



GRAVE MARKERS and MONUMENTS, Charleston, SC



Client/Owner
St. Mary's Parish Church

Location
Charleston, SC

Project Dates
2000

Materials
Marble
Limestone
Granite
Sandstone
Cast Iron
Wrought Iron

Services Provided
Conditions Assessment
Treatment
Documentation

St. Mary's Parish Church, built in 1889, is distinguished as the oldest Roman Catholic Church in the Carolinas. It served as the Mother Church for the Dioceses of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) was contracted to perform a conditions survey of more than three-hundred grave markers and monuments located in the church's cemetery, and to conserve seven grave markers that had been broken by a previous contractor during a restoration effort. The broken markers had been improperly repaired with a hard Portland cement patching material. Many of the various broken pieces were misaligned before reattachment and excess patching material was allowed to drip over the faces of the stones. The excess material was not removed before it cured and thus adhered to the marble substrate.

All information gathered on-site was compiled into a report that consisted of: 1) a site plan that identified every headstone by a unique number; 2) photographic documentation of every marker; 3) a description of the present condition of each marker; 4) a prioritized listing of the markers categorized according to their conservation needs; 5) general recommendations for the proper conservation of the headstones and monuments; and 6) budgetary cost estimates for the conservation of each marker.

CSI initiated treatment on the broken and improperly repaired grave markers by removing the inappropriate repair material from the surface of the stone using scalpels and fine chisels and then reassembling the stone fragments in proper alignment using Jahn Restoration Adhesive. Any remaining cracks or losses were filled with custom-matched fine lime putty.