FUN FACTS

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a work of mercy." *(Jan. 18, 1934)*

All in the family

"Among the Creoles of the city, children left orphans were seldom placed in institutions. Uncles or aunts or grandparents usually took care of such children. What a pity such a custom was not continued!" (Roger Baudier and his siblings were raised by such relatives after his parents' early deaths.) *(Jan. 25, 1934)*

Private religion teachers

"One of the institutions of another day that has all but passed on is the private communion or catechism school. These were usually taught by elderly Creole ladies and it was a common sight to see them wrapped in black shawls, marching their classes to church on catechism mornings. ... Practically all Creole children made their first Communion at the Cathedral. Among these old teachers were Madame Rouboin, Mamselle Farge, Mamselle Hebert and Madame Durel. Many a Catholic owed his knowledge of the Faith to these pious souls." *(Jan. 25, 1934)*

Frugal times

"In the early years of the colony there was a dire shortage of candles. The priests at the parish church had to refrain from lighting candles except at the Elevation of the Mass." *(April 19, 1934)*

A Catholic oath

"During the Spanish regime, a Catholic brought into court to testify, swore 'by God, Our Lord and a sign of the Cross.' There are on record many instances where Englishmen testified, but they swore 'on the Holy Evangelists,' because they were Protestants." *(June 21, 1934)*

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Maison Blanche on Canal Street (Ain't Dere No More) welcomed the 1938 Eighth National Eucharistic Congress.

Jesuits' foresight

"When the Jesuit Fathers bought the property in the past (1890s) where Loyola is now located, many looked upon them as visionaries, so distant was the location regarded." *(Aug. 9, 1934)*

Patron of meteorologists

"In years gone by, ... folks watched the weather closely on the day of St. Medard (June 8), as rain on that day meant rain for forty consecutive days." *(Aug. 16, 1934)*

Sacred news source

"During the French colonial regime, the most popular spot in the city was the front door of the old St. Louis church (now St. Louis Cathedral). All official notices and announcements were posted on the door, which at times resembled a billboard. The law required that such notices be posted three times, on three different Sundays. So, the door of the old church was the father of modern billboards in the city." *(Sept. 6, 1934)*

Bells of Christmas

"One of the most stirring moments in old New Orleans in days gone by was the ringing of the Cathedral bells on Christmas Eve. Every bell in the towers swung merrily for a protracted period after the Angelus on the eve of the great feast. And when the merry peal began, folks would tell the children: 'Écouté! Ce son les cloches de Noel!' (Listen! Those are the Christmas bells!) And in awed silence and with a thrill, the little folks remained transfixed as the Cathedral bells pealed." *(Dec. 20, 1934)*

Ursulines' care of orphans

"In 1731, the Ursulines of New Orleans were caring for forty-nine orphans, many of them being children of French settlers who had been massacred by the Natchez Indians. The French king allowed the nuns approximately eight cents per day for the maintenance of these children." *(April 4, 1935)*

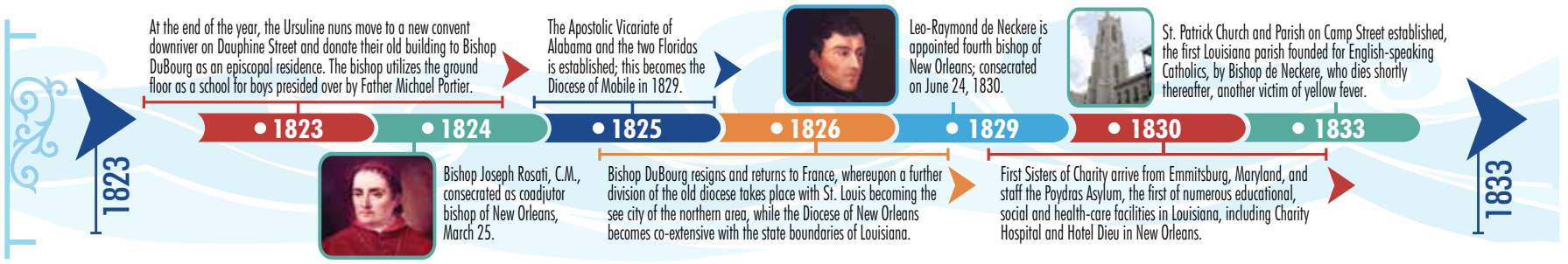
All roads lead to cathedral

"For many decades, it was the custom in New Orleans to have all Church rites for the family performed at the Cathedral. ... Fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers had worshipped there, had made their First Communion there and had been buried from there, hence there also should everything be done for the children. It is not more than half a century ago that this practice began to break up, and the old families started really to adhere to their particular parishes; still, many continue to go to the Cathedral." *(April 25, 1935)*

Geneaological treasures

"One of the fortunate features of the old church records is the custom that prevailed, particularly at baptisms and marriages, to record the names of the family on both sides and where they came from. In this way, the genealogies of most of the old families have been preserved, and it has been made possible to trace families still further back to France and Spain. These records are a treasure of history, not to mention quaintness and charm." *(June 27, 1935)*

All Saints' Day in N.O.

"The custom of decorating graves on All Saints' Day goes back to the French colonial period. It is really an anomalous practice, as the dead are remembered by the Church on All Souls' Day, and All Saints' Day is a day of rejoicing in honor of the saints. It is probable that the custom arose from the practice of going to the cemetery on the day before to have the graves properly decked for the following day. At any rate, few indeed are the Orleanians who do not make a visit to the cemetery on that day, regardless of creed or color." *(Nov. 7, 1935)*

Dr. Charles Nolan is the former archivist of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.