Thomas Hall Chapel, Loyola University

6363 St. Charles Avenue

Holy Name of Jesus Roman Catholic Church and Loyola University stand on property that was originally part of the Foucher Plantation. The riverside portion of this tract was the site of the Cotton Centennial Exposition of 1884, which led to the development of Uptown New Orleans.

Jesuits have been part of New Orleans since its founding in the early 1700s. The area now known as the Central Business District belonged to the Jesuit plantation until the mid-1700s, when the French government expelled the order. In the 1800s they returned to New Orleans and purchased land at the corner of Baronne and Common streets, where they established the College of the Immaculate Conception, the predecessor of Jesuit High School and Loyola University, in 1849. Father John OShanahan purchased the present site of Loyola University in 1886, and in May1890 the parish of Most Holy Name of Jesus was established. A frame church known as Little Jesuits was built on the site two years later.

In 1904 Loyola College opened its doors, and the state of Louisiana granted it university status in 1912. As Loyola grew, it built Marquette and Thomas halls, the latter in 1912. The next year, work began on Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, and these three buildings form the impressive campus horseshoe that faces St. Charles Avenue and Audubon Park. Thomas Hall is named for Louise C. Thomas, who funded the construction in memory of her late husband Stanley O. Thomas, a cotton broker.

St. Thomas, who is often overlooked when churches select window subjects, is included here, probably in gratitude to Mrs. Thomas. She also contributed $100,000 for the construction of the National Votive Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, at the Ursuline Academy.

The church served the community, Marquette Hall served the university, and Thomas Hall served the Jesuits as both a residence and a religious refuge from the distracting activities surrounding them. Before Hurricane Katrina, the Jesuits moved from Thomas Hall to smaller quarters nearby, leaving the chapel inside Thomas Hall unused but intact. It has served as a female dormitory, a storage facility, and home to the Admissions Office.

The windows, signed by the John Morgan & Sons Studio, New York, are just as bright and beautiful as when they were first installed, around 1912-1915. This company installed many of the windows in the neighboring Holy Name of Jesus Church. With detailed shading and minimal use of leading, the style resembles traditional Munich glass. All feature angels in the lower panels and familiar Catholic portraits in the larger, upper panels. In 1960 the Frei studio bid on windows for the St. Thomas Chapel, but nothing is known about new windows at that time.

John Morgan came from a long line of glass craftsmen, dating back to his great-uncle George Morgan, who came to the U.S. from Wales in 1832 to establish a stained glass business with his brothers. Family documents report that several of the first generation of American Morgans were killed by falling from scaffolding while installing windows in a church. Nonetheless, the family business persisted, passing from father to son.

In the late 19th century the Morgan & Sons competed successfully with German stained glass companies by imitating the Munich style of painting while encouraging Congress to maintain high tariffs on imported glass and luring German artists to the U.S. Around 1915, however, the company changed its focus from windows to glass bending—making items such as lamps, antique restorations, and other custom designs. The company closed in 1985 and sold its molds for bent glass to the Flickinger Glassworks.

 **Windows of Thomas Hall**

St. Joseph Sacred Heart of Jesus

St. John Sacred Heart of Mary

St. Thomas St. Peter

*Visited April 19, 2009*

When citing information from this document, please acknowledge the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 2021.