



Greenwich Village
Society for Historic Preservation
252 East 11th Street
New York, New York 10003



May 22, 2013

Mr. Douglas Steiner
Steiner Studios
15 Washington Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th floor north
New York, NY 10007

Commissioner Robert LiMandri
Department of Buildings
280 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Re: Church of Mary Help of Christians and former East Eleventh Street Cemetery

Dear Mr. Steiner, Chair Tierney and Commissioner LiMandri,

As we continue to urge that the historic Mary Help of Christians complex in the East Village be preserved, we write to bring to your attention another important layer of historic significance to this site. Research has shown that the third oldest Catholic cemetery in New York was located on the large majority of this block from 1833 to 1907, directly underneath what is now the church and school, among other sites (though not under what is the current open school yard connected to the church which is also part of this planned development). Various sources from the 19th century refer to as few as 3,000 and as many as 41,000 people having been buried here.

The cemetery, known as the East Eleventh Street Cemetery, was the final resting place of prominent and lesser known New Yorkers, buried here between 1833 and 1848. After Saint Peter's on Barclays Street and Old Saint Patrick's on Mott Street, the Eleventh Street location was the third oldest Catholic burial ground in the city, and at the time, the largest in New York. The land was purchased as an extension of Old Saint Patrick's graveyard, which had no more space for burials. In an 1899 piece called "The Catholic Cemeteries of New York," Reverend Michael Augustine Corrigan wrote that "the need of another and larger cemetery had become imperative" after the first outbreak of Asiatic cholera in 1832 had claimed the lives of 3,500 New Yorkers. The Eleventh Street block, deemed "a good and convenient location for a new graveyard," was purchased on August 29th of that same year.

While early 20th century newspapers reported that bodies from this cemetery were exhumed and reburied in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, it is not clear if all the bodies from the East 11th Street cemetery were in fact moved. Some published reports refer to 41,000 bodies having been buried here, while all accounts refer to 3-5,000 bodies being moved to the Queens Cemetery. Regardless of the number of people buried here, experience has shown that even when cemeteries in Manhattan have been closed and all bodies supposedly moved to a new and final resting place, sometimes graves and bodies are found to have remained.

We therefore call for a thorough archaeological study to be completed before any construction or demolition takes place to discern if there are human remains buried on this site, to ensure that no bodies are disturbed by construction or demolition on these sites.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation



Simeon Barkoff
Executive Director
Historic Districts Council



Richard Moses
President
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative



Sara Romanoski
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition

CATHOLICS TO ABANDON EAST SIDE CEMETERY

Adopt Archbishop Farley's Plan Despite Protests.

PLOT IN USE SINCE 1833

Eleventh Street No Longer Proper Location, Archbishop Urged—Will Take Bodies to Calvary.

Despite many protests Archbishop Farley put through yesterday his plan to abandon the old Roman Catholic cemetery on Eleventh Street, east of First Avenue. When opened seventy-four years ago, this burying ground was considered favorably situated; but with the growth of the city there have been repeated demands for its abandonment. An effort made twenty-five years ago to remove the bodies was stopped by an injunction. Since then the project has been revived at intervals.

Yesterday's decision was reached at a meeting in the assembly room of the Roman Catholic Diocesan House. Archbishop Farley presided, and it was largely upon his initiative that the vote was taken. John Fox, President of the Democratic Club, Adrian Iselin, Jr., Thomas J. O'Donohue, John Rhinelander Dillon, John G. Agar, Thomas O'Neil, and Thomas L. Feltner were some of those present, and John D. Crimmins sent his secretary to record an affirmative vote.

Legally, none save parishioners of St. Patrick's could vote, but Archbishop Farley, in the interests of fair play, suggested that those not members of the cathedral corporation, in which the legal title to the burying ground is vested, but having relatives buried in the old cemetery, be permitted to record their formal protest or approval. Eleven persons approved the measure and seven disapproved it, but at least eleven others, when they found that the majority favored removal, refused to vote.

Archbishop Farley called the meeting to order, and the resolution was read. It stated that the Trustees of the cathedral believed it advisable to remove what remains are still left in the old burying ground to Calvary Cemetery, because the neighborhood of the said Eleventh Street Cemetery is devoted to business purposes and is not conducive to the reverence due to the dead."

"Now," said the Archbishop, "there is no need of any speechmaking. The resolution explains itself. This question has been discussed for many years. We have had hundreds of letters from surviving relatives, and the burden of them is that, in the interests of the reverence and respect due to the dead, the removal should be made.

"The neighborhood of East Eleventh Street is anything but a reverential neighborhood. It is a neighborhood in which are all sorts of peoples, and few of them have any reverence or respect for the cemetery. These people throw rubbish over the fence, and the place is littered with refuse, which no amount of effort within reason is sufficient to prevent.

"Sooner or later, even if it is not done now, this removal will have to come. It would better be done now, it seems to the Trustees, because, let us say, twenty-five years hence practically all of the relatives of those buried there will have passed away. Now they are here and will have the satisfaction of knowing and identifying their various plots, and be able thus to aid in the transfer. The transfer will be conducted with the greatest respect and reverence. The remains will be taken to Calvary Cemetery, the largest and, I hope soon to say, the best-kept Catholic cemetery in the United States. It isn't the best-kept now, but it is a better place than Avenue A and First Avenue. Good sense and reverence point to the need of the change."

"On behalf of my mother," said Forbes J. Hennessy. "I wish to enter a protest. We have many many relatives—a grandparent, a cousin, an uncle, and two aunts—buried in the old cemetery. I should not like to see their remains carried off to Calvary Cemetery. I do not think that we ought to desecrate the remains of our dead by removing them in this fashion."

Mrs. Kate R. Fay, a widow, also pro-

tested against the change. She wanted to know about the injunction obtained twenty-five years ago. John G. Agar explained that the injunction had been vacated shortly after issuance. He added: "We do not have to seek the authority of the Supreme Court for the removal of these bodies, inasmuch as they are taken from one cemetery owned by a corporation to another under the same ownership."

Mr. Hennessy got the floor again. "I wish to know," he said, "if that cemetery is consecrated ground, how it can be taken and used for other purposes."

"The position the speaker takes," said Archbishop Farley, "is not tenable. Churches are consecrated every day that in the course of time will be pulled down. The mere removal of the fact which causes the consecration is enough to vitiate that consecration."

James J. Phelan then made his protest.

"We owe it to the memories of our fathers and grandfathers," he said, "to perpetuate the memories of those noble men who bore the flag of Catholicity in this city when it was a hard thing to bear. They fought the good fight, and for this and this alone, their graves should be let alone as a mark of respect."

"See Trinity Church, with its churchyard property worth millions of dollars, giving us an example of what we ought to do in holding sacred the memory of our forebears. See how the Jews reverence their dead. Look at the old cemeteries in the heart of London, untouched for centuries."

After several other protests the vote was taken, and the resolution declared carried. After the meeting it was said that the Trustees would go forward with the removal of the bodies at once. It is expected that the cost will be about \$100,000. The old cemetery was not endowed, and for several years had cost the Cathedral \$2,000 annually for maintenance.

A separate plot in the most desirable section of Calvary Cemetery is to be fenced off, exactly of the same dimensions as the old cemetery, and is to be designated as "The Eleventh Street Section of Calvary." In it are to be buried the remains of those not identified or claimed in the old burying ground, and such others as it is desired shall be buried there. But the Trustees promise to remove bodies, if desired, to any other Catholic plot about New York.

The Eleventh Street Cemetery at one time contained 3,000 graves, but many bodies have already been removed to Calvary and to other cemeteries.

The cemetery was opened in November, 1833, and was the third Catholic place of burial in New York. An old churchyard about St. Peter's Church, in Barclay Street, was the first, and the churchyard about old St. Patrick's Cathedral the second. The Eleventh Street Cemetery was closed to general burials in 1848.

It has not been determined, it was said at St. Patrick's Cathedral last night, what disposition will be made of the property. It was hinted, however, that it would be sold for building purposes. It was purchased for \$55,000 in 1833 from Charles L. Hall. There are approximately thirty-three city lots in the property, worth, it is estimated, \$400,000.

GIVE UP AN OLD CEMETERY.

Catholic Burying Ground in East Eleventh Street to be Abandoned.

The old Catholic cemetery, known as the old Eleventh Street cemetery, in Eleventh Street, between First Avenue and Pleasant Place, is being done away with. The coffins of persons who have been buried there during the last century are being removed to Calvary Cemetery in Queens.

The Superintendent of Calvary Cemetery, who has charge of the work of removal, said yesterday that only a few of the heirs of the persons buried there are interested in the disinterments. Nearly one-half of the graves have already been excavated and the bones removed and placed in wooden boxes ready for transportation to Calvary.

A quarter of a century ago an attempt was made to remove the bodies with a view to selling the land, which cost only \$55,000, and is now valued at nearly \$500,000, but there was such strong opposition that the project was abandoned.

In February, 1907, Archbishop Farley and several prominent Catholics held a conference for the purpose of discussing the abandonment of the cemetery, as the land was very valuable and the crowded state of the neighborhood did not permit the graves to be properly cared for. Since the cemetery was established in 1833 the entire neighborhood has changed and is no longer a Catholic centre.

It is now announced that the land will be sold for Jewish tenements. According to the records the Eleventh Street cemetery was the third Catholic burying ground established in the City of New York. St. Peter's was the first and St. Patrick's the second. About 3,000 persons were buried there, the last interment being in 1851.

Among the prominent persons buried there were Countess de Baldi of Santo Domingo, Carmon Delatoure, Hendrik Smets of Amsterdam, who was Burgomaster of his native city before he came to this country, and Capt. John McMahon of the Eighteenth Company of the old Montgomery Guard in 1848.

RENEWS MOVING PICTURE WAR

Proprietor of a Resort Gets a Writ of Mandamus Against the Mayor.

The moving picture war which has been vigorously pushed by Mayor McClellan was complicated somewhat yesterday by the service upon the Mayor and the Chief of the Bureau of Licenses, Frank Oliver, of a writ of mandamus issued by Justice Marean of the Kings County Supreme Court ordering that a license be granted to Herman S. Schnitzer of 627 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn.

Schnitzer's license was revoked by the Mayor after he had received petitions from the Rev. Frederick J. Keech, pastor of the Church of Atonement, at Seventeenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and the Rev. Louis K. Moore, pastor of the Sixth Methodist Episcopal Church, both of which are near Schnitzer's establishment. The latter then applied to Justice Marean for an order compelling the Mayor to show cause why the license was not issued, and it develops that there was some misunderstanding, as to the date on which the order was returnable.

Assistance Corporation Counsel Crowell, who is attached to the Mayor's office, will endeavor to obtain a rehearing of the case from the Justice.

DISCREDIT TAMMANY DEAL.

Politicians Do Not Think McClellan and Murphy Have Made Peace.

Local politicians did not take the rumors of a peace treaty between Mayor McClellan and Charles F. Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall, very seriously yesterday. It was said about City Hall that John F. BenseL, President of the Board of Water Supply, had been sent by the Mayor to Mr. Murphy to open negotiations for an understanding. Mr. BenseL was Chief Engineer of the Department of Docks and Ferries when Mr. Murphy was Dock Commissioner. He is also a close personal friend of both the Mayor and the Tammany chief.

There seemed to be little definite evidence of another peace compact between Mr. McClellan and Mr. Murphy, however, other than the appointment by the Mayor of Police Magistrate Joseph Moss to be one of the extra Judges of Special Sessions. Mr. Moss is one of Mr. Murphy's personal political lieutenants and an officer of the Anawanda Club, the Tammany elader's organization in his Assembly District, but the politicians seemed to find little significance in this fact, for the reason that Mr. Moss, in his long service on the police bench, has made a good record and is considered a natural selection.

MURDERED TEACHER BURIED.

Impressive Services for Girl Slain by Her Father.

In a white hearse drawn by four horses the body of Miss Anna A. Mangano, the school teacher who was shot and killed by her father, Filippo Mangano, as she was passing through 103d Street on her way to school on Wednesday morning, was driven over the spot where she met her death yesterday morning on the way to Calvary Cemetery.

At 10:30 o'clock a high requiem mass was sung by the Rev. Father Di Mono at St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church, in One Hundred and Fourth Street, near First Avenue, and as the procession drew away from the church it went by a roundabout way to the ferry so that the St. Cecelia's Home for Working Girls, in which Miss Mangano lived, could be passed.

Forty teachers, led by Miss Teresa Burke, marched to the church in a body.

SELL OLD CATHOLIC CEMETERY AT LAST

**Bodies Removed Three Years Ago
 from East Eleventh Street
 Despite Opposition.**

PRICE ACCEPTED IS \$357,000

**Cardinal Farley and the Trustees Ap-
 prove—None Buried There
 Since 1851.**

The old East Eleventh Street Cemetery, which was first opened in 1817, is to be sold at last. Three times the opposition of descendants of those buried there held up the sale, but yesterday, when the Trustees of St. Patrick's Cathedral approached Supreme Court Justice Newburger in his chambers, there was no opposition, and he signed the order allowing it to be sold to Frank Schlitt of Jersey City for \$357,000.

Schlitt's offer was acceded to by Cardinal John M. Farley, President of the Cathedral Trustees; by Louis H. Amy, their Secretary; by George J. Gillespie, their Treasurer; Eugene A. Philbin, Andrew Dougherty, Jr.; Thomas H. Kelly, John Fox, Ernest Iselin, and Alfonso de Navarro. The cemetery plot includes most of the block bounded by First Avenue, Avenue A, and East Twelfth and Eleventh Streets.

No one has been buried in the cemetery since 1851, and in 1909 5,000 buried there, with their tombstones and coffins, were transferred to Calvary Cemetery in Queens County. Legal proceedings to prevent this transfer has been undertaken on several occasions, but were unsuccessful.

For three years back the cemetery has been used as a playground. After the dead were removed it was loaned by the Cathedral Trustees to the National Playgrounds Association, which installed swings, basket ball courts, a running track, and a baseball diamond.

The first movement to sell the old cemetery plot was made shortly after St. Patrick's Cathedral moved from its old location at Mott and Mulberry Streets to its present site in Fifth Avenue, at Fiftieth Street. Attorney Arthur J. Delaney brought proceedings in 1883 which restrained the sale and removal of bodies at that time. The cost of the original plot, it appeared from the court action at that time, was \$55,000.

Another effort to sell the plot was made in 1907. This aroused such opposition that a meeting of the descendants of those buried there was held in Greenwich Hall, First Avenue and East Eleventh Street. At this meeting it was declared that the charter granted to the Cathedral by the Legislature on April 14, 1817, did not extend to it after its removal to Fifth Avenue. It was said that there were only sixty-eight persons at the meeting of the St. Patrick's Ca-

thedral congregation when it was resolved to sell the cemetery. These included only nine Trustees, it was said, of whom Archbishop, now Cardinal Farley, was one.

The protest was made that the ground, which had been consecrated, could not be sold, and that it would be a sacrilege to disinter the bodies. The Trustees asserted that the ground had not been consecrated, but merely blessed. One of the grounds of attack on the proposed sale was that the tombstones in the cemetery had served as barricades for Catholics who were attacked in the Know Nothing riots.

Among those who were buried in the cemetery were Hendrik Smets, once Burgomaster of Amsterdam, Holland; Countess de Baldi of Santo Domingo, and Capt. John McMahon of the Eighteenth Company of the Montgomery Guards.

HAMBURG-AMERICAN HEADS.

**Business Here to be Managed by a
 Directorate of Three.**

Before sailing yesterday on the Kaiserin Augusta Victoria for Hamburg, Albert Ballin, head of the Hamburg-American Line, said he had arranged for the reorganization of the American office of the company, made necessary by the death of Emil S. Boas.

A board of directors has been established, consisting of Dr. Karl Buehn, the general representative of the company in America, as Chairman, and J. P. Meyer and W. G. Sickel, by which board the affairs of the company will be managed.

A. L. Cronmeyer and Emil Lederer have been appointed Passenger Traffic Managers and C. J. Beck Freight Traffic Manager.

Carl L. Schurz has been appointed general counsel of the company here.

374 *THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES OF NEW YORK.*

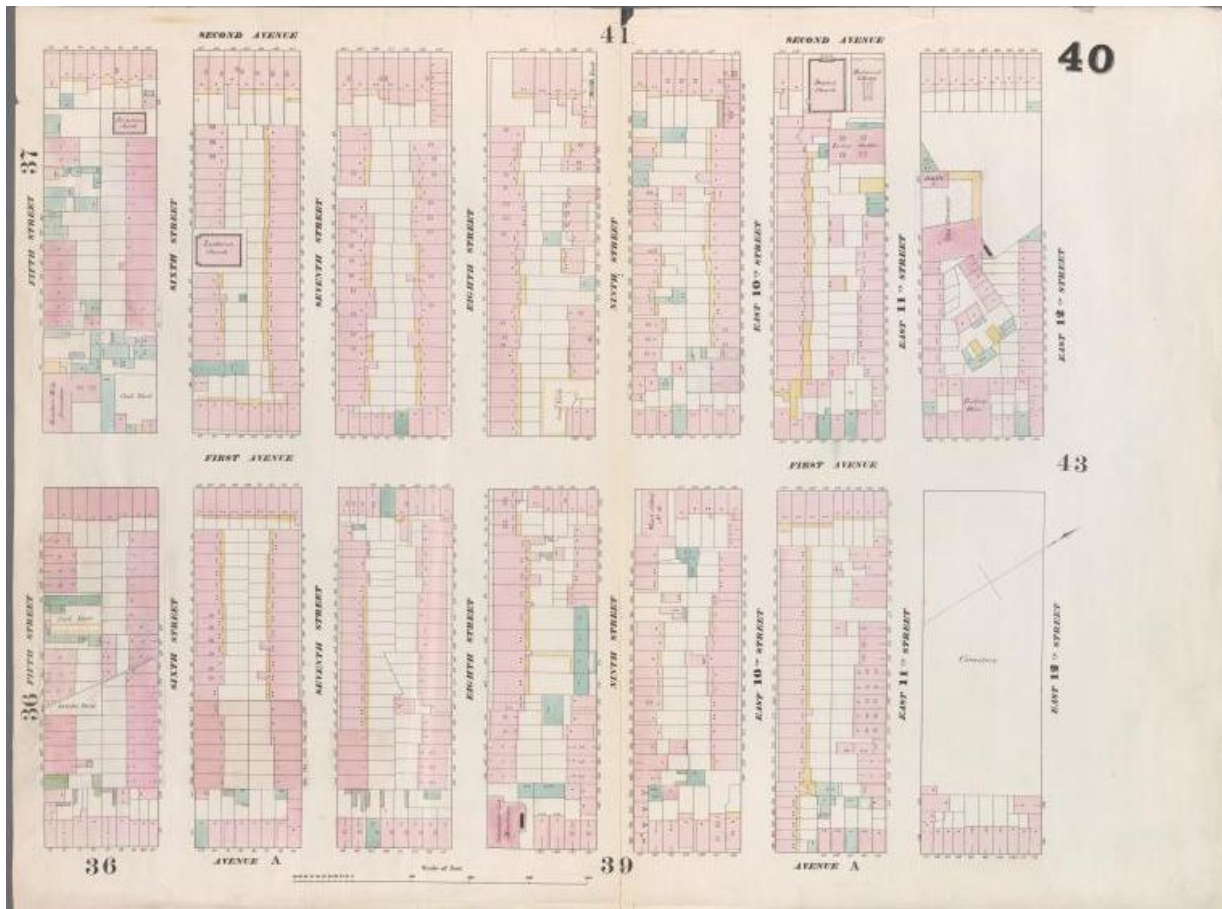
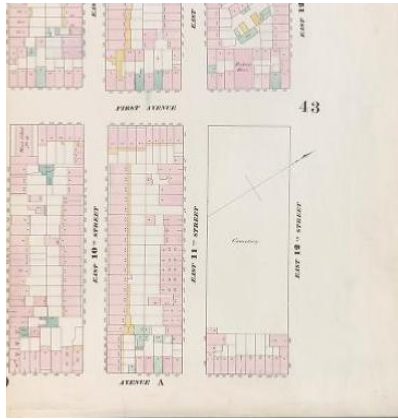
Archbishop, the Parochial School in East 50th Street, and to liquidate part of the Cathedral funded debt.

From May 25, 1813, when the interments began to be officially recorded, until the closing of St. Patrick's Cemetery in 1833, the total number of burials was 32,153.

Meanwhile, the need of another and larger cemetery had become imperative. The Board of Health as early as 1832 began to forbid intra-mural interments, and although the measure was not rigidly enforced for some years, it was the part of good citizenship to comply with ordinances made for the public welfare. The first visitation of Asiatic cholera, in that same year, carried off more than 3500 victims in the city proper, and thus emphasized the need of immediate action. A committee of five trustees was accordingly named to provide "a good and convenient location for a new graveyard." After various experiments, the board finally purchased from Alderman Charles Henry Hall, for the sum of \$37,050, the block situated between East 11th and 12th streets, First Avenue and Avenue A. The date of conveyance was Aug. 29, 1832. Mr. Hall subsequently offered \$50,000 to repurchase this property.

To lighten the burden of debt, the ground facing the avenues, 100 feet in depth, was sold for building purposes. The remainder, 413 feet by 206, was used as a cemetery, the lower portion, near Avenue A, being filled in about 18 feet above the original level.

From the minutes of the board, March 13, 1833, it appears that permission to inter in the new ground was accorded on that date. In the minutes of the previous meeting, March 6, 1833, every member present pledged himself to do his utmost "in finding and prosecuting the invaders of the vault out of town," i.e., in 50th Street and Fifth Avenue. The 11th Street cemetery was used until August, 1848. The total number of interments made in its limits was 41,016. A few years ago the primitive wooden fence enclosing the cemetery was replaced by a handsome iron railing, on strong granite foundations, and various other precautions were taken to surround the last resting-place of the departed with affectionate care and veneration.



1857 Perris Map