

New Orleans civic culture imbued with Catholicism

By Dr. Charles Nolan
Contributing writer

This article in the Clarion Herald's "River of Faith: 300 Years as a New Orleans Catholic Community" includes a few "random facts" on the early Catholic community in New Orleans.

These form a small part of Catholic historian and author Roger Baudier's "Historic Old New Orleans" column in the early issues (1933-35) of the Catholic Action of the South, which predated the Clarion Herald and was published until 1963.

More than Sazeracs

"New Orleans has a real past, but this is not to be taken in the sense given to the expression by the movies. The city has a real history – an absorbingly interesting history, more than a mere Cabildo, an Absinthe House, Dueling Oaks, Sazeracs and a few other points doted on by the guide books and 'the rubberneck bus Cicerones.' ... The editor suggested for this column random facts – no cut-and-dried chronology, how abhorrent – but "purple patches on the walls of 'Time.'" (Jan. 1, 1933)

Jesuits' cotton gin

"The first cotton gin operated in Louisiana, of which there is any record, was on the famous plantation of the Jesuits, located roughly from Canal to Felicity Street and from the River to Broad Street. The gin was operated as early as 1733. It was invented ... by an English



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Roger Baudier, associate editor/editor of the Catholic Action of the South from 1932-49, receives the Palmes Academiques medal as Officer d'Academie from French Consul General Lionel Vasse, while Msgr. Lucien Caillouet looks on.

boat builder named James. ... the machine consisted of two steel drums operated by a double wheel." (Feb. 18, 1933)

on Sundays and feasts of obligation during the time of Mass at the parish church

(now the St. Louis Cathedral). The king's attorney on several occasions made

his rounds of the town during High Mass and caught some tavern keepers with brandy, omelettes, pork chops, in fact, whole breakfasts on the tables. The violators were promptly hauled before the council. In those days, Mass came first and feasting afterwards." (Oct. 21, 1933)

Pope Francis would love it

"It was decreed in colonial days that talking in church at Mass was forbidden. If we only had such a law now!" (Dec. 14, 1933)

Corporal works of mercy

"In April 1869, the Sisters of Mercy undertook the task of visiting the inmates of the city prison. They did so regularly, bringing books, catechisms, beads and medals or little favors and gave instructions to those properly disposed. With the primitive prison conditions existing then, it was indeed

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Water table issues

"Until 1724, many of the dead in New Orleans were buried on the river front, along the river bank, although there was no cemetery. Thus, the city's first burial ground was ... a 'wet grave,' a name which was later given to the city." (March 1933)

Closed for Holy Days

"Shortly after the city was founded, an ordinance was adopted, ordering all billiard rooms, taverns and similar places to close



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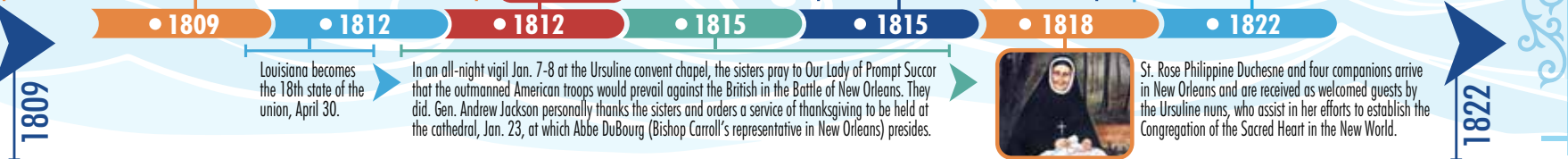
More than 5,000 refugees from Saint-Domingue (Haiti) arrive in New Orleans after expulsion from Cuba to which they had first fled. Through 1811, the largest single migration to the U.S. – more than 10,000 natives of Saint-Domingue – came to New Orleans after a year's stop in Cuba. Consisted of one-third each of free whites, free people of color and enslaved.



Louis William DuBourg is appointed apostolic administrator of the diocese; appointed bishop three years later.

After a vacancy of 14 years, Louis William DuBourg is consecrated as third bishop of Louisiana and the Florida in Rome, Sept. 24. Returns to the U.S. in 1817 and establishes his residence in St. Louis (until 1823).

Large numbers of Irish begin to arrive in New Orleans. Also, the Association de la Propagation de la Foi dans les Deux-Mondes, a charitable organization of Lyons, France, without whose financial assistance the Church in Louisiana and the Midwest could not have survived, is established.



- 1809: Louisiana becomes the 18th state of the union, April 30.
- 1812: In an all-night vigil Jan. 7-8 at the Ursuline convent chapel, the sisters pray to Our Lady of Prompt Succor that the outmanned American troops would prevail against the British in the Battle of New Orleans. They did. Gen. Andrew Jackson personally thanks the sisters and orders a service of thanksgiving to be held at the cathedral, Jan. 23, at which Abbe DuBourg (Bishop Carroll's representative in New Orleans) presides.
- 1815: St. Rose Philippine Duchesne and four companions arrive in New Orleans and are received as welcomed guests by the Ursuline nuns, who assist in her efforts to establish the Congregation of the Sacred Heart in the New World.