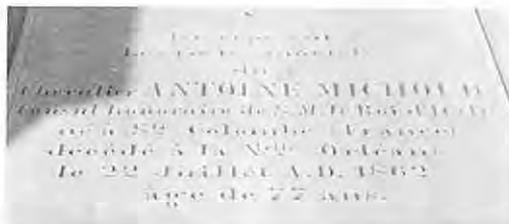
Hellenic Orthodox Community mausoleum designed and erected in 1928 by Victor Huber.

Among the noteworthy personages who find their last rest in St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 are Father François Isidore Turgis (1805-1868), Confederate chaplain who spent his last years as pastor of St. Anthony's Church, the old Mortuary Chapel on Rampart and Conti Streets, and whose modest



Multi-vault tomb of the Little Sisters of the Poor donated by Margaret Haugbery who has been remembered for her many charities by her statue erected in Margaret Place, Camp and Prytania, 1884.

monument was erected by his former comrades of the Army of Tennessee; of Valcour Aime (1798-1867), the fabulous Louisiana sugar planter who could once boast that he raised on his own land in St. James Parish everything to supply a gourmet's dinner, including wines and cigars; of Cyprien Dufour (1819-1871), lawyer and author of "Esquisses Locales"; of the Abbé Adrien Rouquette (1813-1887), poet, missionary priest who lived and worked for many years among the Indians in St. Tammany Parish who called him "Chahta-Ima" (remains removed from St. Louis No. 2 to the tomb of the priests); of Thomy Lafon (1811-1893), a highly respected mulatto philanthropist.



Tombstone of Antoine Michoud whose Chef Menteur plantation is now the site of the NASA plant for the manufacture of rocket engines.

During the Civil War the body of Col. Charles D. Dreux, the first Confederate officer from New Orleans to lose his life (July 5, 1861), was interred in St. Louis No. 3 after a tremendous funeral. Dreux's remains were removed to the tomb of the Army of Tennessee in Metairie Cemetery July 4, 1896.



Monument of James Gallier, architect, designed by his son in 1866.

One of the most interesting monuments in the cemetery is that erected by James Gallier, Jr. to the memory of his distinguished father and step-mother. This cenotaph bears the inscription:

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JAMES GALLIER
ARCHITECT OF NEW ORLEANS
BORN AT RAVENSDALE, IRELAND JULY 24, 1795
BY HIS SON AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS
GENIUS, INTEGRITY AND VIRTUE
AND OF
CATHERINE MARIA ROBINSON
BORN AT BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS
WIFE OF JAMES GALLIER
THEY WERE LOST IN THE STEAMER EVENING STAR WHICH FOUNDERED
ON THE VOYAGE FROM NEW YORK TO NEW ORLANS
OCTOBER 3, 1866



Benachi tomb made entirely of cast iron

All Saints' Day

November first, All Saints' Day, is the New Orleans Memorial Day. For several weeks prior the cemeteries fairly hum with activity. Weeds, and they grow rank in New Orleans cemeteries, are cut down. Tombs are patched and freshly whitewashed. The tap-tap of the marble cutter's mallet is heard, for the names of those who recently took up residence must be carved. Vases of marble, of glass and even bottles are brought. Then comes the great day! Thousands and thousands of chrysanthemums are brought to the cemeteries and reverently placed at the tombs. From morning to late afternoon the cemeteries are thronged and by nightfall become huge bowers of flowers.



A rosary procession

A diligent reporter for *The Picayune* visited the New Orleans cemeteries on All Saints' Day in 1879. This is what he wrote of the three St. Louis Cemeteries:

"The cemetery on Basin and St. Louis Streets [No. 1] witnessed a large concourse of people . . . Here the tomb of the Lusitanos Portuguese Benevolent Association is situated. It was draped in mourning and surmounted by various Portuguese flags. The Italian Benevolent Society's fine tomb was decorated with flags and draped in black. The Société Française, Orleans Artillery, Catalan Society, Sieurs Bien Aimée and other societies bedecked their tombs in becoming manner.

"A detachment of Battery "B", Orleans Artillery, guarded the cemetery and gave the occasion a military aspect.

"The Claiborne, Duralde and other family tombs were adorned with beautiful floral ornaments in the shape of crosses, wreaths, bouquets, etc.

"The St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 was crowded with frequenters. Every tomb and every grave showed the presence of friends in whose hearts reverence for the dead is still fresh. The many society tombs, the Carrière tomb, especially, were decked with the fairest and most fragrant flowers.

"The new St. Louis Cemetery No. 3, on Esplanade near Bayou Bridge, was constantly filled with numbers of the city's wealthiest people. The many family tombs here were all decorated with costly vases and flowers. Some floral ornaments displayed here were truly magnificent and attracted much attention. Further down the broad avenue were the graves of many of the humbler portion of the Catholic population."

Writing in 1951, Elise Kirsch, reminisced of the All Saints' Days that she knew as a girl in the 1880's.* Miss Kirsch, who lived on Robertson Street near Esplanade, "in the nest of the Creole district" and whose grandfather Alfred Barbier, is buried in the French Society tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, wrote of the customs of the times:

"In the early eighties some tombs were decorated with tarlatan which was draped with artificial pansies and moss. Some of the tombs, especially the Society ones, had vases with flowers and also wreaths with seed pearls and glass beads [which] hung all through the day. As these were valuable, some of the members sat throughout the day to watch them.

"The bouquets were made of tiny, stiff chrysanthemums and the colored people always placed a cock's comb (a coarse red homegrown flower) in the center of them held by a stiff perforated paper. There were no large roses nor cultivated mums.

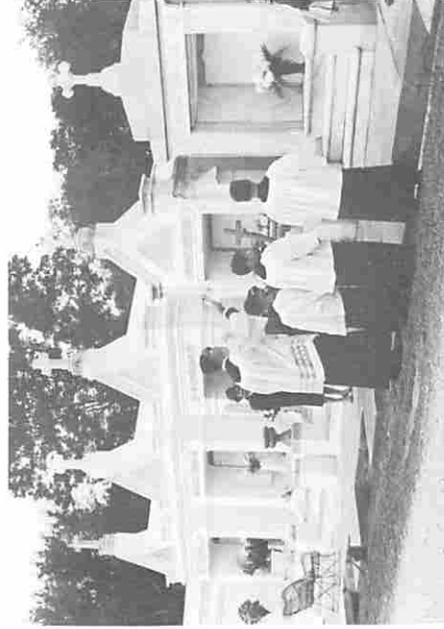
"At the gates and in different places in the cemeteries there were orphans seated at a table accompanied by a nun—there was a collection box where all people donated generously. . . ."

*"Down Town New Orleans in the Early Eighties"



The Very Reverend George Julian, O.M.I., pastor of St. Louis Cathedral, blessing wall vaults.

Customs have changed somewhat since these times. No longer are tombs draped in black and decorated with flags and the nuns and orphans have vanished with the coming of the United Fund, but the custom of visitation and the bringing of flowers on All Saints' Day is still a distinctive New Orleans observance.



Father Julian blessing family tombs

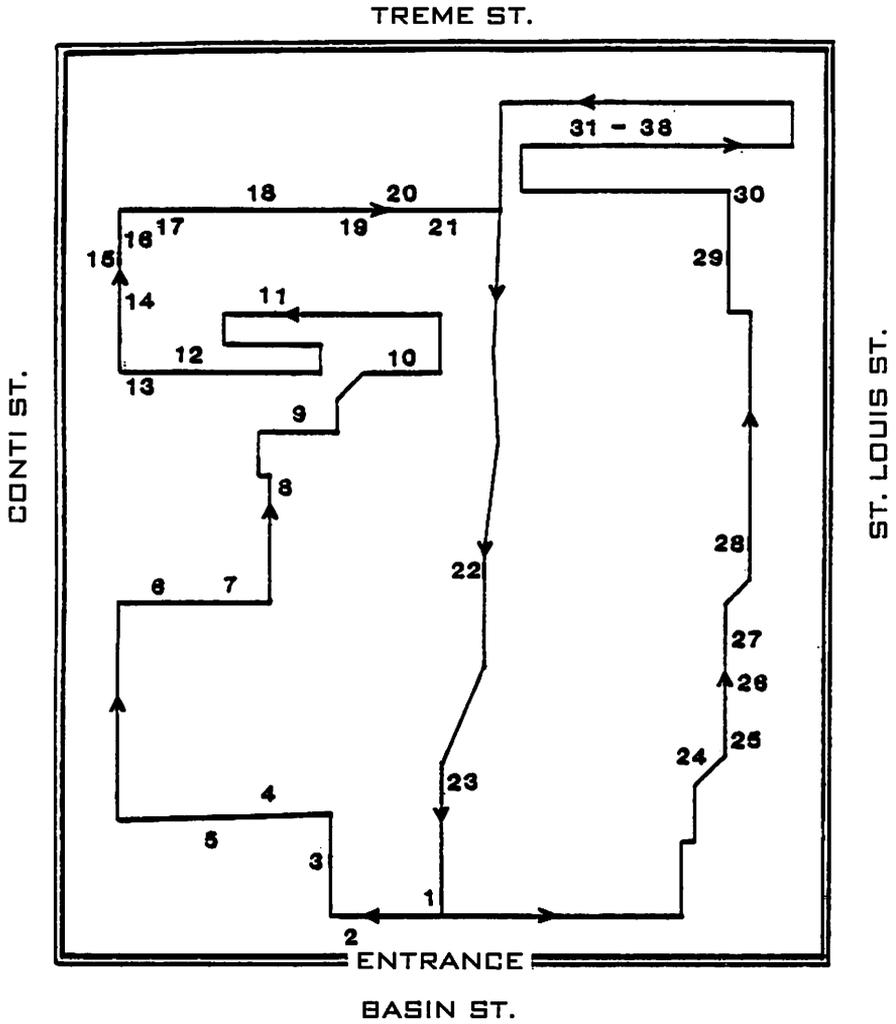
“Since April 1, 1966, when The Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan, Archbishop of New Orleans, established an Office of Cemeteries for the Archdiocese, the St. Louis Cemeteries are owned and operated by the New Orleans Archdiocesan Cemeteries, a Louisiana Corporation, of which the Archbishop is the president. The three St. Louis Cemeteries are managed from the new office located in St. Louis Cemetery No. 3. Inquiries about the St. Louis Cemeteries should be directed to: Office of Cemeteries, Archdiocese of New Orleans, 7887 Walmsley Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70125.”

Notes on my trip to the St. Louis Cemeteries

APPENDIX

ST. LOUIS CEMETERY No. 1

TOUR ROUTES



ST. LOUIS CEMETERY No. 1

Tour Routes

LEFT TOUR

1. Varney Tomb — pg. 4
2. Oven Vaults — pg. 14
3. Marie Laveau Tomb — pg. 14
4. Henry Dick Tomb — pg. 17
5. Paul Morphy Tomb — pg. 14
6. St. Vincent dePaul Society Tomb — pg. 16
7. Italian Society Tomb — pg. 16
8. Portuguese Society Tomb — pg. 16
9. Orleans Battalion Tomb — pg. 17
10. Exhibit Area
11. French Society Tomb — pg. 17
12. Exhibit Area
13. Spanish Society Tomb — pg. 17
14. Pons Tomb — pg. 17
15. Mandeville DeMarigny Tomb — pg. 13
16. Cesare Olivier Tomb — pg. 17
17. Layton Tomb — pg. 12
18. Oven Vault Exhibit Area — pg. 18
19. Claiborne Tomb — pg. 12
20. Veterans Memorials and Landscape Area — pg. 12
21. Myra Clark Gains Tomb — pg. 14

CENTER ALLEY

- Etienne Boré Tomb
22. Pierre Derbigny Tomb — pg. 14
 23. Grima Tomb — pg. 19

RIGHT TOUR

24. Michel Fortier Tomb — pg. 14
25. Carlos Trudeau Tomb — pg. 10
26. Louis Moreau Lisset Tomb — pg. 14
27. Blaise Cenas Tomb — pg. 14
28. Landscape Area
29. Landscape Area
30. Exhibit Area
31. LeBaron Tomb — pg. 17
32. Mioton Tomb — pg. 17
33. Chiapella Tomb — pg. 17
34. Millaudon Tomb — pg. 17
35. McCall-Jones Tomb — pg. 17
36. Soniat-Duffosat Tomb — pg. 17
37. Maspereau Tomb — pg. 17
38. Chretien Tomb — pg. 17

NOTE: Page numbers refer to listing of memorials in this booklet.

New Orleans Archdiocesan Cemeteries

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1

GENERAL HISTORY

When New Orleans was founded in 1718 burials were made on the river bank. The first cemetery, in 1721, was on St. Peter Street. Burials were also made in the Church. The first cemetery was demolished when this cemetery, St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, was established by Spanish Royal Decree of August 14, 1789. As the City grew St. Louis No. 2 was established on Claiborne Avenue in 1823 and St. Louis No. 3 on Esplanade Avenue in 1854.

MULTIPLE BURIALS

One of the oldest burial grounds in the Mississippi Valley, St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is still in use. From its beginning in 1789 it has been the custom to make multiple burials in the tombs and vaults. When space in a tomb is re-used the remains of previous burials are lowered into a receptacle below the ground level or placed in the back or side of the vault. This practice of re-using burial space has become a custom here and in other cemeteries in New Orleans.

SOCIETY VAULTS

Most immigrants arrived in the city with little material goods. To provide medicine, doctors, funeral expenses and burial facilities it became common practice for mutual benefit associations to be formed. Multi-storied vaults were constructed in which members and their families were entitled to entombment. Mutual Benefit Society Vaults of French, Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese, Irish and Negro origin are to be found in this and the other old cemeteries in the city.

SINGLE BURIAL

This remnant of a once attractive structure shows how provision was made for the burial of a single person. A brick vault was built into the ground into which the casket was placed. A brick covering was then constructed over the crypt, plastered and then white-washed.

1. VARNEY TOMB

Alley No. 1-L, Tomb No. 1, facing Basin St.

The oldest extant cemetery in New Orleans, established by Royal Spanish land grant August 14, 1789. Originally outside city limits and double its present size this sacred ground reflects the early culture and history of the Crescent City. A small area in the rear was once part of a larger section for Protestant burials. The Varney Tomb to right was once center of cemetery.

2. OVEN VAULTS

Alley No. 1-L, Vaults No. 1 through 35.

To the left, along the aisle, is a row of burial crypts which also

serve as the wall of the cemetery on Basin Street. Because of their arched shape they were commonly known as "Oven" vaults.

Constructed probably in the middle of the nineteenth Century these vaults are historically significant for their efficient use of the land and because they foreshadowed the modern mausoleum which has become popular in the middle of the Twentieth Century.

The location of these vaults was once the center of the cemetery which originally included what is now Basin Street.

Preservation of these vaults was made possible by a grant from Acme Marble and Granite Company, New Orleans, Louisiana.

3. GLAPION TOMB

Alley No. 2-L, Tomb No. 7, facing St. Louis St.

MARIE LAVEAU

This Greek revival tomb is reputed burial place of this notorious "Voodoo Queen". A mystic cult, voodooism, of African origin, was brought to city from Santo Domingo and flourished in 19th century. MARIE LAVEAU was the most widely known of many practitioners of the cult.

4. HENRY DICK TOMB

Basin parallel No. 2-L, Tomb No. 9, facing Basin St.

One of a number of architectural gems. Probably designed by J. N. B. dePouilly, French architect. Structure is of Italian marble.

5. PAUL MORPHY TOMB

Alley No. 2-L, Tomb No. 11, facing Basin St.

1837-1884

A prodigy at chess. Morphy was recognized in his day as greatest player in world. At age 13 he defeated Champion J. Lowenthal of Hungary. He was born and died in New Orleans.

6. PORTUGUESE SOCIETY

Conti parallel No. 1, Tomb No. 5, facing St. Louis St.

Original Portuguese Society burial vaults, 1848; donated to St. Vincent dePaul Society 1942. Restored 1972.

7. ITALIAN MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETY TOMB

Conti parallel No. 2, Tomb No. 4, facing St. Louis St.

This architectural masterwork is the most notable of the many multi-vaulted Society tombs in the cemetery. It was erected in 1850 at reputed cost of \$40,000.00. In 1949 the tomb was sold to Logia Dante #174, F. & A.M.

8. PORTUGUESE BURIAL SOCIETY TOMB

Conti parallel No. 2, facing Conti St.

Original vaults — Portuguese Burial Society, constructed 1865. Acquired and restored Archdiocese of New Orleans 1977.

9. ORLEANS BATTALION OF ARTILLERY TOMB

Basin parallel No. 4-L, Tomb No. 9, facing Basin St.

Within this burial memorial rest some of the gallant defenders

of New Orleans, members of the battalion which fought with honor on the plains of Chalmette on January 8, 1815 against the British invaders. Date of construction is unknown. Restored in 1974.

11. FRENCH SOCIETY VAULTS

Alley No. 8-L, Tomb No. 10, facing Basin St.

SOCIETE FRANCAISE deBENEFSAISANCE

Known simply as the "French Society Vaults" this monumental burial facility has dominated the cemetery since its construction in 1848. The section with the smaller openings, an obvious addition of a later date, was for the interment of children.

13. SPANISH SOCIETY TOMB

Basin parallel No. 4-L, Tomb No. 3, facing Basin St.

CERVANTES MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETY

This multiple burial facility is typical of the custom adopted by the early immigrants of various nationalities to meet an inevitable need. These vaults which were used over and over again were constructed by a group of Spanish families who formed a society for the distinct purpose of providing a burial place for their beloved deceased. Constructed near the end of the nineteenth century this burial memorial was restored in 1977 by Alfortish Marble and Granite Company, Gretna, Louisiana.

14. PONS FAMILY TOMB

Conti St. Alley, Tomb No. 16, facing Conti St.

The stone of this family tomb is Italian marble which was widely used in New Orleans. Similar architectural design is found in other tombs in the cemetery.

15. BERNARD deMARIGNY TOMB

Conti Alley, Tomb No. 22, facing St. Louis St.

Bernard deMarigny deMandeville (1785-1868) a wealthy landowner, served in the U. S. Army, participated in framing the first and second Constitutions of Louisiana, and served in the Louisiana Territorial Legislature. He also was elected President of the Louisiana Senate in 1822. Lost most of his wealth before his death. Mandeville, Louisiana was founded by him in the 1830's. Two streets of New Orleans, Mandeville and Marigny, carry the family name.

16. CAESARE OLIVIER TOMB

Conti Alley, Tomb No. 17, facing Conti St.

Fine example of the Italian influence in design and construction of burial places to be found in all the local cemeteries dating back into the nineteenth century.

17. LAYTON FAMILY TOMB

Protestant Section — Corner of Conti and Treme Sts.

This tomb and the two tombs on the far right belong to the Thomas Layton family which also holds title to the surrounding area, the only cemetery land which has never received burials. Among those buried in the main tomb is Major Gen

eral John Breckenridge Grayson (1807-1862), graduate U. S. Military Academy; in 1861 he resigned his commission to join Confederate Army.

18. EXHIBIT AREA

Alley No. 10-L, Vaults 1 through 24, facing Basin St.

Probably the oldest extant wall vaults, a type of burial facility singular to New Orleans, this row of crypts separated the Protestant area from the main area of the cemetery. As families died out or moved away, time and the unrelenting elements took their toll.

19. CLAIBORNE TOMB

Alley No. 9-L, Tomb No. 4, facing Basin St.

Burial place (right) of second wife of Governor Wm. C. C. Claiborne, Clarisse Duralde, who died in 1809 at age of 21.

20. PROTESTANT SECTION

Corner of Conti and Treme Streets.

In 1805 an area at the rear of the cemetery was assigned to Christ Church (Episcopal) for the burial of non-catholics. More extensive originally, all that remains of the Protestant Section is the area between these wall vaults, the brick walls to the right and left. Between 1822-38 all burials in the other part of the Protestant Section which was beyond the back wall were transferred to the Girod Street Cemetery to allow for a residential development and the extension of Treme Street.

Non-Catholic burials have always been made in any part of the cemetery. Some Catholics were buried in the Protestant Section.

20. ELIZA LEWIS CLAIBORNE TOMB

Rear Open Area — facing Basin St.

Eliza Lewis (1784-1804), first wife of Wm. C. C. Claiborne, first American governor of Louisiana. Also memorialized here are her son and her brother, Micajah Green Lewis, who died in a duel defending the honor of his brother-in-law. Benjamin Latrobe, noted architect, designed the memorial.

20. VETERANS MEMORIALS

Rear Open Area

Among burials in this area are William P. Canby, U.S.N. and other Americans who died in defense of the City in the Battle of New Orleans and the defeat of the British Army, January 8, 1815.

21. GAINES TOMB

Alley No. 9-L, Tomb No. 3, facing Basin St.

Myra Clark Gaines (left) was the daughter of Daniel Clark (1760-1813), American Consul when Spain ruled City and later Territorial Delegate to Congress. Her claim to large land tracts resulted in 65 years of litigation.

ETIENNE BORÉ TOMB

Alley No. 7-R, Tomb No. 5, facing Treme St.

(1741-1820) Appointed first Mayor of New Orleans when France acquired Louisiana from Spain in 1801. Was Captain in Household Troops of King of France. Was first successfully to granulate sugar commercially. Also interred is grandson, Charles Gayarré, noted Historian.

22. PIERRE DERBIGNY TOMB

Alley No. 5-L, Tomb No. 2, facing Basin St.
1769-1829

Noted jurist. He and Louis Moreau Lislet (also buried in this cemetery) drew up the Civil Code of Louisiana. Governor of the State from 1828 until death by accident on September 25, 1829.

23. GRIMA FAMILY TOMB

Alley No. 2-R, Tomb No. 2, facing Basin St.

Albert Xavier Grima, founder of this prominent family, immigrated to New Orleans from Malta in 1780. Among his distinguished descendants were Notary, Lawyer, Judge, Ophthalmologist, Writer.

24. COLONEL MICHEL FORTIER TOMB

Alley No. 2-R, Tomb No. 13, facing Basin St.

(1750-1819) Royal armourer and soldier, fought with Spanish under Galvez in capture of Manchac and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from the British. Became member of First City Council.

25. CARLOS TRUDEAU TOMB

St. Louis parallel No. 2, Tomb No. 4, facing Conti St.

Surveyor General of Louisiana. There is extant a plot plan showing the location of the earliest cemeteries in New Orleans dated Jun 12, 1801 and signed by Carlos Trudeau whose remains are at rest in this tomb.

26. LOUIS MOREAU-LISLET TOMB

St. Louis Alley, Tomb No. 26, facing Conti St.
Co-author Codes of 1808 and 1825.

27. BLAISE CENAS TOMB

St. Louis Alley, Tomb No. 9, facing Conti St.
1776-1812

First United States Postmaster of New Orleans. His son, Blaise Carmick, killed in Battle of Murfreesboro December 31, 1862, is also in this tomb.

31 through 38.

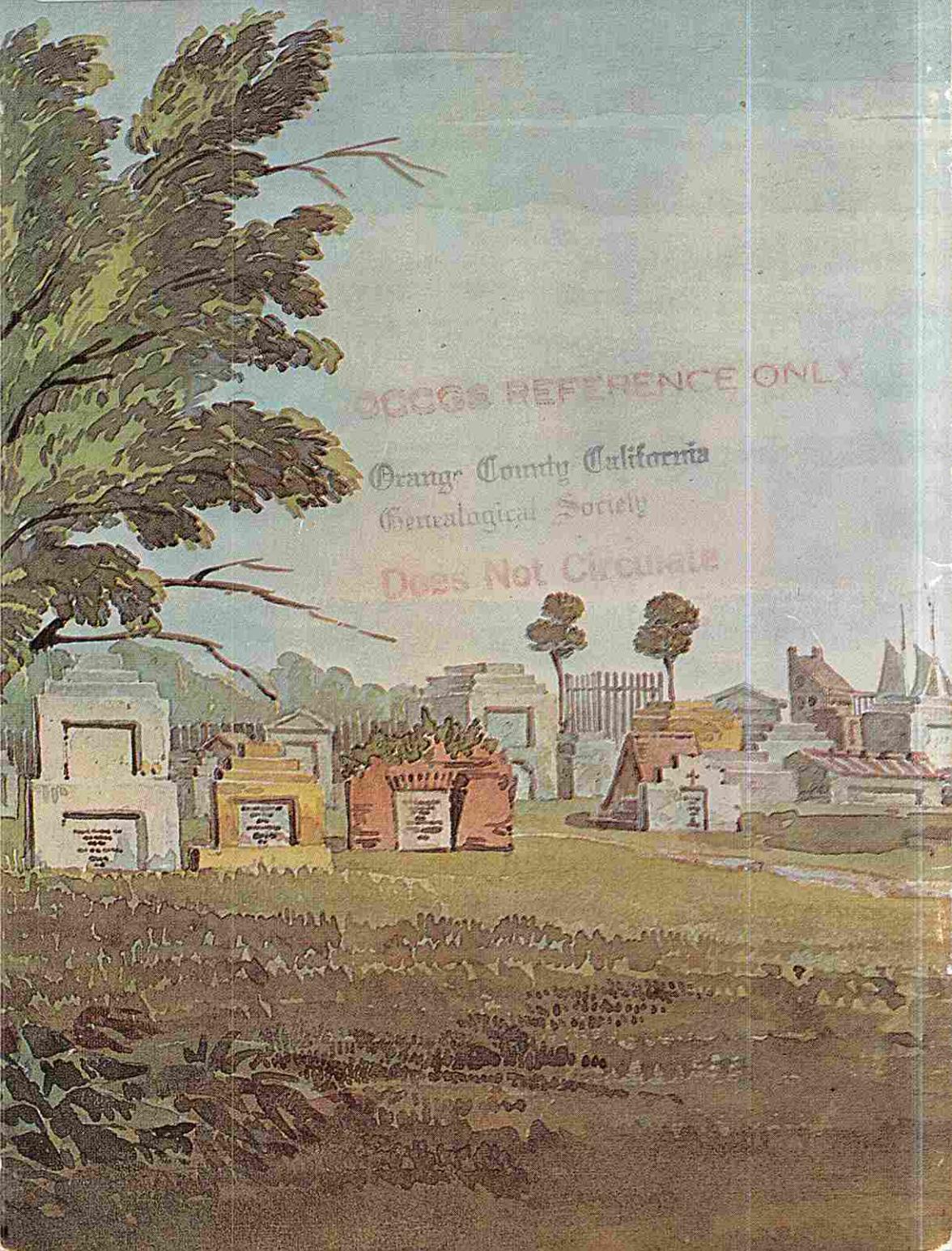
Alley No. 9-R, Tombs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, facing Basin St.

Alley No. 9-R, Tombs 7 and 8, facing Treme St.

This row of well-designed Italian marble tombs was built for prominent New Orleans families, many of whose names are recognizable today in local business, civic and social circles.

LOUISIANA

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