The Vieux Carré

The French Quarter of New Orleans is home to some of the most fascinating and beautiful historic architecture in America. The variety of styles and buildings is as varied, colorful, and striking as the people who have made this city what it is today. From the origins as a Spanish backwater colonial outpost of the French empire, to its time as a Spanish city, to its absorption into the United States, each period and people have left their mark on the city, specifically what is now known as the French Quarter or the Vieux Carré. It has become a cross-culture kaleidoscope of the greater New Orleans area.

LAITRÉ, 1779-1853

Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820)

Latrobe was a renowned British-born architect whose most notable works include the United States Capitol and the Waterworks of New Orleans. Among Latrobe’s final works was the central bell tower in the Saint Louis Cathedral.

The Presbytère

The Presbytère or Casa Curial as it was known at its construction in 1791, was built to be the home of the Capuchin monks in New Orleans. The Presbytère, despite its name and intended function, never actually housed any clergy or ever saw any other religious use. The building, designed by Guillamard like the Cabildo, took much longer to complete than the Cabildo, construction finally ending in 1813. Before the additions to the structure by the Baroness de Pontalba in the 1840s, the Presbytère, like the Cabildo, was two stories, built of brick, with a flat, balustraded roof.

The Presbytère

The Baroness is Micaela Almonester, Baroness de Pontalba (1795-1874). The Baroness is greatly responsible for the way that Jackson Square appears today.

The St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square is undeniably one of the architectural crown jewels of New Orleans. The current structure dates from 1847, the previous structure being destroyed (along with much of the city) in a colossal fire. The current structure features a central bell tower designed by famed architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, completed shortly before his death in 1820.

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