

St. Mary's, Newport

Oldest Catholic Cemetery To Become Historical Site

The state's oldest Catholic cemetery located at Mount Vernon and Barney Streets, Newport, is being developed into an historical landmark by the Catholic Cemeteries Office, it was announced this week by Rev. Galliano Cavallaro, diocesan director.

The diocesan director sees that the cemetery which is attached to the oldest Catholic Church in the state, St. Mary's, Newport, has graves dating back as far as 200 years, Father Cavallaro has announced. The diocesan office is restoring the land which has been overgrown with trees, shrubbery, weeds and grass. The plot, neglected, has now been placed under the direction of the diocesan cemetery office. Restoration of the site will be part of an expansive long-term plan

was the first Roman Catholic Church in the state. The first Mass celebrated in New England and thus in Rhode Island was said for the Revolutionary Army soldiers under General Rochambeau in 1780—Many Catholics in the area at that time, are in all probability, buried in this historical graveyard now being beautified and rehabilitated.

Father Cavallaro has hoped that the diocese's first cemetery will in time become a memorial park and historical landmark.

Joseph Auriello of Barrington is superintendent and in Charge of the rehabilitation. Many trees have been cut down and the area has been cleared and bulldozed. In the fall, permanent grass will be sown and a parklike area developed.

Several of the old tombstone* have been removed to St. Columba's Cemetery workshop at nearby Middletown to be cleaned and deciphered; These will be returned and laid flat in designated place*.

at the cemetery will also be placed in the park-like area. Mr. Auriello will be assisted by worker* from St. Colunga's cemetery in maintaining the historic spot. The Catholic Church Will thus give Newport and the State another important landmark in the restoration of its oldest cemetery.

Newport's Catholic history is long and strong. Besides being site of the first Mass in the area, the oldest church and cemetery, it was visited by leading churchmen including Bishop Carroll of Baltimore.