

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 59

7 - DESCRIPTION

Historic Cemeteries in Port Gibson (Thematic Group)

The historic cemetery theme relates to the historic development of Port Gibson. The founding of the early settlement, organization of religious institutions, and the beginnings of self-determination for blacks after the Civil War are important historic movements reflected in the establishment of the cemeteries. Their major common physical characteristics are rural setting and relative isolation from residential areas.

The group displays striking contrasts in individual physical treatment and in historic and associational significance. Wintergreen is representative in plan and design quality of mid-nineteenth-century romantically inspired funeral landscapes, epitomized by Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Greenwood in Brooklyn, and Laurel Hill in Philadelphia. Wintergreen lacks only the topographical contours of its contemporaries. The contiguous Catholic and Jewish cemeteries share similar settings; however, the compacted plan, elevated monuments, and superior maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery contrast with the partially barren field of its neighbor, which is accentuated by an overgrown crucifix focal point and vandalism to several notable monuments. Golden West Cemetery, with its grassy hillside setting, displays none of the landscape elements of the other three, nor does it have a symmetrical arrangement of plots. Random placement of makeshift cast-concrete monuments and lack of shrubbery or any formal landscape plan impart an appealing pastoral folk-art quality to Golden West.

This cemetery survey of the Port Gibson multiple resource area was conducted by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Of the five extant cemeteries in Port Gibson, Scott Memorial Cemetery was the only one omitted from the thematic group. It was not included because it lacks historic or landscape significance.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF PORT GIBSON
[Miss.]

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 60

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Cemeteries in Port Gibson (Thematic Group)

Each of the four cemeteries included in the thematic group relates to the historic development of Port Gibson as described in the individual survey forms. A fifth cemetery, Scott Memorial, is not included because of its recent establishment and lack of historic or landscape significance. The historic significance of Wintergreen as the burial ground for Samuel Gibson, an early Port Gibson settler, is enhanced by the application of mid-nineteenth-century principles of landscape planning in the United States. In the context of Mississippi, the thematic cemetery group is notable as a significant aggregation of small-town cemeteries supported by private associations (Wintergreen and Golden West), and religious congregations (Catholic and Jewish).

Historic Sites Survey

2B



State of Mississippi
Department of Archives & History
P. O. Box 571, Jackson, MS. 39205

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Catholic Cemetery is situated in an open field in the southeastern corner of Port Gibson. The cemetery measures approximately one acre square. The focal point is a cast-metal crucifix mounted on a concrete pedestal, now surrounded by overgrown bushes and vines. Grave-sites are widely dispersed south of the crucifix. The rear third of the cemetery north of the crucifix is vacant.

ALTERATIONS:

Site is overgrown; tombstones have been vandalized.

OUTBUILDINGS:

LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Catholic Cemetery was established before the construction of St. Joseph Catholic Church in 1850. Resin Bowie (1793-1841), inventor of the Bowie Knife made famous by his brother David, was buried here along with Thomas Cantwell Healy (d. 1889). The crucifix comes from St. Paul's Catholic Church in Vicksburg (constructed in 1849). The church was damaged by a tornado in 1953 and subsequently demolished (Julia Arnold, resident of Port Gibson, interviewed by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Port Gibson, Mississippi, February 10, 1979).

NAME: Catholic Cemetery
STREET NO: 700 Block, Coffee Street
TOWN/VIC: Port Gibson
COUNTY: Claiborne
BLOCK/LOT:
PRESENT OWNER: Diocese of Jackson
ADDRESS P.O. Box 2248, Jackson, Mississippi 39205
PRESENT USE: Cemetery
FORMER USE:
DATE: 1840 - present
STYLE:
ARCH/BUILDER:
SOURCE OF DATE:
ENVIRONMENT: residential, agricultural
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
NEIGHBORHOOD
LOCAL X
STATE
NATIONAL

PHOTOS

NEG. #

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Overgrown

THREATS: Vandalism

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Refer to cemetery boundaries as outlined on U.S.G.S. map.

ACREAGE: one acre

JTM REF:

| | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 5 | 6 9 1 0 4 0 | 3 5 3 7 1 3 0 |
| | ZONE EASTING | | NORTHING |
| C | | | |
| B | | | |
| | ZONE EASTING | | NORTHING |
| D | | | |

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE

Jack A. Gold

February, 1979



Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON

(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi

Claiborne Co.

Jack A. Gold

January, 1979

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Catholic Cemetery; view to north

Photo # *85 of 125*

MAY 30 1979

DOE
JUL 22 1979



Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area
HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON

(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi

Clairborne Co.

Jack A. Gold

January, 1979

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Catholic Cemetery. View to north.

Photo CA1 *105 of 125*

DOF

JUL 22 1979

MAY 30 1979



Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON

(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi *Claiborne Co.*

Jack A. Gold

January, 1979

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Catholic Cemetery. View to north.

Photo CA2 *106 of 125*

DOE

MAY 30 1979

JUL 22 1979



Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON

(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi

Clairborne Co.

Jack A. Gold

January, 1979

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Catholic Cemetery. View to northwest.

Photo CA3 *107 of 125-*

MAY 30 1979

DOE

JUL 22 1979

REZIN P. BOWIE
BORN
Sept. 8, 1798
DIED
Jan. 17, 1841.

Port Gibson Multiple Resource area
HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON
(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi
Jack A. Gold
January, 1979

Clairborne Co.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Catholic Cemetery. View to east.

Photo CA5 *108 of 125*

DOE
JUL 22 1979

MAY 30 1979



Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC CEMETERIES IN PORT GIBSON

(THEMATIC GROUP)

Port Gibson, Mississippi

Clatsone Co.

Jack A. Gold

January, 1979

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Catholic Cemetery. View to west.

Photo CA4 *109 of 125*

DOE

MAY 30 1979

JUL 22 1979