

**ST. MARY'S CEMETERY  
"ROBINSON PARK"  
LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY  
HELENA, MONTANA  
Compiled by Charleen Spalding**



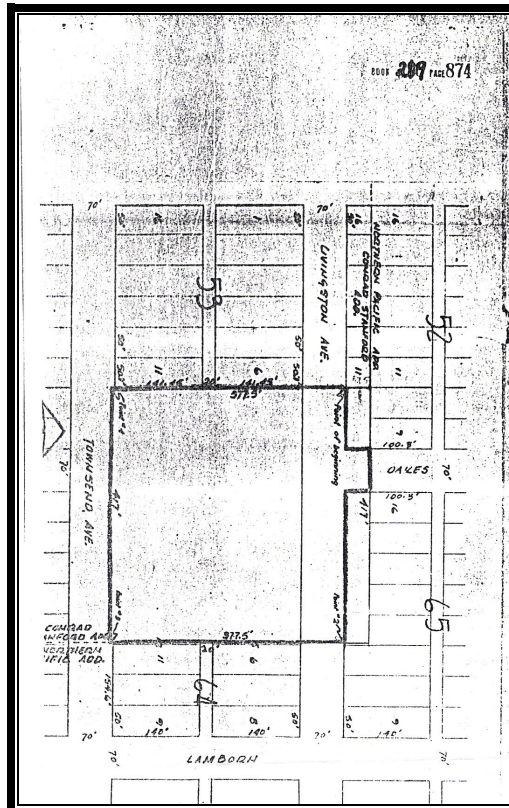
Before 1972



After 1972, Robinson Park today



Aerial view 1960



Plot plan which was attached to the Grant Deed and Dedication dated 9/29/1972,  
Book 269, pages 870 through 874





This cemetery has had several names: Catholic Cemetery, Catholic Cemetery-Sacred Heart Church, St. Mary's Cemetery, Old St. Mary's Cemetery, Oak Street Cemetery or Oakes Street Cemetery.

Known in later years as St. Mary's Cemetery, it is located between Livingston and Townsend Avenues with Oakes Street adjacent to the cemetery and bordered on the east by Lamborn. Burials occurred on this property before it was deeded to Lawrence Palladino, S.J. in 1880. The first "recorded" burial was in November 1872 and the last "recorded" burial in 1922. The Cemetery fell into disrepair and in 1972 the property was sold to the City of Helena as a passive park. The cemetery is now known as Robinson Park. The tombstones were removed and dumped in various locations throughout the county. Tombstones have been found as far as Canyon Ferry and several were dumped near Applegate Drive. Some tombstones are set up in the back of Resurrection Cemetery – no bodies, just stones.



Stones from St. Mary's set up in Resurrection, no bodies, just stones.



Resurrection Cemetery - the pile of tombstones on the east side of the cemetery away from the main cemetery



Resurrection Cemetery - the pile of tombstones now buried under dirt

When the City of Helena put in the sewer line on Livingston Avenue, they dug up coffins and bones, threw them in a dump truck and left the metal coffins. It is unknown where they dumped the remains.

It was stated that all the remains were removed from this cemetery but no documentation has ever been found nor is there any information as to the final resting place for these people. If you visit Robinson Park, the sunken graves can still be seen. One priest stated that the tombstones were in storage – but again, there is no documentation. There was a mausoleum in the center with granite roof and sides. It was in kind of a hole, had six coffins on each side stacked but the two



on the bottom were sunk in. There was a big cast iron fence around the cemetery, and it had some very large tombstones, mostly in the center.

There were 1774 individuals buried in this cemetery originally, 214 were moved to Resurrection Cemetery, one was moved to Benton Avenue Cemetery, three were moved to the IOOF Cemetery, 17 were moved to Forestvale Cemetery and one was moved to Fort William Henry Harrison Cemetery (now defunct). There are approximately 1538 still buried there. Many who died were from Ireland and Canada. Other countries: Austria, Bavaria, Belgium, Bohemia, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Hibernia, Italy, Mexico, Prussia, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

In November 2004 (*Helena Independent Record*, 11/11/2004), a utility crew accidentally unearthed several graves when digging a trench on Townsend Avenue. Photos courtesy of Curtis Milledge.

