



(Oct. 1990)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

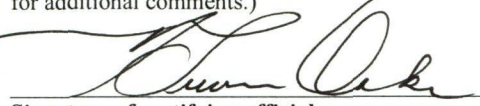
HISTORIC NAME: Matagorda Cemetery
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Intersection of Texas Highway 60 at Matagorda County Roads 259 and 260 **NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A
CITY OR TOWN: Matagorda **VICINITY:** N/A
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Matagorda **CODE:** 321 **ZIP CODE:** 77457

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x nomination) (___ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x meets) (___ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (___ nationally) (___ statewide) (x locally). (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official



Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

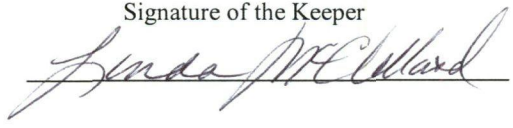
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
- ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ See continuation sheet
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action



5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: District

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	1	0 SITES
	3	0 STRUCTURES
	19	2 OBJECTS
	23	2 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: FUNERARY/Cemetery

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

FOUNDATION	N/A
WALLS	N/A
ROOF	N/A
OTHER	Granite, marble, limestone, wood, metal

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-12).

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

DESCRIPTION

First used for burials in 1830, Matagorda Cemetery is a large burial ground occupying 7.29 acres on outlot 4 of Matagorda Town League No. 11, at the northeast edge of the Town of Matagorda. The cemetery faces southwest and is about one half mile east of the developed portion of the Town of Matagorda. The cemetery has been continuous use since 1830 and is divided into sections A through E. Graves are numbered sequentially based on date of internment. The cemetery occupies flat, Gulf Coast prairie and features a central entry, regularly spaced, interconnecting shell-paved drives that provide internal circulation and separate Sections A-E from each other. Graves are placed in an irregular fashion, but most face east. The cemetery is well maintained and includes a variety of early 19th-to-mid-20th century monuments that range from impressive stone or metal Victorian tabernacle types, stone crypts, columns and obelisks, to more modest tablet types as well as upright or flat stone or metal markers characteristic of 20th century monument styles. The cemetery also contains four granite 1936 Texas Centennial markers, and several small, flat, state-issued stone and metal markers. The majority of markers are granite, limestone or marble, but molded metal, bronze and concrete markers also are present as are handmade folk markers. The first internment in the cemetery occurred in June 1830, but the cemetery was not formally established by the Proprietors of the Town of Matagorda until 1833, when it was designated as a public cemetery for the use of local citizens in perpetuity. The cemetery retains a high degree integrity; changes are limited to installation of replacement perimeter fencing in 1955, brick gate posts and an iron arch ca. 1970, and the evolutionary changes to grave markers and the site caused by the climate and hurricanes. Established during the early Anglo-American settlement period of Matagorda County, the cemetery is of great age relative to Anglo-American history in Texas and is associated with the settlement of the Town of Matagorda, an important early to mid 19th century point of entry into Texas. The cemetery also represents the lives and work of several men important in the Texas Revolution and the governance of the Republic of Texas. Matagorda Cemetery is nominated as a district and contains 19 Contributing objects, three contributing structures, one contributing site and two Noncontributing objects for a total of 25 resources. The cemetery is preserved in good condition, retaining its integrity to a high degree.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

A small, coastal community situated on the east bank of the Colorado River where it empties into Matagorda Bay, the Town of Matagorda (U.S. Census 2000 710) is about 20 miles south of the county seat at Bay City, Texas. The surrounding Gulf Coast topography consists of sparsely wooded occasional drainages and flat, grass covered Gulf Coast prairie. Soils are the rich clay bottomlands of the Colorado River. Matagorda Bay is less than one-half mile south of the cemetery, and is visually separated from it by the 1942/1961 earthen levee, erected to lessen the effects of hurricanes and other damaging sea-borne storms. The Colorado River is about 1 ½ miles west of Matagorda Cemetery at the western edge of town. The cemetery is at the eastern edge of the Town of Matagorda and for the most part is separated from it by open prairie (**Map 1**). Sited on outlot 4 of Matagorda Town League No. 11 (**Figure 1**) northwest of the

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junction of Texas Highway 60 and County Road 259, and facing southwest onto County Road 260, the cemetery is a prominent visual presence on the open prairie at the entry to the Town of Matagorda. Intact historic resources in Matagorda are limited, as much of the east side of town was destroyed in the 1942 hurricane and was not rebuilt. The vast majority of surviving historic buildings have been incompatibly altered and as a result have lost their historic integrity. The hot humid climate has taken a toll on local buildings, too. A few early-to-mid 19th century and early 20th century dwellings survive in the community, but most have been altered. The Town of Matagorda served as the seat of county government from 1836 until 1894, when the county seat moved to Bay City. None of the public buildings associated with county government activities survive, and the wharves, warehouses and business buildings reflective of Matagorda's role in the early settlement and commerce of Texas have disappeared. Since World War II Matagorda has largely been a seasonal community, catering to fishermen, beach goers and those wanting a quiet weekend retreat. A small full-time population remains in the community. Many full-time residents are descendants of 19th century settlers. Matagorda Cemetery is the only surviving publicly owned, historic property in the community to retain its integrity and the only resource with the ability to convey, through the burials within it, the rich history of the Town of Matagorda and the important role it played in the settlement of Texas and the governance of the Republic of Texas. Through its monuments the cemetery further reflects commemorative practices of the 19th to mid-20th centuries and records the historic presence of a much larger population than surviving resources in the community would suggest.

MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Matagorda Cemetery faces southwest onto County Road 260, and is visible from State Highway 60 as one enters Matagorda from the north. The first known burial in the cemetery occurred in June 1830, when Esther Randall Wightman, the mother of town founder and proprietor Elias R. Wightman, died of fever just six months after arriving by ship from New England. Within six weeks, her husband, Benjamin Wightman was laid to rest beside her. These two graves (**Photo 1**) are the earliest known in the cemetery, although the area may have been used earlier by the sparse Anglo-American population living in the area in the late 1820s. In 1833 the Proprietors of the Town of Matagorda officially set aside six acres surrounding the Wightman graves for use as a public cemetery. In 1835 the town's six proprietors--Elias R. Wightman, S. Rhodes Fisher, Ira R. Lewis, Stephen F. Austin, Seth Ingram and Ira Ingram--were deeded six individual plots out of the cemetery lands for use as family plots. During the following years disease, accidents and the harshness of everyday life took its toll, and many more residents joined the Wightmans. Today, the cemetery (**Figure 2**) contains the known graves of more than 1,255 people. Recurring destructive storms and hurricanes have damaged the cemetery over time, breaking markers, toppling trees and stripping away plot fencing. An estimated 350 unmarked graves may exist in the cemetery. Losses suffered by the cemetery are part of its history and mirror the experience of the community as a whole, which has seen population growth and loss, and the building up and tearing down of the town, all fostered by the sea. The survival of the cemetery as an intact historic resource is part providence and part community determination.

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Today, brick gateposts and an iron arch, erected ca. 1970, mark the primary entry to the cemetery (**Photo 2**). A chain link fence was placed in 1955 and replaced an earlier barbed wire type. It encloses the cemetery and secondary gates are found on the west and south sides of the property. Although no early site plan or description of the cemetery's plan survives, the placement of internal cemetery roads has been in existence since the 19th century. The primary internal cemetery roads are paved with crushed oyster shell, a traditional Gulf Coast method for making roads all-weather passable. With the advent of Federal and state environmental legislation in the 1970s and 1980s, shell became harder to obtain, as it was traditionally dredged from the bay floor, which is now outlawed. The small shell pile visible in the cemetery (**Photo 3**), with a shell-paved road behind it, is maintained by the Matagorda Cemetery Association through the purchase of legally harvested shell. But in time, the ability to obtain shell may cease, and this traditional paving material may no longer be available. Secondary internal roads are earthen and covered with regularly mowed native and exotic grasses. The cemetery's terrain is flat and the ground is covered with a combination of native grasses and St. Augustine grass, which thrives in the local climate. Scattered trees and shrubs are within family plots or adjacent to them, but most such specimens are relatively small, a result of the harsh climate and punishing storms that have pounded the cemetery and the community. Recently planted oaks and sycamores add to the informal mix of plant material that includes juniper, cypress, crepe myrtle, oleander, Chinese tallow, vitex, crinum, lantana and honeysuckle. **Figure 3** shows the locations of the photographic log. **Figure 4** shows the cemetery about 1900. This image is the earliest known visual record of the cemetery.

On paper, the cemetery is divided into five sections--A through E--with graves placed somewhat irregularly throughout (**Figure 2**). The cemetery's internal shell paved roads separate Sections A through E from each other, creating irregularly shaped areas that are roughly rectangular. Originally a segregated burial place, Sections B through E were reserved for white residents, while section A was for African American and Hispanic residents. Graves are numbered, starting with number 1 within sections B through E. The same numbering system starts over again in Section A, which was the section reserved for non-white burials. Secondary earthen roads cut through Section A and Section D. Most of the graves west of the secondary road within Section A are those of African Americans, while those east of the road are of Hispanic residents. This division may have come about more or less naturally, as Spanish surnamed individuals were rare in Matagorda until about 1910.

A narrow strip along the east edge of the cemetery is divided from the rest of the burial ground by a shell-paved road. This area was added to the cemetery in 1927. Although the Matagorda Cemetery Association added adjacent parcels contained on outlots 5 and 6 and a portion of outlot 3 to the cemetery property in 1993 and 2005, these areas are reserved as open space buffers for outlot 4, where the burials are located, and development of the 1993 and 2005 additions is prohibited. No new sections have been added to the area used for burials since 1927. A small number of graves, most from the 20th century are scattered within the 1927 addition, and the area is divided into sections that correspond to the areas located directly west of the shell road. The six individual family plots deeded to the town's proprietors in 1835 are located along the southern edge of the cemetery. Although specifically assigned, some holders, such as

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Stephen F. Austin, did not use his plot and others, such as the plots assigned to brothers Seth and Ira Ingram, include burials of non-family members.

Demarcation of the individual sections and the six proprietor plots is not visually apparent from within the cemetery, except where boundaries are created by the internal roads. Family plots are oriented either parallel to the cemetery boundaries or on an angle. Plots vary in size and shape, but most are rectangular or square. One family plot is arranged in the shape of a Greek cross, with a four sided marker placed in the center of the four radiating graves (**Photo 4**), of which only three are occupied. Some plots are delineated by low concrete curbing, others by ancient wrought iron fencing. But most are not physically delineated. **Photo 5** shows the cemetery looking west and **Photo 6** shows the cemetery looking north. Originally, many family plots were enclosed with wrought iron or wood picket fencing, but storms and the climate took much of this fabric and the need for frequent repair led to the disappearance of most plot fencing. As in most cemeteries, many interrelated families are buried in proximity to each other, with clusters of two, three or four surnames identifying their relationship. Many family plots include pre-1955 and post-1955 markers, documenting the tenure of local families and their continued use of the cemetery.

Concrete curbing is the most dominant type of family plot boundary (**Photo 7**). Iron fencing survives on only three plots, including that of the O'Connell family (**Photo 8**) and the Holt-Plunkett-Dale family grouping (**Photo 9**). The cemetery contains three marble crypts, four graves have large marble columns, and stone obelisks of varying sizes are relatively common. Several burials are marked with the thin, flat, marble or limestone markers typical of the early-to-mid 19th century (**Photo 10 and Photo 11**). Decorative detailing on these is limited to bas-relief garlands, urns, foliate or floral designs (**Photo 12**). Many are undecorated and bear only the essential information about the deceased. Approximately 10 graves or family plots included Victorian tabernacle style monuments (**Photo 13**), popular in the mid-to-late 19th century. Such markers are made either of molded metal or of stone. Some of these are terminated by urns, and others by columns or obelisks. Other mid-19th century burials are marked with square posts carved at the top with gable like detailing (**Photo 14**), or pyramidal shaped finials (**Photo 15**). Other mid-19th century markers are simple stone cylinders laid horizontally to suggest pillows (**Photo 16**). There is little statuary in the cemetery, in keeping with the largely Protestant background of the local population. A few childrens' graves include markers detailed with small lambs or angels. A few early 20th-century graves are marked with Victorian style tabernacle monuments, but most 20th century markers are more compact and less elaborate than 19th century types. Many 20th century markers are upright stone types. Some of these have a bronze plaque attached to them bearing the name and dates of the deceased. Other examples have this information carved directly into the stone. Flat markers also are seen on 20th century graves in the cemetery. These usually include a bronze plaque that gives the name and dates of the deceased. Several upright cast concrete markers in Section A commemorative members of an African American family (**Photo 17**). These markers are modest, but well made, and are examples of a more informal, folk type of monument. Three 20th century markers in the folk category are homemade metal types that incorporate weld marks as part of the design (**Photo 18**). A few burials are marked with concrete or granite slabs that completely cover the grave, another grave is treated with a mounded concrete

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top (and the identity of the remains is unknown) **(Photo 19)**, and one family plot is completely paved over with concrete, which serves as a base for individual markers placed on top. A number of special markers placed by the State of Texas are present in the cemetery including four pink granite 1936 Texas Centennial markers, placed on the graves of Ira Ingram, Seth Ingram, George M. Collinsworth and Richard R. Royall **(Photo 20)**. Other graves in this grouping, including those of Sinclair D. Gervais and Dr. Albert M. Levy, have small concrete and cast aluminum state-placed markers, while the graves of Catherine and Peter Ryman and Asa and Jerusha Yeamans display small granite markers with bronze medallions bearing the words "Citizen of the Republic of Texas," also placed by the state. Many grave markers display Confederate States of America, Masonic, International Order of Odd Fellows and Woodmen of the World insignia **(Photo 21)**. Some 20th century veterans' graves are marked with flat military style markers **(Photo 22)**. A few of the larger marble monuments--those marking the Gibson **(Photo 23)**, Herrford and W. H. Loverin graves--are inscribed with the name of their Galveston maker, Emmett & Co. Other substantial markers, notably those on the graves of Michael O'Connell, Mary O'Connell, Patrick Kain, Jane Kain, and some of the Cookenboos, are unsigned but appear to be of the same marble as those made by Emmett & Co. Handmade folk markers include those incorporating small stones, wooden or metal crosses or small niches for tiny statuary. In the area containing graves of Spanish surnamed residents, many markers contain information about the deceased in Spanish **(Photo 24)**.

The pre-1955 grave markers, curbing, fencing and internal roads, which are classified as either objects or structures, retain their integrity and are Contributing elements to the cemetery. These features reflect the socio-economic and cultural mix of the community as well as changing societal burial traditions. Noncontributing burials are those placed after 1955--the end of the period of significance. One 2003 burial is elaborately covered with a variety of artificial flowers and mementos of the deceased **(Photo 25)**, while another, from 1969 is more modestly marked with a small homemade memorial **(Photo 18)**. **Table 1** lists the primary Contributing and Noncontributing elements of Matagorda Cemetery. Matagorda Cemetery is nominated as a district and contains 19 Contributing objects, three contributing structures and two Noncontributing objects for a total of 23 resources.

In continuous use since 1830, Matagorda Cemetery has received the remains of prominent citizens, men who played important roles in the creation, governance and commerce of the Republic of Texas, and men who participated in government and commerce after Texas became part of the United States. In most cases no dwelling or other building associated with these individual survives, and when such does, it has been incompatibly altered. The cemetery also has received the remains of women, men and children who died in epidemics, such as the yellow fever outbreak of 1862, the typhoid epidemic of 1917 and the global influenza outbreak of 1918-1920. Buried in the cemetery are veterans of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Texas Revolution, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam. Ordinary citizens, and those more exalted, are buried here. Slaves and servants, white, black and brown residents are here, and this variety reflects the socio-economic, cultural, racial and ethnic mix that defined Matagorda and the Texas Gulf Coast during the period of significance. Thus, the cemetery interprets the rich history in which its citizens participated, and of which little other physical record remains.

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TABLE 1: MATAGORDA CEMETERY CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES						
Individual or Family Name	Section	Grave #	Property Type	Feature	C/NC Status	Photo #
E.R. and B.W. Wightman	B	163, 164	Object	Flat state issued granite and bronze marker	C	1
Murphey-Baker Group	B	52-53; 59	Object	Molded metal Victorian tabernacle marker	C	4
Cates-Wilkinson-Graham Group	D	210, 211; 315; 178, 179; unassigned	Object	Marble, granite, bronze, concrete markers; post-1955 upright markers	C	7
O'Connell Family Plot	B	65-77	Object	Marble, granite, concrete tabernacle and slab markers	C	8
Holt-Plunkett-Dale Group	D	15-17; 43-44	Object	Marble, molded metal slab and tabernacle markers	C	9
Issac Van Dorn	D	22	Object	Marble slab marker	C	10
Samuel Rhoads Fisher	D		Object	Marble slab marker	C	11
Coleman Fisher	D	59	Object	Carved marble slab marker	C	12
Julia Wadsworth	C	42	Object	Molded metal Victorian tabernacle marker	C	13
Albert C. Horton	D	24	Object	Marble tabernacle marker	C	14
James H. Selkirk	C	5	Object	Molded metal Victorian tabernacle marker	C	15
Ryman Family Plot	C	11,12,15AB,16-18	Object	Granite tabernacle, pillow, tablet, slab markers	C	16

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TABLE 1: MATAGORDA CEMETERY CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES						
Lewis and Williams Group	A	14, 16, 116, 118	Object	Cast concrete markers	C	17
Benjamin Aitken Walker	E	127	Object	Granite, concrete, hand welded stainless steel marker; concrete angel	NC	18
Unknown Burial	A	108	Object	Mounded concrete with niche and cross	C	19
Ingram-Collinsworth-Royall Group	E	128-130; 184; 284-288	Object	Granite 1936 Centennial markers, flat state issued concrete and metal markers, flat state issued granite and bronze markers	C	20
Refugio G. Gonzales	A	50	Object	Concrete Woodmen of the World marker	C	21
Hugh Gilmore	C	75	Object	Flat military marker, WWI	C	22
Gibson Family Group	D	86-88; 89B	Object	Marble tablet and columnar markers, marble crypt	C	23
Armendariz-Garcia Group	A	97-103	Object		C	24
Juan Carlos Hernandez	A	None Assigned	Object		NC	25
Internal shell and earthen roads	Throughout	N/A	Structure		C	3
Wrought iron fencing	B, D	N/A	Structure		C	8
Concrete plot curbing	Throughout	N/A	Structure		C	7

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SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL CONDITION AND INTEGRITY

First used in 1830, when Esther Randall Wightman was buried there, Matagorda Cemetery was officially established by the Proprietors of the Town of Matagorda in 1833 as a six acre public cemetery. In 1835 the six town proprietors each received title to an individual burial plot, located along the southern edge of the cemetery. The cemetery is an excellent example of a rural Texas burial ground that reflects both local settlement and development patterns as well as commemorates the lives of individuals important in the creation and governance of the Republic of Texas. Alterations are confined to the replacement of the historic-era barbed wire perimeter fence with a chain link type, the construction of brick gate posts and an iron arch at the entry, and the evolutionary changes to cemetery vegetation and some grave markers caused by storms and the climate. The cemetery's character-defining elements—layout, internal circulation, materials and craftsmanship are maintained in good condition and retain a high level of integrity of setting, location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association within the period of significance.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- ☐ **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- ☐ **C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- ☐ **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: D

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1830-1956

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1830, 1862, 1863

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Ira Ingram, Seth Ingram, George M. Collinsworth, Richard R. Royall, S. Rhoads Fisher, Albert C. Horton, Robert Kuykendall, Isaac Van Dorn, Dr. Albert M. Levy

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: European American, African American, Hispanic

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: N/A

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-13 through 8-29).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-30 through 9-31).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: Diane E. Williams, P.O. Box 49921, Austin TX 78765

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Established in June 1830, Matagorda Cemetery is significant for its associations with the settlement of Texas and the Town of Matagorda, an early Texas Gulf Coast community part of Austin's Colony that served as a major port of entry into Texas between 1829 and 1860. The cemetery also is significant for its great age, within the context of Texas history, and as the burial location of a number of persons of whose activities were pivotal to the success of the Texas Revolution and the development of the Republic of Texas. Matagorda Cemetery reflects the cultural and spiritual values of the community it served and is the only surviving publicly owned historic property in the community. As few intact historic dwellings survive in the community, the cemetery is a highly visible resource that interprets, better than any other in the community, the role of the Town of Matagorda and its citizens in the settlement of Texas and the creation of the Republic of Texas. Located northeast of the Matagorda town plat, Matagorda Cemetery is situated northeast of Texas Highway 60 at its intersection with Old Gulf Road (County Road 259) in the Town of Matagorda, Texas. The flat terrain of the cemetery is surrounded by vacant Gulf Coast prairie. Native and exotic grasses cover the prairie, which includes an occasional sparsely wooded seasonal creek. An earthen levee, constructed after the 1942 hurricane and made taller in 1961, is just southeast of the cemetery boundaries. The cemetery is about a half mile east-northeast of the developed portion of the Town of Matagorda, which until the 1942 hurricane extended much closer to the cemetery than it now does. The cemetery is visually defined by the flat, grassy terrain, the mix of grand to modest 19th and 20th century monuments, markers and crypts including the work of accomplished stone carvers as well as folk designs, by its shell roads and grassy tracks, by its curbing and surviving historic fencing, and by its historically segregated layout. Matagorda Cemetery is historically significant for its associations with the settlement of Texas and settlement and development of the local community, for its great age, and as the burial place of persons of great importance to the development and governance of the Republic of Texas. Matagorda Cemetery is maintained in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity. It derives its primary significance from its historical associations. For these reasons, Matagorda Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level under Criterion A in the areas of exploration and settlement and community planning and development within a period of significance extending from 1830 to 1955. In addition, the cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D for its great age, association with settlement of the community and Texas and as the burial place of persons of transcendent importance within the context of the Texas Revolution and the Republic of Texas.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN MATAGORDA COUNTY AND THE TOWN OF MATAGORDA

Bay City (population 18,667, U.S. Census 2000) is the seat of Matagorda County, which is located on the Texas Gulf Coast about half way between Houston and Corpus Christi. The county was one of the

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original counties of the Texas Republic and began to see Anglo-American settlement in the 1820s when Austin's Colony was established on land that is now part of several counties including a portion of Matagorda County. A permanent settlement at the mouth of the Colorado River was established in 1828 when a small fort was constructed and staffed with a few Anglo "soldiers" in anticipation of the arrival of colonists on the ship *Little Zoe*. On January 27, 1829, the *Little Zoe* arrived at what is now the Town of Matagorda and settlers soon added a log schoolhouse and other buildings to the fort and log dwellings built by the "soldiers." The Town of Matagorda grew into a major port for immigrants to Texas during the 1830s and 1840s. Unlike many sections within Texas where most settlers were from other southern states, early settlers in Matagorda County arrived from all areas of the United States, and most arrived by ship. The Town of Matagorda was established as the seat of county government when Texas joined the United States in 1845 and retained that position until 1894, when, because of hurricanes and other damaging storms, and the isolated location of the community, the county seat was moved to newly established Bay City. Rich, clay bottom lands deposited by the Colorado River, Caney Creek and the San Bernard River, and abundant rainfall, sunshine and warm temperatures made the area ideal for agriculture. Early county agriculture focused on plantation and subsistence agriculture and maritime trade. Early crops were sugar cane, cotton and cattle. Sugar cultivation declined after the end of slavery, but by the end of the 19th century had been replaced by rice farming. The arrival of railroads in the early 20th century fueled the economy and supported population increases countywide, as new areas of the county opened to settlement and development. In the early 20th century the creation of irrigation canal systems and pumping stations in the western two thirds of the county supported the continued development of rice and cotton cultivation. Large cattle operations continued into the 20th century. With the advent of the good roads programs of the 1910s and 1920s throughout Texas and the nation, Matagorda County's economy and development further benefited from improved transportation when highways and county roads were expanded and improved. In the 1950s cattle and rice were joined by the cultivation of grains, and cotton began to decline. Fishing and oystering also were important in coastal communities such as Palacios. Other industries during the pre-1955 period included sulphur mining at Matagorda, oil and gas extraction in various locations around the county, and the development of Camp Hulen, an army training facility, at Palacios (*Historic Matagorda County*). Today, both rice and cattle remain important economic contributors.

Population distribution and settlement patterns of the county are reflected in surviving historic resources. The eastern portion of the county contains most of the surviving 19th century resources, while the western section of the county has few 19th century resources, but is rich in early 20th century properties. The eastern portions of the county contain a large number of creeks on which were, in the antebellum period, a number of plantations utilizing African American slave labor. While only two known properties identified with antebellum plantation agriculture survive, many small communities are present. These tiny population centers are on or very near the creeks and bayous and are frequently marked by little more than a few houses, a church and a cemetery or two. Many of these communities are African American settlements, created by freedmen and freedwomen in the years immediately following emancipation. Documentation of these communities through church records, census materials, land

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records and oral histories is underway by the Matagorda County Historical Commission, and such work is an important component in developing an inclusive county history and recognizing the role of all county residents in its development. A few of these communities contain historic resources eligible for National Register or state landmark designations. In contrast, the western portion of the county contains few if any African American communities. This area of the county contains fewer creeks and much of the land was owned by a few large landowners involved in cattle raising rather than crop growing. Although coastal areas and the land along Tres Palacios Bay saw some settlement prior to 1865, most development did not occur until the early 20th century when landowners created towns as speculative ventures to either capitalize on pending rail service or to encourage it. Throughout the county are a small number of historic resources that are abandoned and in fair to poor condition. Much of their historic integrity is gone, the result of decay and lack of maintenance.

The Town of Matagorda dates to 1828 when a small group of settlers arrived at the mouth of the Colorado River and built a small fort and a few buildings near the east bank of the river in anticipation of the arrival of a ship carrying immigrants from the eastern United States. Part of Austin's Colony, the Town of Matagorda was authorized in 1827 by the Mexican government when Stephen F. Austin convinced the Mexican authorities of the need for a military post to protect settlers. A town corporation was established and Elias R. Wightman, James B. Austin, H. H. League, Duke Selkirk and William Selkirk. Each became owners of 25 percent of the town. Wightman, Austin's chief surveyor, recruited a number of families from his native New York and from New England to journey to Matagorda. These 60 people traveled by boat on inland rivers from New York state to New Orleans and then by ship from New Orleans to Matagorda. The ocean portion of the trip was expected to take only seven days, but took 31, and the settlers arrived tired and ill on January 27, 1829. They were met by the inhabitants of the new fort and shortly thereafter began construction of the new town. A school was built and a Sunday school established. In June of 1829 Esther R. Wightman, mother of Elias, died of fever. Her husband Benjamin followed her six weeks later. They were the first known burials in Matagorda Cemetery, which survives as the only intact publicly owned historic resource in the community. In 1835 the town's proprietors officially donated six acres for cemetery use to the Town of Matagorda. Over the next four years many more ships arrived and the town grew. Businesses and homes were built and two salt factories were established. Barter was used more than currency, because of its scarcity. Trade with Hispanic citizens increased during the following years, and the community thrived.

From its earliest days, cotton was an important contributor to the local economy. Reportedly a gin operated in the area as early as 1825 (*Handbook of Texas Online*: "Matagorda, Texas"). By 1832 about 1,400 people lived there, with an additional 250 or so living outside the city limits in nearby areas. In 1835 many local residents joined the movement for Texas independence. Local resident George Collinsworth was commander of the Texans at the capture of Goliad in October 1835. Matagorda resident and town proprietor Ira Ingram, along with Phillip Dimmit, drafted the Goliad Declaration and Ingram wrote the final version on December 20, 1835. Thirty of the 92 signers were from Matagorda. In early 1835 Matagorda became the fleet base for the Texas Navy when Commodore Charles E. Hawkins selected

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Matagorda Bay as the fleet's headquarters. In April 1835, the fleet moved to Galveston. Local resident Samuel Rhoads Fisher became Secretary of the Texas Navy on October 28, 1836. Two signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence were local residents: Samuel Rhoads Fisher and Bailey Hardeman. Ira Ingram served as the first Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic. Other local men also were prominent in the Republic and in the early government of Texas after it became a state. Matagorda's influence was so strong during the Republic era that the town was just three votes short of selection as capital of the Republic (*Historic Matagorda County*). Prior to the selection of Austin in 1839 as the capital, local resident Alexander C. Horton built a three-story building to house the Republic's government, and presumably it was later used as the county courthouse. A Masonic lodge, Odd Fellows group, the Matagorda Methodist Church and the Episcopal church all organized in 1839. In 1840 the town incorporated, and later disincorporated. The Episcopal church was the first organized in Texas. Several newspapers were published locally during the Republic era, and other papers replaced these publications beginning in the 1850s. A customs house was established for the Port of Matagorda, collecting duty on products arriving and leaving by ship. James H. Selkirk established one of the earliest dock-and-warehouse businesses in Matagorda and freight moved along the Colorado River despite a log jam not removed until 1929. Matagorda was one of the top three points of entry into Texas during the Mexican and Republic of Texas period, sharing the honors with its sister seaport Galveston and the entry point at San Augustine, which served those traveling by land from Louisiana and points east.

In 1850 the threat of slave rebellions led county citizens to establish a curfew for slaves and free persons of color and in 1856, fear of losing control over the slave population was given as the reason for expelling the county's entire Mexican population (Thoms et. al.:9). In this same period, disease, such as yellow fever, spread by mosquitos as well as through contact with the sick, spurred wealthy planters from Caney Creek and Colorado River locations to build summer homes in Matagorda, where fairly constant sea breezes dispersed the insects and lessened the risk. Private schools operated in Matagorda during the Republic era and after the passage of a state education act in 1854, public schools were established (*Handbook of Texas Online*, "Matagorda, Texas"). In 1860 Matagorda's population included a number of varied occupations, including a physician, stock raisers, a teacher, farmers, carpenters, a stone mason, and laborers. Many residents made their living from the sea, and occupations associated with maritime activities included pilot, bar, pilot, seaman, sailor, boatman, ship carpenter and lighthouse keeper. Residents reflected the diverse immigration patterns typical for seaports. In addition to New England and southern states, a number of residents claimed birthplaces such as Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England, Africa, Mexico, the Bahamas and Denmark (U.S. Census 1860). Despite the lessened risk of disease, yellow fever broke out in Matagorda at the end of September 1862, and before the epidemic ended that fall about one third of the population had succumbed to it. Some victims of the outbreak are buried in Matagorda Cemetery, but the burial locations of most victims is unknown.

During the Civil War, Matagorda was one of eight Texas ports used by blockade runners who moved cotton, munitions, clothing and other goods in and out of the Confederacy. In December 1863 Federal troops landed about four miles south of town, on the peninsula, and a local Confederate company

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along with volunteers were called out to attack the Union troops. However, a sudden weather change resulted in the loss of 23 men, who drowned or died of exposure. Local tradition states that the bodies of some of the men were not recovered. Of the 23 men, 19 are buried in Matagorda Cemetery (Bay City High School Junior Historians. "Matagorda Cemetery List of Internments", 1973, updated by the Matagorda Cemetery Association) and one is interred in Caney, Texas. The burial location of the three remaining soldiers has not been identified. It is possible their remains were not recovered.

With the emancipation of African American slave labor at the end of the Civil War, the plantation economy declined and farmers turned to cattle raising. A beef processing plant was established in 1866 and hide and tallow factory in 1870. Population information recorded in the 1870 census reflects the changing social patterns of the post-slavery era. A number of new laboring class occupations occur in the census materials, including laundress, housekeeper, assistant housekeeper, wood cutter, porter, cook, seamstress, farm hand, drayman, and house maid. Most of these positions were held by newly emancipated African Americans, who previously had performed similar jobs as slaves. Other new occupations also appear in town, reflecting the increased economic and educational opportunities available in Matagorda at that time. Included are cattle driver, grocer, hotel keeper, clerk, beef packer, tailor, and insurance agent. Occupations associated with government service also appear, including sheriff, deputy district clerk, county judge, post master and mail carrier. Residents born in Sweden, France, Russia and Nova Scotia added to the cultural mix. Markers in Matagorda Cemetery reflect the presence of the African American population. Although most marked graves date from the early to mid-20th century, cemetery records document the presence of slave burials as early as the 1850s.

Hurricanes hit the town hard in 1875, 1886 and 1894 destroying homes and businesses and leading to an economic decline. In addition, new coastal towns drew commerce from Matagorda, although after the county seat was relocated to Bay City in 1894, the community remained a shipping point for cotton, cattle and fruit. Despite the Cane Belt Railway's spur to the port, the town's best commercial years were past. As early as the 1870s Mexican immigrants found their way into Matagorda County, and with the start of the Mexican Revolution about 1910, more immigrants began to arrive, adding to the Spanish surnamed population already present. County census enumeration rolls first show substantial numbers of Spanish surnamed individuals in 1910, and record most as living in the farming communities of the central and western portions of the county. The U.S. Census for 1910 records a number of Spanish surnamed families and individuals in the Town of Matagorda, many of whom were born in Mexico. A few were natives of Spain. In addition to place of birth and other information, the census materials also record the year the individual came to the United States. According to the 1910 census, most of the Mexican immigrant population present in the Town of Matagorda in that year came to the United States prior to 1905. One individual arrived as early as 1882, and several immigrants came in 1898, others in 1900 and 1903, and many males were employed in seafaring trades, while others were laborers. Occupations included fisherman, fisherman's mate, and laborers. One man ran a restaurant. Women, when employed outside the home were typically housekeepers. In many families, one parent was born in Mexico and the other was a native of Texas. This population added to the already diverse mix of Euro-Americans,

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European and Caribbean born residents, and African American residents already present. Spanish or Italian surnames recorded in the 1910 census for the Town of Matagorda include Pima, Villareal, Garcia, Jaramillo, Garza, Gonzales, Montelongo (Italian), Salina, Mazza (Italian), Martinez, Gartica, Rodriguez, Fernandez, and de Leon. According to census information the Italian surnamed families came to the United States from Mexico. Many of these surnames can be seen on monuments in Matagorda Cemetery. The earliest marked grave with a Spanish surname is that of Refugio Gonzales, who died in 1910. His grave is marked with a Woodmen of the World monument.

By 1914 Matagorda's population in 1914 was 1,000 people and the most important industries were oystering, sulphur mining and oil extraction. Cattle raising and various farming activities also were important. Two epidemics hit Matagorda in the early 20th century. The first was an outbreak of typhoid in 1917, and the second the influenza of 1918. Victims of both epidemics are buried in Matagorda Cemetery. Electricity arrived in Matagorda in 1926 and stimulated the seafood industry, but the Great Depression curtailed the expansion. In 1933 the community had 33 businesses and more than 200 white and African American children attending local schools. But a hurricane in 1942 destroyed much of the town, including most of the east end. A protective levee was built after the 1942 storm, and was made taller in 1961 just prior to the arrival of Hurricane Carla, a storm that devastated much of the Texas Gulf Coast. Because of the levee damage in Matagorda was much less than it would have been without the levee. The levee remains in place today. After the 1942 storm, many people sold out and moved to Bay City or elsewhere, feeling that the inevitability of future storms was too great. After World War II Matagorda became a weekend retreat for those who enjoyed fishing or beachcombing. Today, the community offers these pursuits and supports a small full time population of 710 inhabitants.

The historic population distribution and settlement patterns of the Town of Matagorda are masked by the loss of properties due to hurricanes and other damaging storms. Surviving historic resources in Matagorda represent only a fraction of the properties there during the 19th and early 20th centuries. A portion of the townsite was platted as a grid containing a public square near the center and flanked on the east, north and south by larger square and rectangular parcels. The Colorado River formed the town's west boundary. Today, only scattered development survives, most of it represents the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A few dwellings remain from the 1830s and 1840s, but have been altered. The courthouse and other associated public buildings are gone. The Episcopal church dates from the 1850s, but parts of it have been reconstructed over time due to several damaging storms; a 1960s education building is now attached to the historic church. Other early congregations retain altered early 20th century buildings. A few altered commercial buildings survive on Fisher Street, the main east-west extension of Texas Highway 60, which links Matagorda with Bay City and points east and west. Located at the southern edge of Matagorda not far from the intercoastal canal, Fisher Street runs through the center of what was the business district, terminating at the Colorado River. No other through streets are present in the town. Matagorda Cemetery, the only surviving publicly owned historic resource in the community, reflects the history of the community, from its earliest settlement by Euro-Americans through the end of the historic period in 1955.

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MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Located at the northeast edge of the developed portion of original town plat of the Town of Matagorda, Matagorda Cemetery occupies 23.1 acres and includes a portion of outlot 3, and all of outlots 4, 5 and 6 within Matagorda Town League No. 11 of the E. R. Wightman League (Matagorda County Deed Records). Burials are clustered on outlot 4, which encompasses 7.29 acres; only the 7.29 acres is included in this nomination. The other lots are set aside as a vacant buffer between the cemetery and any future development that may occur on property outside cemetery boundaries (Hlavinka interview 2005). The first known burial in the cemetery occurred June 20, 1830 when Esther Randall Wightman died. Six weeks later, her husband Benjamin Wightman, a Baptist minister and Revolutionary War veteran, was buried beside her (**Photo 1**). Although these are the first known graves in the cemetery, local tradition speculates on the presence of the unmarked graves of Native Americans and others who were in the area before 1830. The Wightmans were the parents of Elias R. Wightman, who in 1827 was granted Matagorda Town League No. 11 by the Mexican government and laid out the town (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:1).

Although the cemetery was in use by 1830, no official designation of a cemetery was made by the town proprietors until August 1833 when they resolved that a survey be made of a "...lot for a burial ground at the place now designated by a mesquite bush and by internment of the dead heretofore made, that is to say a tract 290 varas long by 120 wide..." (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:1), approximately 6.163 acres. In June 1835 the six town proprietors, Elias R. Wightman, S. Rhodes Fisher, Ira R. Lewis, Stephen F. Austin, Seth Ingram and Ira Ingram, were deeded separate plots for their individual and exclusive use, separated out from the public portion of the cemetery along the southern boundary of the cemetery. These men received lots 1,2,3,4,5,6, respectively. The remainder of outlot 4--21,200 square varas--was designated for "...the use of the inhabitants of the town as a public cemetery forever..." (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:2). In 1927 the first addition was made to the cemetery, measuring 800 feet long by 48 feet wide, or .88 acres. This area is at the rear (east) of outlot 4, and stretches across with width of the cemetery, roughly from northwest to southeast. In 1993 10.93 acres in outlots 5 and 6 were added. These lots form the vacant buffer to the east. In 2005, a parcel of 4.88 acres in outlot 3 was donated to the Matagorda Cemetery Association by the Serrill family. This parcel forms the vacant west side buffer.

No early plat of the cemetery has survived, but church records and census materials have provided data on some early, unmarked burials of children, African American slaves and white adults. In 1973 the Bay City High School Junior Historians surveyed the cemetery, compiling a book of all marked graves and creating an accompanying site plan (**Figure 2**). Since that time, the Matagorda Cemetery Association has recorded each burial, and the number of known burials recorded as of 2005 is about 1,255. However, because hurricanes and other damaging storms devastated the cemetery prior to the construction of the 1942 levee, many graves are unmarked and will only be discovered through electronic sensing or archaeological excavations. Early markers on many pre-1860 graves were simple cedar crosses or handworked stones (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:2), now lost, and without the aid of technology their locations will remain undiscovered.

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One gravesite, felt by Association members to possibly be a mass grave associated with one of three 19th century local catastrophes--an armed conflict in 1826 between Anglo settlers and the Karankawa Indians, the 1862 yellow fever epidemic that claimed about one third of the community's population, or the 1863 weather-related boating disaster where Confederate soldiers and volunteers drowned or died of exposure in Matagorda Bay--was excavated in 2001 by an archaeology team from Texas A&M University. The excavation located within the low mounded site found the individual graves of six people: a man in his early 20s, a man in his early 30s, a woman in her late 20s to early 30s, a two-to-three year old child of undetermined gender, an infant whose remains were not examined, and a grave of undetermined size, whose remains were not examined. Based on the coffin types and personal items found, the individuals examined were likely interred in the mid-1800s. The age and known information available for the people who died in the catastrophes did not match the examined remains, and the people were buried individually, not in a single pit grave as would be likely in a mass internment. Differences in coffin types and alignments of grave shafts suggested that the burials took place over several years. The identity of the examined remains was not established, but the project illustrates the cemetery's potential to yield additional historical data on the early period of Matagorda's history. A Texas historical marker in the cemetery states that as many as 350 unmarked graves may exist within the boundaries of the cemetery. Future DNA studies may be done to determine the identity of the remains and their descendants (Thoms et al.:iii). Since 2001 a careful examination by Association members of grave markers within the cemetery located the graves of 19 of the 23 Confederate soldiers and volunteers who died in the 1863 disaster.

As with early cemetery records, the Matagorda Cemetery Association has no known record of its organization. Local tradition and the recollections of early 20th century residents state that in 1913 the cemetery association was active, and had been for years. Early presidents included Mrs. George Sargent and Mrs. Carroll Ryman, but a complete list of officers and members does not exist (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:n.p). However, the cemetery has been maintained over time by a combination of efforts by individual families and by the Association. Donations, memorials and the gift of time and service traditionally maintained the cemetery. In the early days, plots were free to all local citizens, but for the past 25 or 30 years a nominal fee is charged to fund the cemetery's perpetual care program. Prior to 1955, the entire cemetery was enclosed by barbed wire to keep out cattle, and families erected fencing around individual family plots and graves. Although families were expected to maintain the graves and the fencing, this was often impossible as people moved away and families died out. Cemetery work days were community events, and residents gathered to clean and trim their individual family plots. The frequency and impact of hurricanes and other storms severely damaged much of the historic fencing and many markers. The hot, humid climate contributes to the development of rust, fungi and molds, which did, and continues to do, further damage. By 1955 most graves had lost their historic fencing and the Association erected a chain link fence to replace the late 19th century barbed wire enclosure. Since the 1980s the Cemetery Association maintains most plots and the cemetery as a whole, including the internal shell-paved and grass covered earthen roads.

Clearly, the certainty of death was present in the minds of the male passengers on board the *Little*

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Zoe, as they included in their provisions “pine for coffins” because pine trees do not grow on the Gulf Coast. The women and children were not told the intended purpose of the wood. Later, pine lumber was shipped to Matagorda for the making of coffins and a horse-drawn “hearse” was purchased by the town (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:7). Actually a wagon painted black, the hearse was also drawn by oxen when need dictated. Early funerary rituals included preparation of the body by the women and accompaniment of the coffin in the hearse by the pallbearers, who walked beside the wagon. At the cemetery, the open grave was lined with flowers and greenery by the community’s young people, and the pall bearers filled in the grave, each taking a turn with the shovel (*History of Matagorda Cemetery*:8).

Several individuals of importance to the settlement of the Town of Matagorda are buried in the cemetery. In addition to its role as a shipping point for crops and merchandize, the Town of Matagorda was an important early port of entry for settlers coming to Texas. In the 1830s and continuing up to the start of the Civil War, Matagorda was one of the top three points of entry into Texas. In some years it saw more immigrants than Galveston, and other years it ranked second in arrivals by sea. San Augustine, in the piney woods of east Texas was the primary point of entry for people arriving by land. With the founding of the town, perched on the edge of a vast, and largely unpopulated area, new areas of Austin’s Colony were made more accessible to early settlers, and the adjacent Colorado River, navigable for some distance up stream, also was used to further settlement. Although Esther and Benjamin Wightman were the first known settlers buried in Matagorda Cemetery, many others soon joined them as disease, hardship, childbirth and accidents claimed many. Two of Matagorda’s early ministers are buried in Matagorda Cemetery: the Reverend S. R. Wright, minister of Christ Episcopal Church, and the Reverend Norman Savage, a pioneer minister of the Matagorda Methodist Church. Wright’s wife Catherine is also buried in the cemetery. Other pioneers buried in the cemetery include Peter and Catherine Ryman (**Photo 20**), James H. Selkirk, Albert C. Horton, Samuel Rhoads Fisher, Dr. Albert Moses Levy, Captain Robert Kuykendall, Sinclair Gervais, Seth Ingram, Ira Ingram, George M. Collinsworth, and Richard Royster Royall, among many others. Many of the markers on the graves of these early residents bear a small round bronze medallion with the words “Citizen of the Republic of Texas.” Church records report the death of a number of slaves during the 1850s and 1860s, and although the name of the deceased, age and to whom the person belonged is recorded, the location within the cemetery of their burial is not known.

Many prominent citizens of the Republic of Texas were residents of Matagorda prior to the Texas Revolution and remained associated with the community after the Republic was established. A large number of Matagorda residents fought in the Texas Revolution, and some went on to leadership positions in the Republic or after Texas became part of the United States in 1845. These men were Albert C. Horton, Samuel Rhoads Fisher, Dr. Albert Moses Levy, Issac Van Dorn, Captain Robert Kuykendall, Sinclair Gervais, Seth Ingram, Ira Ingram, George M. Collinsworth, and Richard Royster Royall. In most cases no dwelling or business building associated with these men survives. In the few cases where a dwelling does exist, incompatible alterations have changed its appearance and resulted in a loss of integrity. The graves of four of these men--Seth Ingram, Ira Ingram, Richard Royster Royall and George Morse Collinsworth--are marked with 1936 Texas Centennial markers that are grouped together at the southeast

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corner of the cemetery (**Photo 20**). These pink granite markers are historically significant in their own right, for their association with the state's centennial celebration. The markers commemorate the importance of these four men to the Texas Revolution and the Republic and undoubtedly replaced older markers damaged or destroyed by storms. The other men lie in graves marked with a variety of 19th gravestones and replacement 20th century markers. All are buried in the southern most section of the cemetery, along its southern edge. Brief biographical data on these individuals is found in **Table 2**.

In late September 1862 yellow fever broke out in Matagorda. Before it was over at the end of November 1862, the epidemic claimed the lives of 45 of the town's 150 residents (Matagorda City Council

TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS BURIED IN MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Name	Birthplace	Dates	Occupation	Significance
George M. Collinsworth	Mississippi	1810-1866	Planter, official of the Republic	Came to Texas in 1831; Texan commander at capture of Goliad, most of his company from Matagorda and Bay Prairie; October 9, 1835 captured the Fort at La Bahia and confiscated about \$10,000 worth of munitions from Mexican forces; customs official at Matagorda.
Samuel Rhoads Fisher	Pennsylvania	1794-1839	Planter, businessman; officer of the Republic	Came to Matagorda in 1830; set up mercantile house and shipping business; delegate to 1836 convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos and was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence; appointed Secretary of the Texas Navy in 1836 by President Sam Houston.
Sinclair Gervais	South Carolina	1779-1838	Judge, official of the Republic	Came to Texas in 1835; 2nd county judge of Matagorda County 1837-38.

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TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS BURIED IN MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Albert C. Horton	Georgia	1798-1865	Planter; politician	Came to Texas 1835; Fought at Goliad; member of the capital selection committee; elected to 1st congress of the Republic; helped draft Texas Constitution; 1st Lt. Gov. of State of Texas 1846.
Ira Ingram	Vermont	1788-1837	Merchant; Elected Official of the Republic; philanthropist	Came to Texas in 1826; 1st Alcalde of Matagorda Town in 1834; Wrote 1835 Goliad Declaration with P. Dimmit. Served at Goliad under George Collinsworth; 1st Speaker of House of Rep. of Republic of Texas; Secretary and Proprietor of Town of Matagorda; willed the Town of Matagorda \$75,000 to establish and operate schools.
Seth Ingram	Vermont	1790-1857	Merchant	Arrived in Texas in 1822; surveyor for S.F. Austin; laid out town of San Felipe; 1820s-1830s Treasurer and Proprietor of Town of Matagorda.
Capt. Robert Kuykendall	Kentucky	1788-1831	Landowner, government official	Came to Texas before 1821; captain in the colonial militia in 1822; Alcalde of the Colorado District, 1824; Veteran of the Texas Revolution

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TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS BURIED IN MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Dr. Albert M. Levy	Amsterdam, Holland	1798-1848	Physician	Came to Texas 1835; early Matagorda County physician; Matagorda school board member; served with the Texas Navy 1835-1837.
Richardson Royster Royall	Virginia	1793-1840	Planter, merchant, provisional government official	Delegate to 1833 Convention; President of the General Council of the Provisional Government of Texas; provided supplies to Texans at Siege of Bexar; Organized a Texas Ranger Co. in 1836 to round up cattle to feed Texan forces.
Issac Van Dorn	Pennsylvania	1801-1860	Sheriff, landowner, county official	Came to Texas in 1822; Fought in 1832 Battle of Velasco; elected 1st Sheriff of Matagorda County in 1837; appointed a county land title examiner in 1840.
Esther Randall Wightman	Connecticut	1758-1830	Housewife and mother	Early settler and 1st known person buried in Matagorda Cemetery.
Benjamin W. Wightman	Connecticut	1758-1830	Baptist minister	Early settler and 2nd known person buried in Matagorda Cemetery; Revolutionary War veteran.

Minutes 1863). Deaths occurred nearly every day and included infants, the elderly and everyone in between. Although many African American slaves living in Matagorda contracted the disease, none died. Many were likely assigned the duty of digging graves. Some of the victims of the disease, including pioneer James H. Selkirk, have a known resting place (**Photo 15**) in Matagorda Cemetery, but the burial location of most victims is unknown, although it is assumed they were interred in Matagorda Cemetery. "Groups of relatives such as siblings, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives and one entire nuclear

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 25

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

family are among those whose burial places are unknown" (Thoms et. al.:13). A mass grave, as yet unidentified, may hold their remains.

On December 30, 1863, a group of Union soldiers were attempting to establish a "sand fort" on Matagorda Peninsula, south of the town. In response, Confederate Captain E.S. Rugeley set out near nightfall with his company of soldiers and volunteers on a sternwheeler that had been converted for use as a gunboat. They traveled across Matagorda Bay and when they reached deep water, the men transferred to three small boats for the journey to shore. Just after they left the gunboat, a strong, cold northerly wind blew in and turned the warm evening cold, and as darkness came, temperatures dropped below freezing and a sleeting rain fell. Rugeley ordered his men back to the gunboat, but in the darkness of night and the storm, the boats became separated. The men, clad mostly in shirtsleeves due to the warm day, were in peril from the elements. One of the boats returned safely to the gunboat. The second capsized but all hands were rescued. The third sank in deep water. All hands were lost. Two drowned and the remaining 20 men died of exposure in the water or on the shore. The men ranged in age from 17 to 35. Local accounts of the recovery and the funerals survive in written account, but details on burial locations in sketchy. After the 2001 Texas A & M excavation in the cemetery, Association members conducted a detailed records search and cemetery survey, looking for the graves of the victims of the December 1863 disaster. One of the men was known to have been interred in Caney, Texas, but the location of the other 21 men's remains was not established. The survey effort identified the graves of 20 of the 21 remaining men. In some cases, information on their markers provided information on birth dates and correct name spellings that were previously not known. In 1913 a monument in Bay City was erected to honor these men. In 1930 a similar marker was placed in the cemetery (Thoms et. al.:13). **Table 3** lists the names of the men lost in this event, taken from the Thoms report (Thoms et. al.:16-17), and edited based on cemetery association records.

In addition to the graves of Matagorda's notable individuals and pioneer settlers, and the Confederate victims of the 1863 event, the cemetery contains the graves of another 28 Confederate veterans, as well as many veterans of other wars. Monuments display Confederate States of America, Masonic, International Order of Odd Fellows, and Woodmen of the World insignia (**Photo 21**), and family plots encompass both pre-1955 and post 1955 burials (**Photo 7**). Monument design reflects early to late 19th century burial commemoration practices, as seen in the use of the early-19th century flat stone slab marker type (**Photo 10** and **Photo 11**), the mid-to-late 20th century Victorian tabernacle type (stone or metal) (**Photo 13**), along with stone crypts (**Photo 23**), tablets, obelisks and columns. A few of the larger marble monuments are inscribed with the name of their Galveston maker, Emmett & Co. Twentieth century markers include metal and stone tabernacle types and more simplified upright and flat stone or metal markers (**Photo 22**). A number of concrete, metal and handmade folk markers also are found in the cemetery (**Photo 17** and **Photo 18**). A small number of graves are marked with metal funeral home markers.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 26

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

**TABLE 3: COMPANY D, BROWN'S REGIMENT, TEXAS CAVALRY, CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS AND VOLUNTEERS
WHO PERISHED IN MATAGORDA BAY, DECEMBER 31, 1863.**

Name	Birthplace	Age	Rank	Occupation	Notes
Matthews, James [Jesse]	London, VA	23	1st Sgt	Merchant	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Jones, John A.	Mobile, AL	29	2nd Sgt	Planter	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
McKinley, D. A.	Cabanis, NC	22	2nd Corp	Farmer	Rugeley's Co., drowned with brother, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Hines, A. D.	Washington, TX	28	Bugler	Stock Raiser	Rugeley's Co. froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Bowie, George M.	Dallis, AL	19	Private	Planter	Rugeley's Co., buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Conner, J. M.	Madison, TN	22	Private	Farmer	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Howell, J. N.	Dallis, AL	18	Private	Farmer	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Kennerly, N. M.	Illinois	33	Private	Unknown	Buried in Matagorda Cemetery
May, A. J.	Arkansas	32	Private	Overseer	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Seaborn, James B.	Greenville, VA	18	Private	Stock Raiser	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 27

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

**TABLE 3: COMPANY D, BROWN'S REGIMENT, TEXAS CAVALRY, CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS AND VOLUNTEERS
WHO PERISHED IN MATAGORDA BAY, DECEMBER 31, 1863.**

Walton, Benjamin H.	Missouri	21	Private	Clerk	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, burial location unknown
Menely [Monely], Willie M.	Illinois	33	Private	Overseer	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, burial location unknown
McKinley, Thomas E.	Tennessee	18	Private	Farmer	Rugeley's Co., drowned with brother, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Wadsworth, Thomas	Matagorda, TX	18	Private	Clerk	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried with four others location unknown
Secrest, T. C.	Matagorda, TX	25	Private	Merchant	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Secrest, J. G.	Ft. Bend, TX	20	Private	Stock Raiser	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Gibson, Henry	Matagorda, TX	19	Private	Student	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Johnson, August C.	Carroll, LA	18	Private	Student	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Rugeley, James	Matagorda, TX	17	Private	Student	Gunboat crew, froze to death, buried in Caney, TX; brother of Capt. E.S. Rugeley
Duggan, James A.	Unknown	35	Volunteer	Merchant	Buried in Matagorda Cemetery

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 28

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

**TABLE 3: COMPANY D, BROWN'S REGIMENT, TEXAS CAVALRY, CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS AND VOLUNTEERS
WHO PERISHED IN MATAGORDA BAY, DECEMBER 31, 1863.**

Lake, Edwin B.	Alabama	18	Volunteer	Clerk	Buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Shaw, Julius	Unknown	18	Volunteer	Unknown	Gunboat crew, buried in Matagorda Cemetery
Copeland, William G.	Pike, AL	19	Private	Stock Raiser	Rugeley's Co., froze to death, buried in Matagorda Cemetery

Texas Subject Markers are present on a number of graves, including those of Royall (**photo 20**) and Horton (**Photo 14**) and a state marker for the cemetery was placed in 1968. In 2001, a Historic Texas Cemetery designation was awarded the cemetery. The northern third of the cemetery contains early to mid-20th century graves of African American residents (**Photo 17**) and Spanish surnamed individuals (**Photo 24**), while the southern two thirds is the resting place of white residents. The cemetery remains in use and has ample room to accommodate burials for many years to come. Segregated burials are no longer required.

Matagorda Cemetery contains about 1,255 known graves that range in age from 1830 to the present; not all include birth or death dates. Of these, 676 graves, or 54 percent, date from between 1830 and 1955, which is the end of the historic period. The cemetery also contains an estimated 350 unmarked historic graves, of which the exact locations within the cemetery are unknown. The cemetery is a significant historic resource important for its great age, for its association with the settlement and development of Matagorda County and Texas, for its association with individuals of transcendent importance in Texas history and for its potential to yield information about the past that is not available from written or other archival sources.

JUSTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Matagorda Cemetery was established in 1830 as a community cemetery and is significant for its great age, for its association with the settlement and development of Matagorda County and Texas, for its association with individuals of transcendent importance in Texas history, and for its potential to yield information about the past that is not available from written or other archival sources. First used in 1830, the cemetery was formally established in 1833 by the Proprietors of the Town of Matagorda, and is the lone surviving publicly owned historic resource in Matagorda. As such it is an important interpreter of the historically significant events and individuals associated with Texas history and the role of Matagorda in those events. The cemetery retains high levels of integrity of setting, location, materials, design,

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 29

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

workmanship, feeling and association and is maintained in good condition. For these reasons Matagorda Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the state level of significance in the areas of exploration and settlement, politics and government and community planning and development within a period of significance extending from 1830 to 1955. Criteria Consideration D applies and the cemetery meets this criteria consideration through its association with the exploration and settlement of the Texas Gulf coast, by its great age--relative to Anglo-American Texas history-- and as the burial site of individuals of transcendent importance to the development and governance of the Republic of Texas.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 30

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

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- Matagorda County Historical Society Museum Archives
- a) Matagorda Cemetery Vertical File.
 - b) Daniel, Freda K., and Jessica Beck Jecmenek. *A Tribute to Matagorda County Confederate Veterans*, 1994.
 - d) Volunteer prepared community and family histories
 - e) "Constitution of the Proprietors of the Town of Matagorda", 1830.
 - f) U.S. Census, 1860, 1870, 1910, 2000.
 - g) Bay City High School Junior Historians. "Matagorda Cemetery List of Internments", 1973, updated by the Matagorda Cemetery Association.
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Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 31

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Texas Historical Commission Library, Austin, Texas.

a) Historical Markers and National Register Files.

b) Havard, Geraldine R. "Historic Texas Cemetery Designation Application", 2001.

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Interviews

Ingram, Mary Belle. Personal interview with Diane Williams, April, 2005.

Hlavinka, Craig. Personal interview with Diane Williams, April and June, 2005.

Havard, Geraldine. Personal interview with Diane Williams, April, 2005.

Anderson, Carl. Personal interview with Diane Williams, April, 2005.

Deshotels, George. Personal interview with Diane Williams, April, 2005.

Visual Documentation

Matagorda County Appraisal District, site plan.

Catherine Anderson, Matagorda, Texas, ca. 1900 photograph.

Texas Historical Commission Library, Austin, Texas, location map.

Williams, Diane E., photographs and maps.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 7.29 acres

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
	15	211230	3178470

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: All of outlot 4 in the Matagorda Town League No. 11, Town of Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The nominated boundary encompasses all the land associated with Matagorda Cemetery that is used for burials.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Diane Elizabeth Williams (Architectural Historian)

ORGANIZATION: for the Matagorda County CLG

DATE: August 31, 2005

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 49921

TELEPHONE: (512) 458-2367

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 78765

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS (see continuation sheets FIGURE-33 through FIGURE-36)

MAPS (see continuation sheet MAP-32 and topographic map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheets PHOTO-37 through PHOTO-38)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Matagorda Cemetery Association, Attn: Geraldne Havard

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 133

TELEPHONE: (979) 863-7879

CITY OR TOWN: Matagorda

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 77457

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

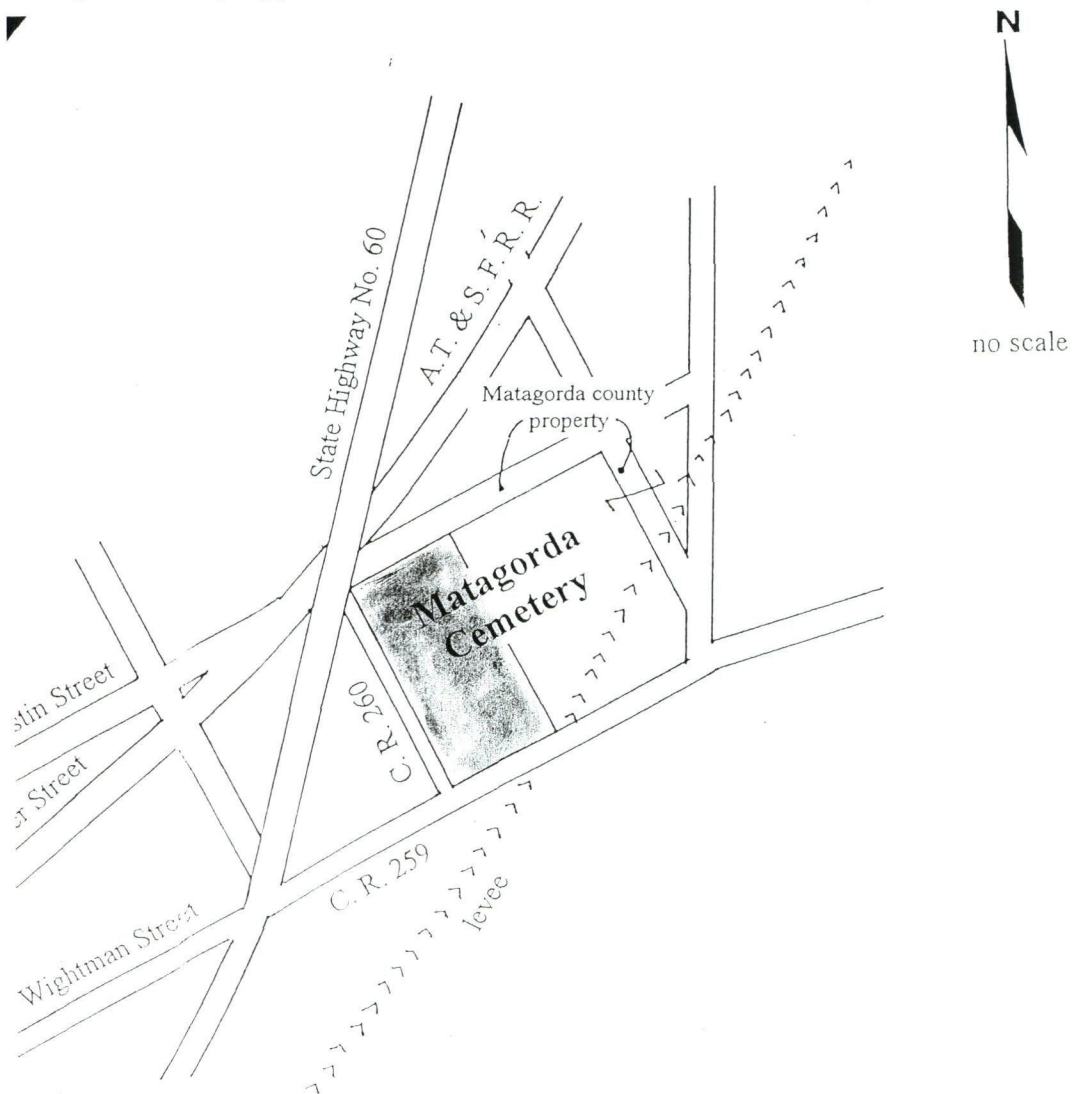
Section number MAP

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Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Map 1. Location Map.

(Source: Matagorda County Appraisal District and Texas Historical Commission)



Map adopted from data provided by the applicant and
Matagorda County Tax Appraisal District.
Located in Matagorda Town League No. 11, Lots 4, 5, and 6, Matagorda County, Texas.
Cemetery located at Latitude 28°42' 04" N Longitude: 95°57' 17" W

MATAGORDA CEMETERY

Cemetery No. MG-C01
Matagorda County

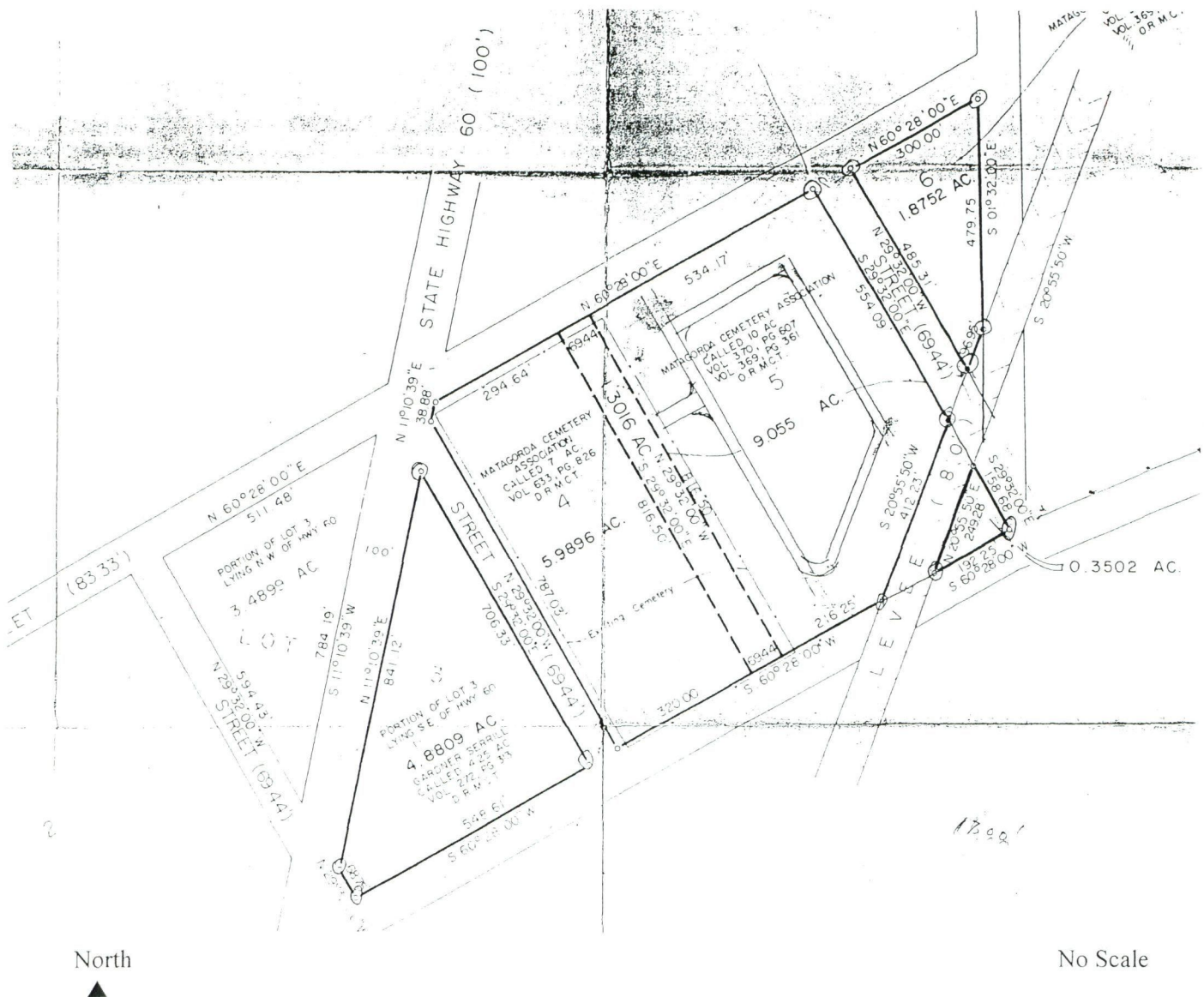
United States Department of the Interior
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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number FIGURE Page 33

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Figure 1: Plat of Matagorda Cemetery
(Source: Charlie Kalkomey, Registered Land Surveyor)



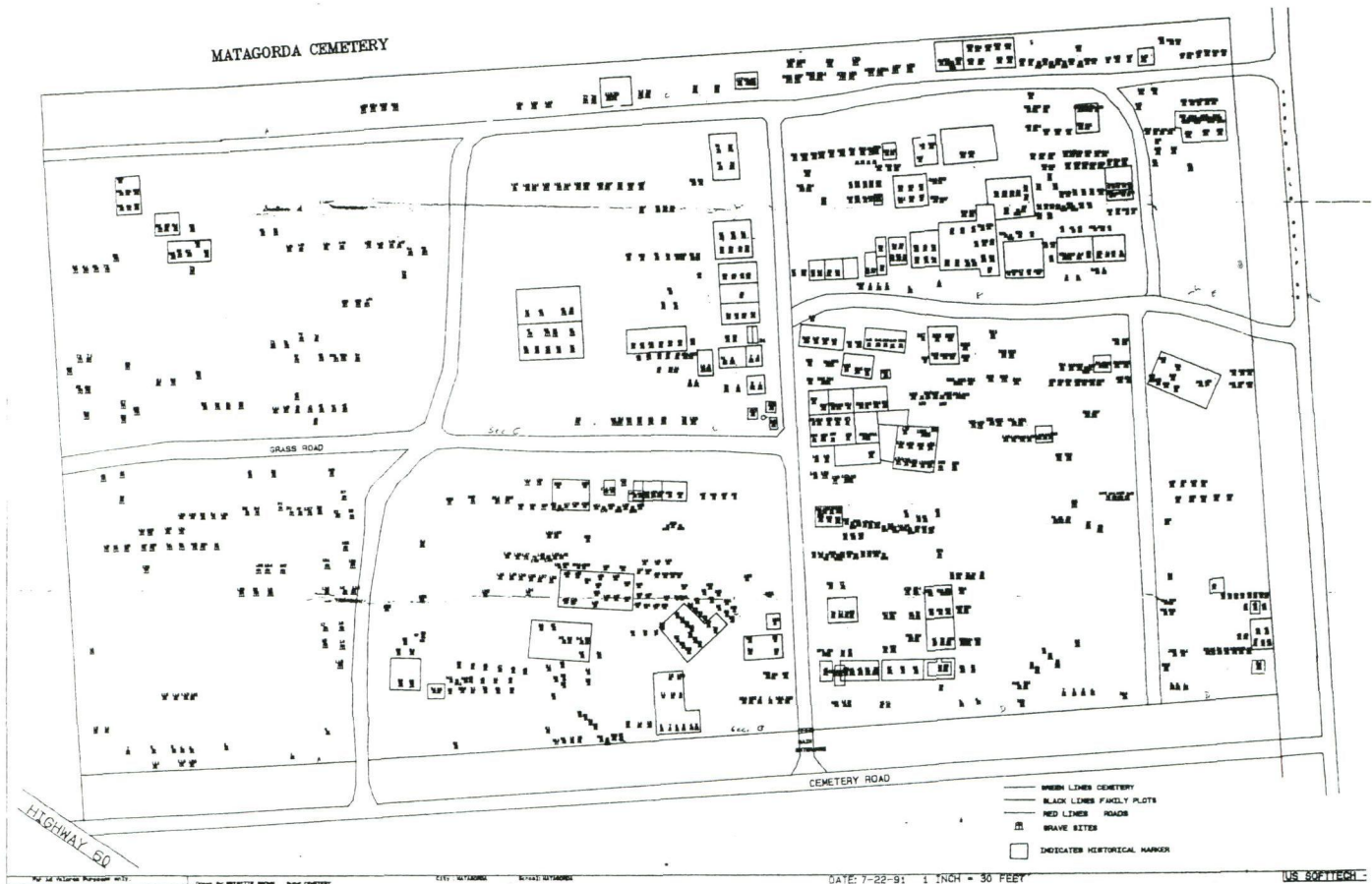
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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number FIGURE Page 34

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Figure 2: Site Plan
(Source: Matagorda County Appraisal District)



North



No Scale

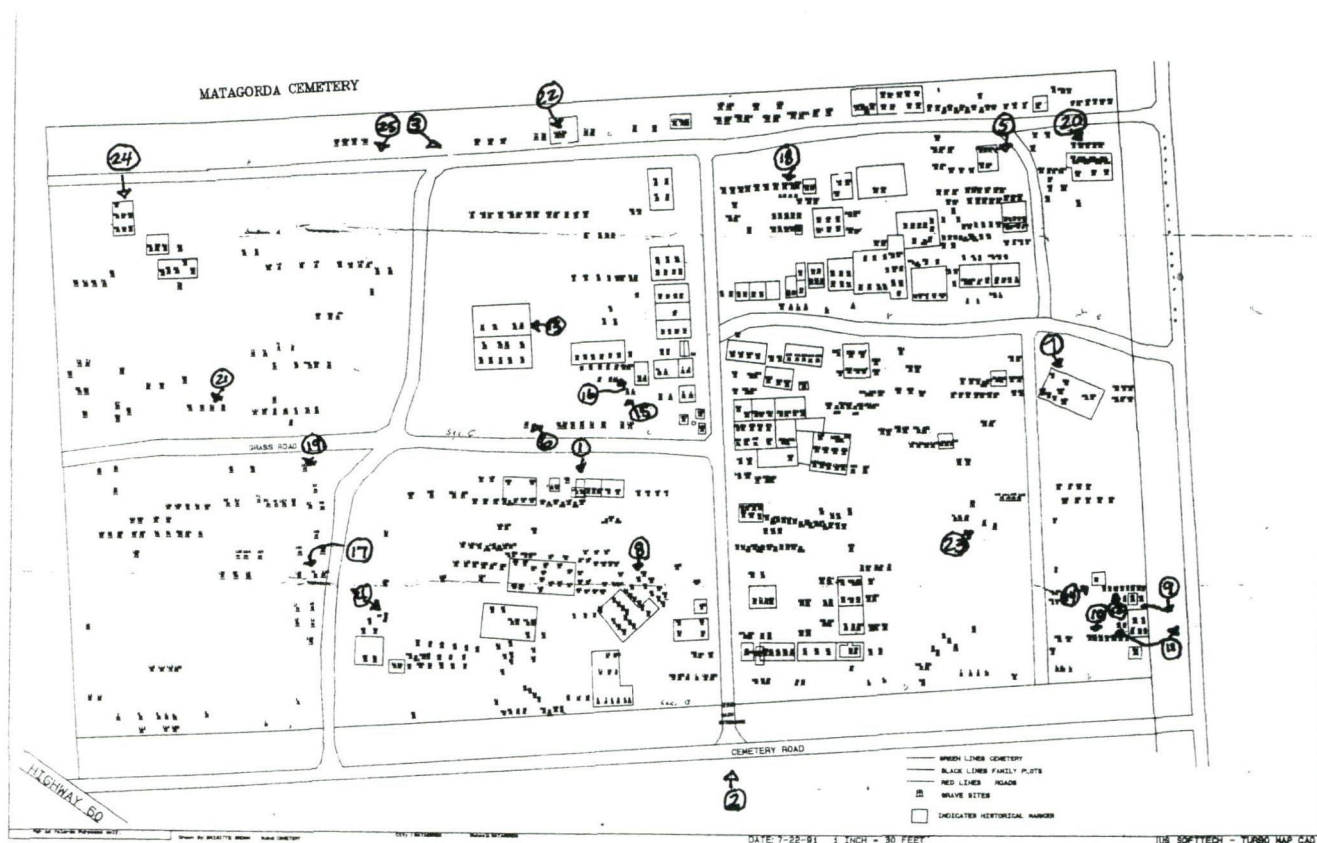
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number FIGURE Page 35

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Figure 3: Site Plan Showing Photographic Locations
(Source: Matagorda County Appraisal District and Diane E. Williams)



North
←

No Scale

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number FIGURE Page 36

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

Figure 4: Matagorda Cemetery, ca. 1900
(Source: Catherine Anderson)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number PHOTO Page 37

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

PHOTO INVENTORY

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS
DIANE ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, PHOTOGRAPHER
APRIL AND JUNE 2005
ORIGINAL NEGATIVES ON FILE WITH THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PHOTO 1 OF 25: Gravemarker of Esther and Benjamin Wightman, camera facing south.

PHOTO 2 OF 25: Main entry, camera facing east..

PHOTO 3 OF 25: Shell-paved roads and shell pile, camera facing southwest.

PHOTO 4 OF 25: Murphey-Baker monument, camera facing southwest.

PHOTO 5 OF 25: Cemetery overview, camera facing northwest.

PHOTO 6 OF 25: Cemetery overview, camera facing northeast.

PHOTO 7 OF 25: Cates-Wilkinson-Graham group and concrete plot curbing, camera facing southwest.

PHOTO 8 OF 25: O'Connell family plot and iron fencing, camera facing west.

PHOTO 9 OF 25: Holt-Plunkett-Dale group and iron fencing, camera facing west.

PHOTO 10 OF 25: Gravemarker of Issac Van Dorn, camera facing west.

PHOTO 11 OF 25: Gravemarker of Samuel Rhoads Fisher, camera facing southeast.

PHOTO 12 OF 25: Gravemarker of Coleman Fisher showing bas-relief carving, camera facing east.

PHOTO 13 OF 25: Gravemarker of Julia Wadsworth, camera facing north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number PHOTO Page 38

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

PHOTO 14 OF 25: Gravemarker of Albert C. Horton, camera facing southeast.

PHOTO 15 OF 25: Gravemarker of James H. Selkirk, camera facing northeast.

PHOTO 16 OF 25: Ryman family plot, camera facing northeast.

PHOTO 17 OF 25: Lewis-Williams group, camera facing west.

PHOTO 18 OF 25: Gravemarker of Benjamin Aitken Walker, camera facing northwest (NC).

PHOTO 19 OF 25: Gravemarker on unknown burial, camera facing northwest.

PHOTO 20 OF 25: Ingram-Collinsworth-Royall-Gervais-Levy-Ryman-Yeamans group, camera facing southwest.

PHOTO 21 OF 25: Gravemarker of Refugio G. Gonzales (Woodmen of the World), camera facing northwest.

PHOTO 22 OF 25: Gravemarker of Hugh Gilmore, camera facing southwest.

PHOTO 23 OF 25: Gibson family group, camera facing southeast.

PHOTO 24 OF 25: Armendariz-Garcia-Barrera-Campos group, camera facing west.

PHOTO 25 OF 25: Gravemarker of Juan Carlos Hernandez, camera facing northwest (NC).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

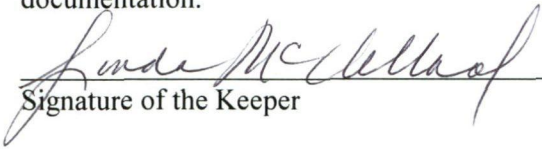
NRIS Reference Number: 06000511

Property Name: Matagorda Cemetery

County: Matagorda State: Texas

Multiple Name: N/A

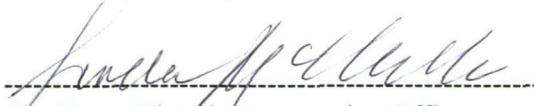
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

 June 15, 2006
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8 Significance

The entries for Cultural Affiliations and Significant Persons are, hereby, dropped because the cemetery is being nominated under Criterion A for its association with early/settlement and community development.



The Texas Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment

DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Matagorda Cemetery

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Matagorda

DATE RECEIVED: 5/04/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/23/06
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/07/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/17/06
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000511

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT ___DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Established in 1830, the cemetery is significant for its associations with region's earliest settlement. Cemetery reflects the cultural and spiritual values of this coastal community and is the only surviving public property associated with town's history.

RECOM./CRITERIA

Accept A + Crit Cons. D

REVIEWER

J. McClelland

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

6/15/06

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 1 OF 25

Grave of E & B Wightman
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co., Tx
1925



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 2 OF 25

matagorda cemetery

matagorda

matagorda Co, Tex

2925



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 3 OF 25

Shell paved road or shell pile
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co., Tx.
3 of 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS
PHOTO 4 OF 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 5 OF 25

Cemetery Overview
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co, Tx
6 of 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 6 OF 25

Cemetery Overview
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co. Tx

6925



MATAGORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 7 OF 25

Cates-Walkinson-Graham Group
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co., Tx



MATAGORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 8 OF 25

O'Connell Family Plot
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co., Tx

8 of 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 9 OF 25

Halt - Plunkett - Dale Group
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co, Tex
9 of 25



ISAAC VAN DOREN

in Pennsylvania

DIED

MAY 30, 1860.

aged 65 yrs

Buried 9/22/60

Finnell & Co.
Granite

MATAGORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 10 OF 25



A black and white photograph of a weathered, rectangular gravestone for Samuel Rhoads Fisher. The stone is set in a grassy cemetery. In the background, a large, dark, vertical monument is visible, and another smaller stone is partially seen to the left. The main stone has an inscription at the top.

SAMUEL RHOADS FISHER
Born Dec. 31, 1794
Died March 14, 1879.

MATALORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATALORDA, MATALORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 11 OF 25

grave of Jane's family
Matalorda Cemetery
Matalorda
Matalorda Co. 74

11925



COLEMAN FISHER

Infant Son of

SAMUEL & ELIZA OPHELIA
FISHER

Died June 19th 1855
Aged 28 Months

*In the spring of that year I thought
I was going to have a very long
time of being a mother
I was not to be disappointed*

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 12 OF 25



SACRED TO
THE MEMORY OF
JULIA AMELIA
BELOVED WIFE OF
W. B. WADSWORTH.
BORN 1846 — DIED 1893.

TURNING ONE YEAR AGO AT HOME
THIRTY-NINE YEARS OLD SHE PASSED
AND LEFT BEHIND ONE CHILD
AND ONE SON. ON JANUARY 1894
SHE WAS IN THE
THE LIVING ONE
WILL COME AND KEEP HER PRECIOUS MEMORIES

WADSWORTH

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 13 OF 25

Jane & Julia Wadsworth
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co. Tx

13 of 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 14 OF 25

14825
Matagorda County
Matagorda Cemetery
James Robert C. Horton



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 15 OF 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 16 OF 25

*Ryman Family Plot
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co. Tx
16925*



DIAZ LEWIS SR
JULY 23. 1904
AUG 10. 1982

SPENCER LEWIS
AT REST
BORN 1870-1947

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 17 OF 25

Lewis Williams Group
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co. Tx

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MATAGORDA CEMETERY

TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260

MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 18 of 25

Grave of B. A. Wheeler
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co, Tx
18 of 25
(10)



MATALORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATALORDA, MATALORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 19 OF 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 20 OF 25

Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co, 209 25
Group
Germain - Levy - Lyman - Young
Royall -



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD
CENTRAL

REFUGIO G.
GONZALES
BORN
JUN 4 1862
DIED
FEB 5 1908

PHOTO 21 OF 25



HUGH MURRY GILMORE
TEXAS
WAGONER SUP CO 360 INF
WORLD WAR I
DEC 29 1955

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 22 OF 25

grave of Hugh B. Moore
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co., Tex
22 of 25



MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 23 OF 25

Gibson Family Group
Matagorda Cemetery
Matagorda
Matagorda Co. Tex

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MATAGORDA CEMETERY
TEXAS 60 AT CR 259/260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS

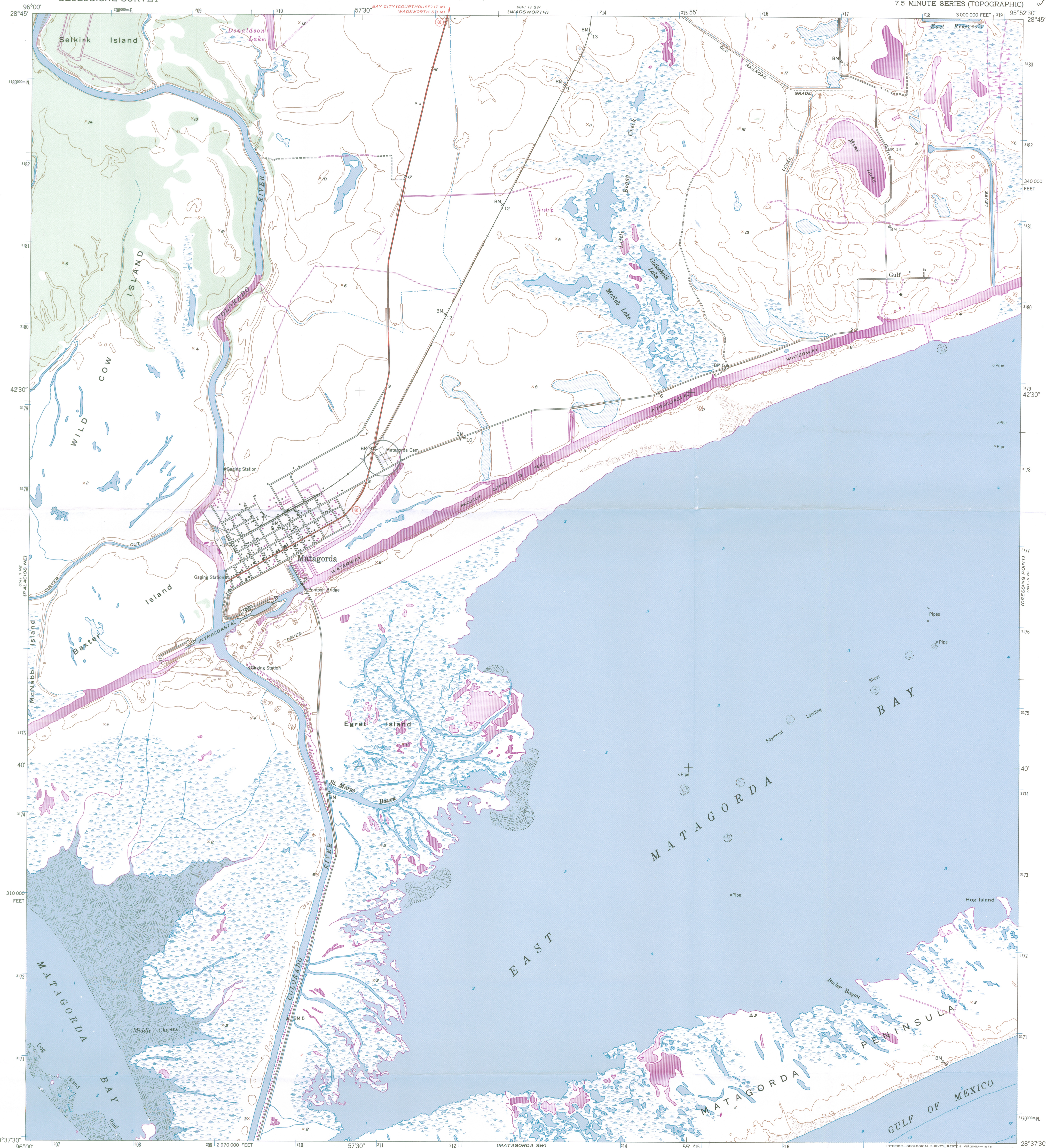
PHOTO 24 OF 25



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

MATAGORDA CEMETERY
STATE HIGHWAY 60 AT COUNTY ROADS 259 AND 260
MATAGORDA, MATAGORDA COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM COORDINATES: 15 211230E 3178470N

MATAGORDA QUADRANGLE
TEXAS-MATAGORDA CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



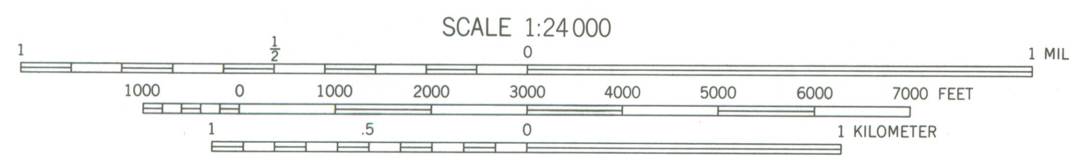
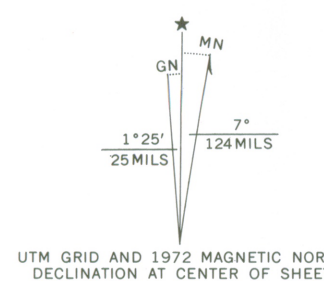
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE

Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1946-1947. Topography by plane-table surveys 1951-1952
and in part by U. S. Corps of engineers.
Hydrography from USC&GS Chart 1284, (1:80000)

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
south central zone

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1972. This information not field checked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 1 FOOT



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MATAGORDA, TEX.
N2837.5—W9552.5/7.5

1952
PHOTOREVISED 1972
AMS 6841 III NW—SERIES V882

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST





TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rick Perry • Governor

John L. Nau, III • Chairman

F. Lawrence Oaks • Executive Director

The State Agency for Historic Preservation



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Matagorda Cemetery, Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

DATE: April 24, 2006

The following materials are submitted regarding:

Matagorda Cemetery, Matagorda, Matagorda County, Texas

☒	Original National Register of Historic Places form
☐	Resubmitted nomination
☐	Multiple Property nomination form
☒	Photographs
☒	USGS map
☐	Correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

☐ SHPO requests substantive review

☐ The enclosed owner objections (do ☐) (do not ☐) constitute a majority of property owners

☐ Other _____