



CATHEDRAL

► From PAGE 6

wall to remain, but as work progressed, the side walls had to be demolished and the front wall collapsed.

Cracked walls delay rebuild

The New Orleans Weekly Delta in 1849 reported that the saving of the side walls seem folly because “the walls are cracked in several places and seem completely out of line.” De Pouilly revised his plans, and on June 15, 1849, the construction contract was amended

to replace the side walls. The specifications for the new side walls called for the footing to be 33 inches below the street and “the bottom covered with two thickness of sound two-inch flat boat planks crossing each other.” The new walls were outward from the 1794 walls.

As the work progressed the new uncompleted central tower collapsed, taking down part of the roof and newly constructed walls. The contractor blamed the architect, and the architect blamed the contractor, and the trustees fired

both, undertaking the work themselves with Alexander Sampson as superintendent. During construction, St. Patrick’s on Camp Street was made the “pro-Cathedral.”

On Nov. 9, 1850, The Daily Picayune said that the “Cathedral is now rapidly approaching completion. The spires of the two corner towers on Chartres Street have been erected and only required slating to be finished. Even in its present rough and incomplete state, the loftiness and lightness of many portions of the interior edifice are very

striking to the eye of the beholder.”

But the church would not be blessed for another year, on Dec. 7, 1851.

The new cathedral was not universally liked. Visiting architect Thomas Wharton described it as an “indifferent substitute” for the Spanish-era cathedral. DeBows Review described the cathedral a “profanation,” and historian Charles Gayarre, in 1854, as an “upstart production of bad taste.”

Today the cathedral’s silhouette is synonymous with the City of New Or-

leans. The architectural style of the cathedral follows the architect’s “modern” French romanticism of the Neo-Grec style.

The impression that the present cathedral is the same church as the 1794 cathedral is not valid. The only portion of the 1794 church to survive is the foundation under the front wall. The claim that St. Louis Cathedral is the oldest American cathedral also cannot be substantiated, no matter how it is phrased. The cathedrals in St. Augustine, San Juan, San Antonio

See **CATHEDRAL** page 8 ►



THE
CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF
MEMPHIS
IN
TENNESSEE

The Most Reverend Martin D. Holley, D.D.,
Bishop of Memphis in Tennessee,
along with the Clergy, Religious and
all the Faithful Laity of the diocese,
offer our congratulations to
*The Catholic Church of the
Archdiocese of New Orleans*
as it commemorates its
Tri-Centennial Celebration.



Spanish Capuchin clergy arrive to take charge of Louisiana mission; Father Cirilo de Barcelona appointed first superior. New parish established at St. John the Baptist in Edgard.



Father Antonio de Sedella (Pere Antoine) arrives in New Orleans; pastor of St. Louis Church from 1787-90 and St. Louis Cathedral from 1795-1829.

St. Bernard Parish established at New Galvez (now St. Bernard).



The Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas is created, April 25, by Pope Pius VI, and Luis Peñalver y Cárdenas of Havana is appointed bishop of New Orleans, Dec. 18; consecrated, April 26, 1795. He takes possession of his see, July 24, and remains until 1801, when he is transferred as the sixth bishop of Guatemala.

1772
1778: Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands begin to arrive in Louisiana.

1778
Father Cirilo de Barcelona nominated auxiliary bishop of Santiago de Cuba with fixed residence in New Orleans. Consecrated as auxiliary bishop in Havana, March 6, 1785.



1782
1787
1788
1793
Bishop Cirilo, as auxiliary, and the Louisiana Territory transferred to the jurisdiction of the newly created Diocese of Havana. New Orleans experiences its first great fire – on Good Friday – which destroys the old parish Church of St. Louis and 80 percent of the city’s buildings, though the Ursuline Convent is saved. Construction begins on new church (1789-94), designed by Don Gilberto Guillemard without a central tower. Don Andres Almonester y Roxas funds construction and is buried in the church.

1793