A Report Concerning the Final Resting Place of Father Jeremiah F. Trecy

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Located in Section 15 of Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Alabama, the headstone inscribed with the name of Rev. J. F. (Father Jeremiah F.) Trecy, the founder of Saint Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, has generally been considered to be only a memorial stone. Information has recently surfaced, however, that proves the stone marks the actual location of Father Trecy's final resting place. That information consists of both physical evidence and primary source documentation.

Parishioners of the church contending that the stone marked the actual burial site of Father Trecy asked members of the cemetery staff to assist them in gathering physical evidence. They agreed to the request. Subsequently, a staff member drove a metal rod into the disputed ground and eventually hit a solid object or box after several feet, indicating that someone was buried there. That discovery established compelling physical evidence of a burial at that location.

Just as compelling was the primary source documentation which centered around the illness, death, and burial of Father Trecy. Hospital records listed Father Trecy as a priest of the Diocese of Mobile in Alabama when he became a patient at the Alexian Brothers Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1882. He remained at that facility until his death from hemiplegia on March 5, 1888. Both the death register (information for death certificate taken from death register) and the burial certificate, located among the records of the City of St. Louis, indicated Huntsville, Alabama, as the intended place of burial.

Shortly after Father Trecy's death, the individual or individuals responsible for the priest's body had it transported (undoubtedly by rail) to Huntsville, Alabama, for interment. The Huntsville Gazette, dated March 10, 1888, a local newspaper, described the burial and the circumstances surrounding it:

All that was mortal of Rev. Father Tracy [Trecy] was consigned to the tomb yesterday. It was meet and fitting that his remains should be brought to the city he loved so much in life, that under the shadow of the lofty mountains that gird our city his dust should find a final resting place.

In summary, the physical evidence and the primary source documentation examined in this report clearly show that Father Trecy is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery. It is therefore hoped that this report will erase any doubt as to that fact.
ENDNOTES


2 From telephone interviews with various members of Saint Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, Spring 1998.

3 Not annotated, as all the statements will be footnoted and expanded in the documented narrative to follow.

4 Archival Records of the Alexian Brothers Hospital; Death Certificate for Father Jeremiah F. Treacy (information from death register), Certificate #004862, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Division of Health, City of St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri; Burial Certificate of Father Jeremiah F. Treacy, Certificate #1882, Records of the City of St. Louis, St. Louis Public Libarary, St. Louis, Missouri.

5 A person or persons obviously had the responsibility of shipping Father Treacy's body to Huntsville.

6 Except for the *Huntsville Gazette* (dated March 10, 1888), issues of the daily and weekly Huntsville newspapers of that period either did not carry the notice of Father Treacy's death, or the issues in question were missing. *The Huntsville Gazette*, March 10, 1888, microfilm copy in the Heritage Room, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Huntsville, Alabama.