SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church

2317 Burgundy Street

*Note: It was with great sorrow that the dwindling congregation faced the closing, announced on March 4, 2001, of a building that holds so many cherished memories. The following comments predate the closing of the church and its renovation to become the Hotel Peter and Paul in 1919.*

The Parish of SS. Peter and Paul dates to 1848, when it was established for the Irish and other English-speaking Catholics in the area. Its small original structure on Marigny Street was replaced by the current church shortly thereafter, in 1860. The moving force behind its construction was Father Cornelius Moynihan (brother of the dynamic Father Jeremiah Moynihan at St. John the Baptist Church). Henry Howard served as the architect, and SS. Peter and Paul, with its brick baroque exterior and subdued Victorian interior, was considered the finest downtown church.

Todays facade is much as it was originally, save that the taller of its two towers had to be shortened in 1911 following lightning damage, and an octagonal belfry was removed in 1934. The interior has been subjected to few renovations, except for the loss of the ceiling frescoes to the 1915 hurricane, which removed the roof.

The organ case has a long history. It originally housed an organ made in the early 19th century by master organ builder Henry Erben for Christ Church Cathedral, then located on Canal Street. After serving another congregation, it moved to SS. Peter and Paul. Early in the 20th century, new mechanics from Notre Dame de Bon Secours Church in the Irish Channel were installed; these, however, have been removed and only the lower case remains.

Like many churches, SS. Peter and Paul originally had simple glass, an example of which can be seen in the choir loft. The American-made stained glass windows are beautiful. A 1907 advertisement for the Flanagan and Biedenweg Company of Chicago in *The Catholic Directory* listed SS. Peter and Paul among its clients whereas a similar ad in 1906 did not; thus we can guess that these windows date to late 1906 or early 1907.

The earlier advertisement describes one Flanagan and Biedenweg window-making technique: In addition to our European German style windows we respectfully call the attention of the clergy to what we term Semi-European style.... The figure and tracery parts are brought out in the European style, in Antique glass, and the balance in American Opalescent glass. This style of work costs considerable less and still makes up very artistic windows, ecclesiastical in every respect, and the combination of Opalescent glass gives a great opportunity to display fine color effects.

This combination of styles is seen in many churches in New Orleans, and in SS. Peter and Paul Church it achieves striking success.Throughout its long history, SS. Peter and Paul served as a beloved spiritual home to a dedicated parish of British descent. Although that congregation expanded to embrace a diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the parishioners love for and devotion to their church remained steadfast.

*Visited*

*September 30, 1991*

*March 25, 2001*

**Windows**

Altar

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque receiving the Sacred Heart Annunciation

Holy Family Jesus gives key to St. Peter

Immaculate Conception Coronation of the Virgin

St. Dominic receiving the Rosary Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the temple

Crucifixion Agony in the Garden

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