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St. Mary Basilica

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ST. MARY BASILICA

NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI

ST. MARY

THE CATHEDRAL - THE CHURCH - THE BASILICA

 Historical Significance

 Exterior Architectural Significance

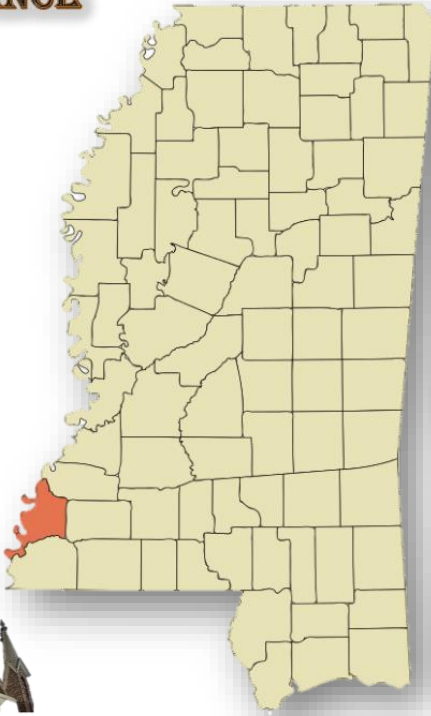
 Interior Architectural Significance

 Restorations

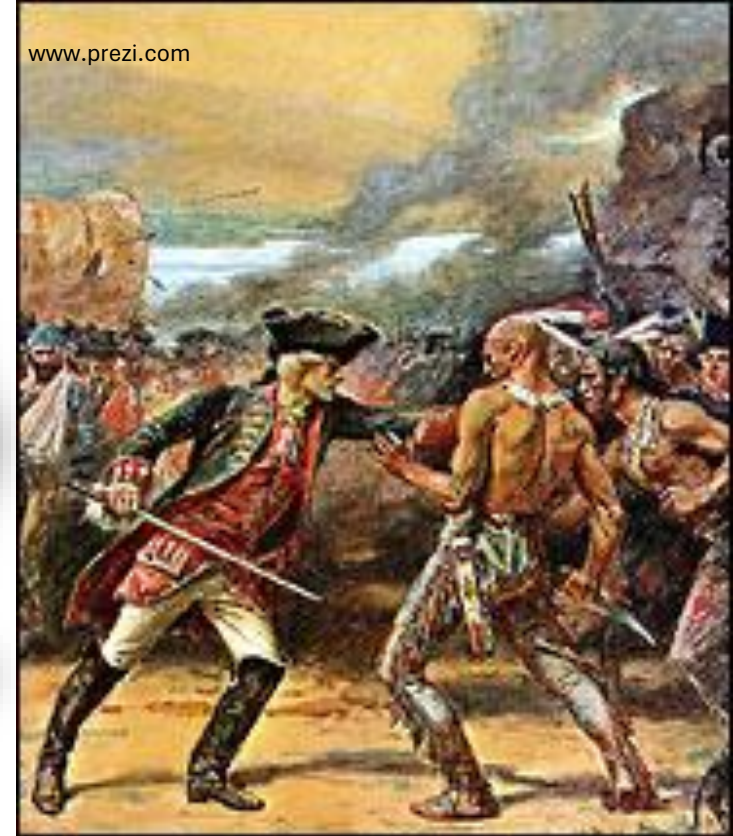


HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

ST. MARY: THE CATHEDRAL THE CHURCH THE BASILICA



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natchez,_Mississippi



www.prezi.com



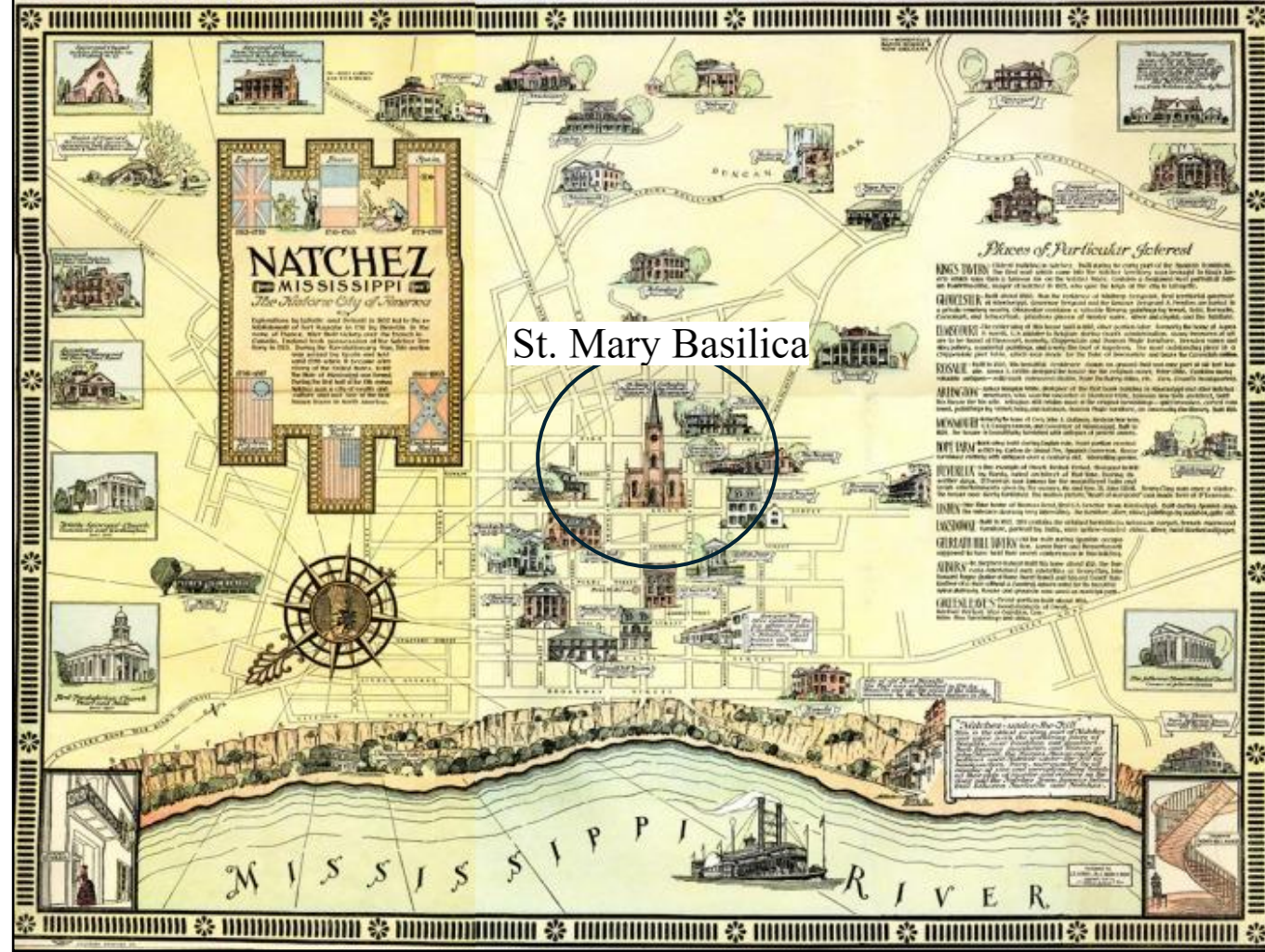
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- French settlers arrived in 1714 by river, meeting the Natchez Indians. They built the first Catholic Church.
- Met with resistance, built a fort, and gained control by 1731.
- Lost control to the English, who ultimately surrendered to the Spanish.
- However, in 1798, Natchez became a territory of the US, as result of the Revolutionary War.
- By that time, the Catholic faith was prominent.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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- Natchez is the terminus of the Natchez Trace Parkway which begins 400 miles North in Tennessee and is located on the Southwestern banks of the Mississippi River .



- Today Natchez has over 100 antebellum homes, 13 national historic landmarks, and over 1000 structures on the national register of historic places.
- It is a tourist destination for the state with carriage rides, double decker bus tours, city wide scavenger hunts, and yearly period-themed pilgrimages.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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THE CHURCH
THE BASILICA



Maria Alexandrina, a 3,000 lb. bronze bell was crafted as a gift to Bishop Chanche, from a noble family friend from Italy.

Bishop Chanche



- Mississippi became a state in 1817, and for another 20 years, the Roman Catholic Society of Natchez maintained order of worship, overseen by traveling bishops from New Orleans, by way of the river.
- But in 1840, Rome appointed Father Chanche the 1st bishop of Mississippi to Natchez, at the time, the state's capital. He began plans immediately to build a "CATHEDRAL." Designing Architect was Robert Long, a prior associate of Chanche. Builder was James Hardie, a prominent architect of Natchez.

3 Symbols of a Basilica ◆ Umbraculum ◆ Papal Keys ◆ Tintinnabulum

- It was dedicated as "Our Lady of Sorrows" in 1843
- Because of debts, it was consecrated approximately 40 years later, in 1886, since loans to build were based on commitments from wealthy benefactors who failed to follow through with their donations.
- In 1948, the Catholic Diocese was relocated to Jackson, the current state capital.
- In 1977, St. Mary was re-titled, "CHURCH"
- In 1998, Pope John Paul II of Rome renamed St. Mary as a "BASILICA"

EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

ST. MARY:

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THE CHURCH
THE BASILICA



Some Exterior FEATURES

- Reddish Brown Brick
- Gothic Revival Style
- Copper Steeple
- Cast Stone Pinnacles
- Clock Tower and Belfry
- Cast Stone Balustrades
- Buttresses
- Archivolt Entrance
- Stained-Glass Windows
- Hood Molding
- Apse End
- Wooden Tracery



EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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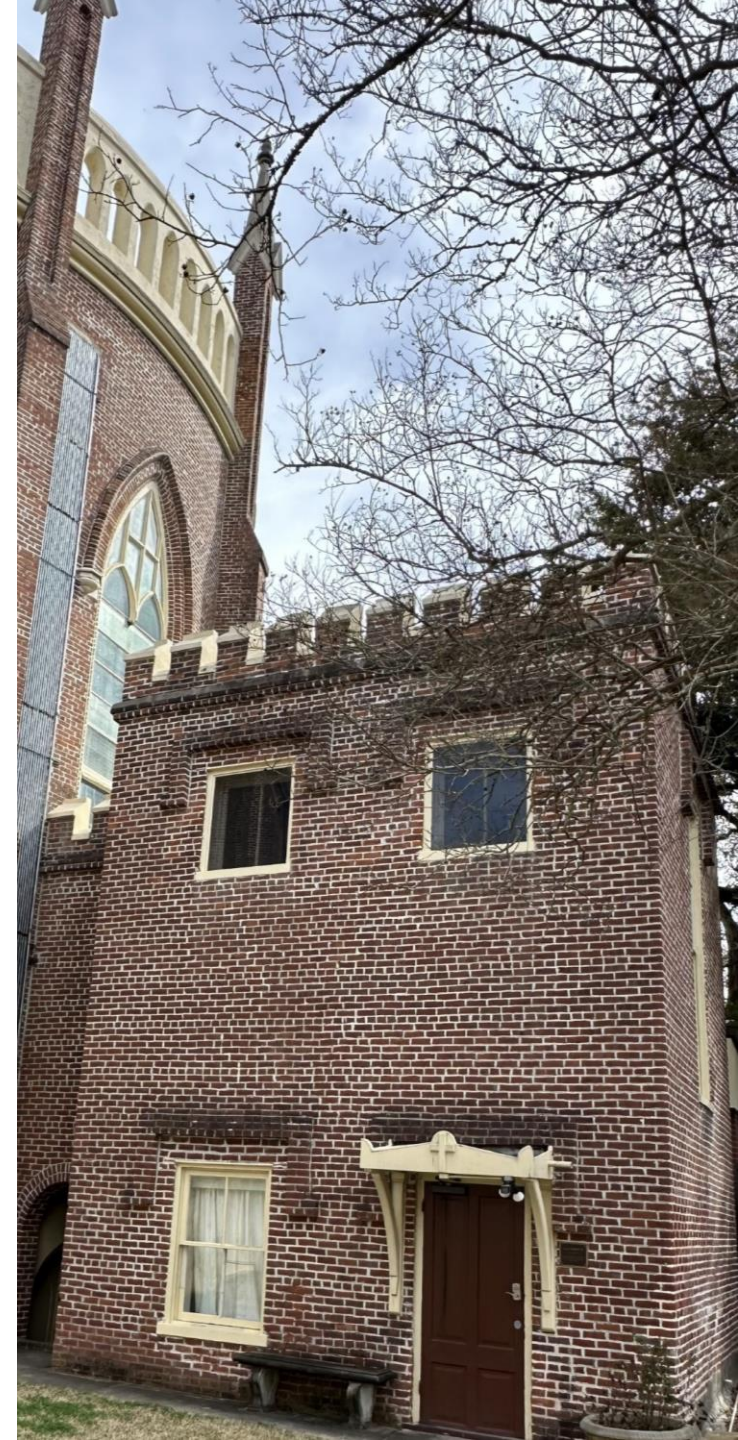
Some Exterior FEATURES

- Gothic Stylized Sacristy
- Battlemented Parapet
- Arched Basement Entries
- Hood Molding



Some Exterior FEATURES

- Federal Style Rectories
- Symmetrical Design
- Opposing Chimneys
- Portico Entrance
- Central Dormers



INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Upon entry, the narthex has unoriginal flooring, a terrazzo with an inlay design. South of the narthex, is an unoriginal crying room. On the north side, is a praying room and elevator, also unoriginal. Doors at each side open to stairways leading to a pipe organ overlooking the body of the church. Although this central section IS original, an expansion of a choir loft to the north and south sides of the organ are not.

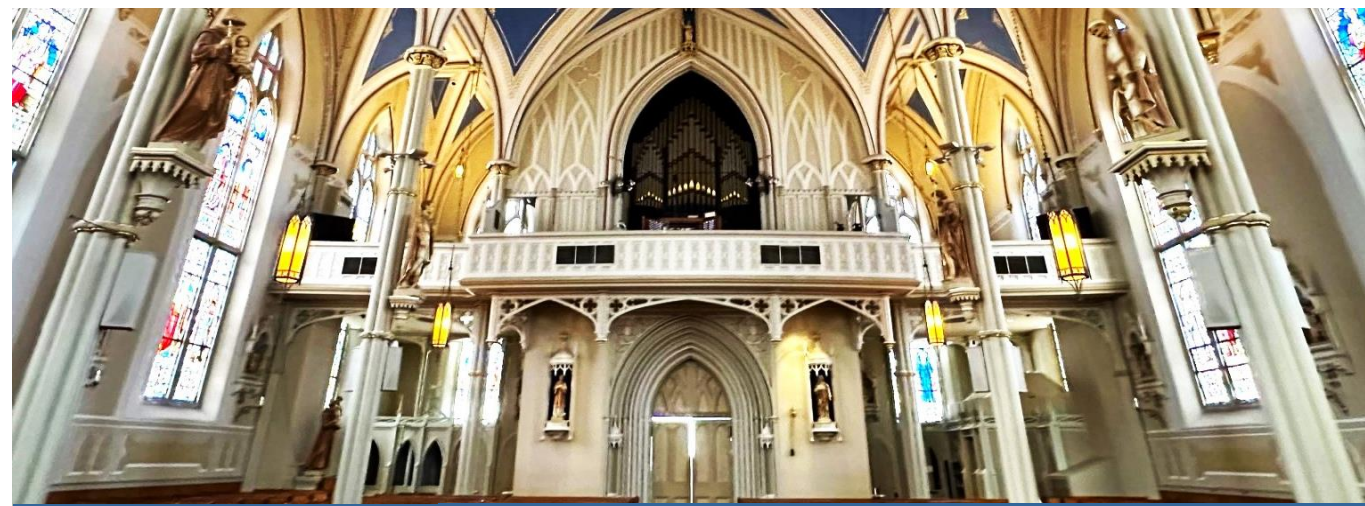
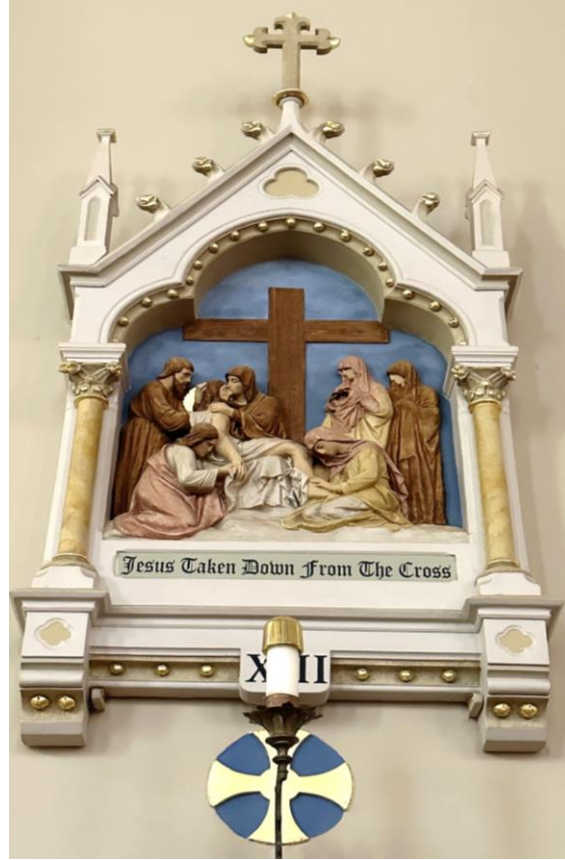


St. Mary, "Our Lady of Sorrows" is painted on the ceilings at each side of the narthex. And a statue of St. Joseph is displayed on the south side also.



**INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL
SIGNIFICANCE**

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Choir Loft
South Side of Narthex
Crying Room
St. Joseph
Our Lady of Sorrows

Large Pipe Organ
Narthex

Choir Loft
North Side of Narthex
Praying Room
Elevator
Our Lady of Sorrows



14 painted plaster scenes are on display throughout the Basilica, following the Passion of the Christ.

And 8 Gothic brass pendant fixtures are suspended in line with the nave piers

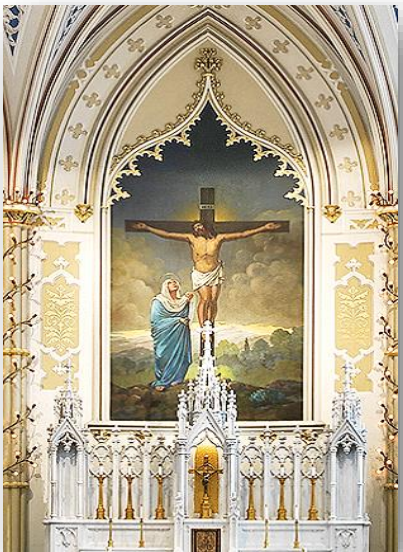


The rib vaulted ceiling is trompe-l'oeil painted with a field of deep blue, signifying sky. And intricate details on the ceiling and on the nave piers are outlined in gold.

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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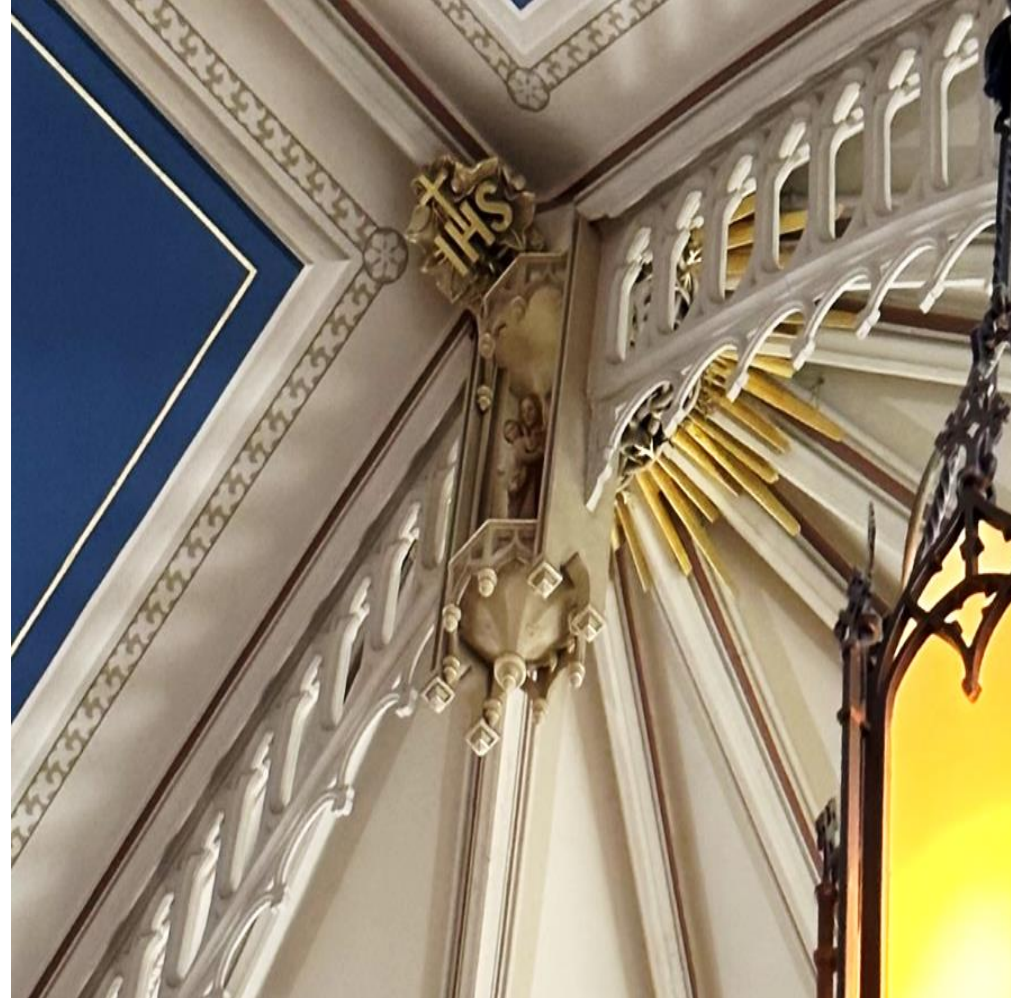
THE CATHEDRAL
THE CHURCH
THE BASILICA



First impression at entering the body of the church (the nave) is the ornately carved marble altar in the distance and the drama of heights and decoration. The altar is 150 feet from the entry door and ceilings are approximately 40 feet at the peak of the arches. Secondary marble altars are flanking the primary one, and all three rest on marble tile platforms. All 3 altars are separated by a communion railing of ornately carved marble as well.

**INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL
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Saints and brackets of ornamental plaster are mounted high on nave piers



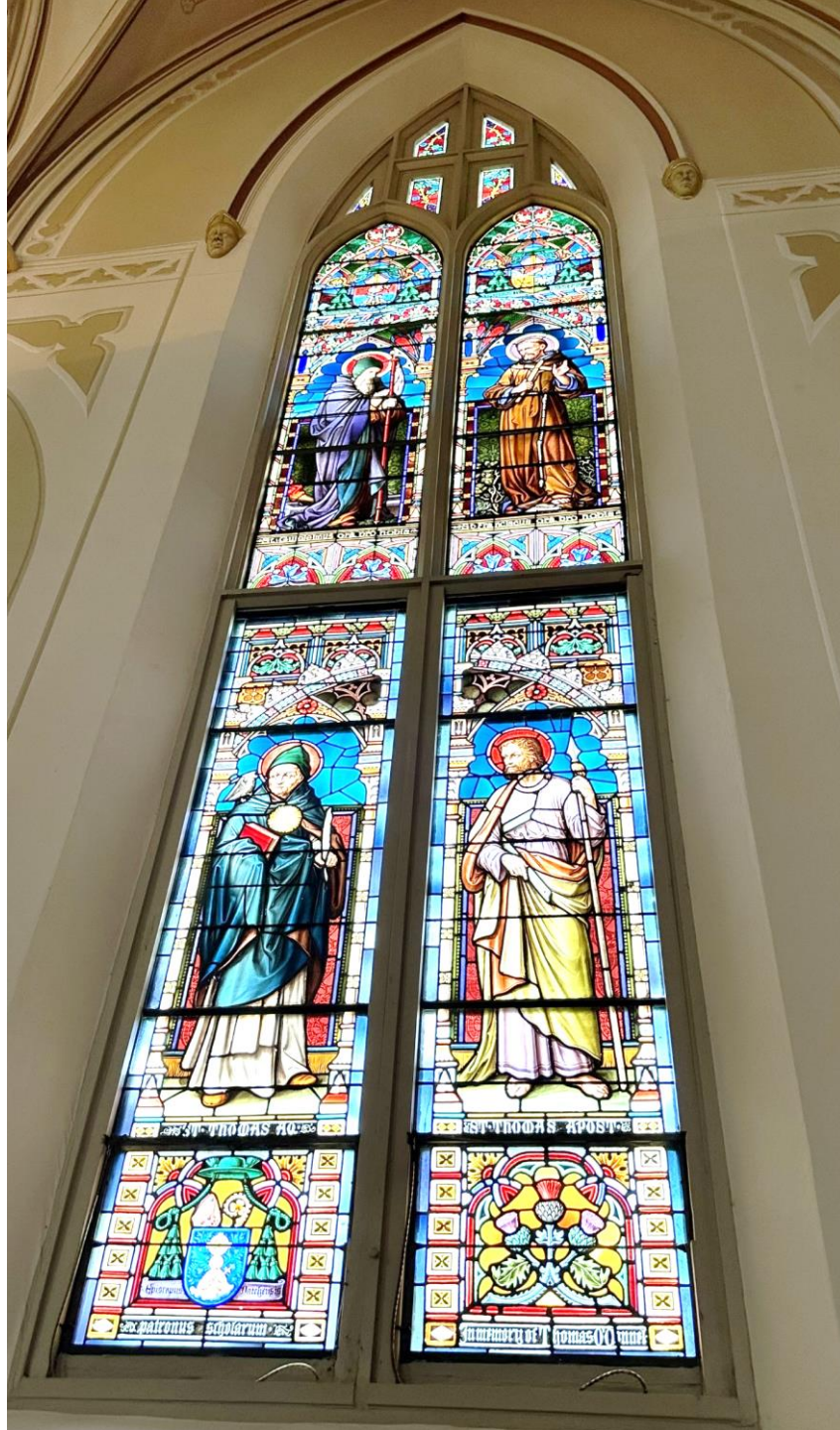
Ceiling detail is seen separating the nave from the sanctuary (the area around the altar in Catholic churches). A crown of thorn is transitioned to a blanketed lace detail on the ceiling. And IHS, a Greek symbol of Christ opposes it. A screen of cast iron is suspended at the same division

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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www.stmarybasilicaarchives.org



16 monumental stained-glass windows, all except those within the apse, depict 4 saints within each, and are crowned with hood moldings that terminate in corbel heads of ornamental plaster. The rib vaulted ceiling also terminates at the wall with larger corbel heads of plaster. Ornate details of plaster moldings line the walls and windows.



www.stmarybasilicaarchives.org

RESTORATION

ST. MARY: THE CATHEDRAL THE CHURCH THE BASILICA



The bishops of St. Mary Basilica have held the responsibility of overseeing maintenance and providing the property with constant attention; thereby avoiding severe and permanent damages. Records available by archives indicate the largest amount of destruction has been brought on by weather related issues throughout its lifetime. For instance, a tornado in 1998 caused damages and prompted an exterior and interior restoration. Later ice storms and a lightning strike prompted more repairs.



Here, a repair in the wood frame of a stained-glass window, caused by time or weather, is overseen by an assigned Bishop.

Restoration Professionals assigned in 1999.



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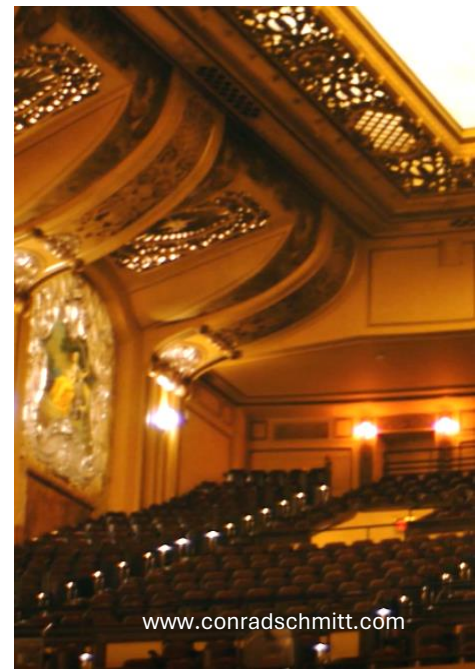


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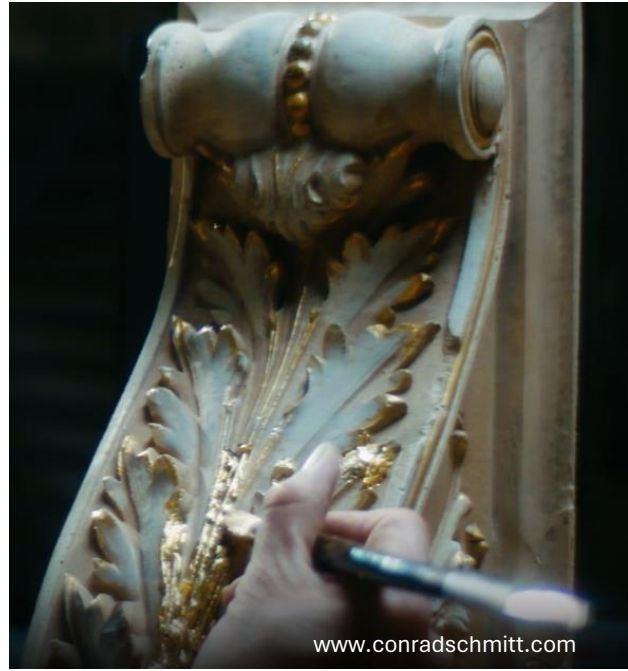
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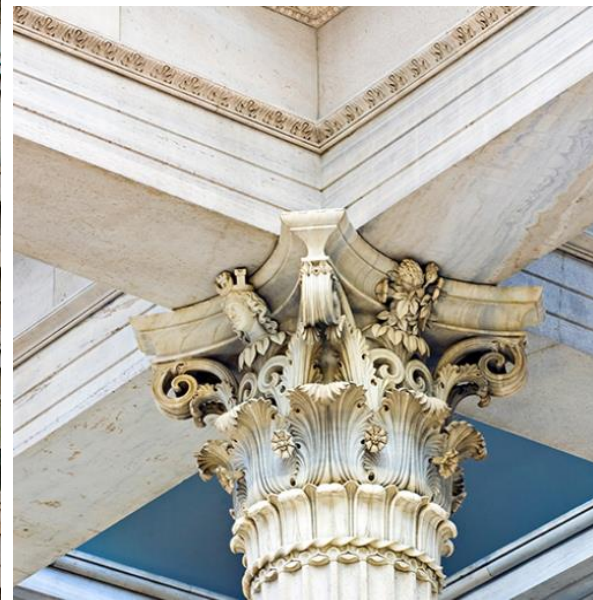
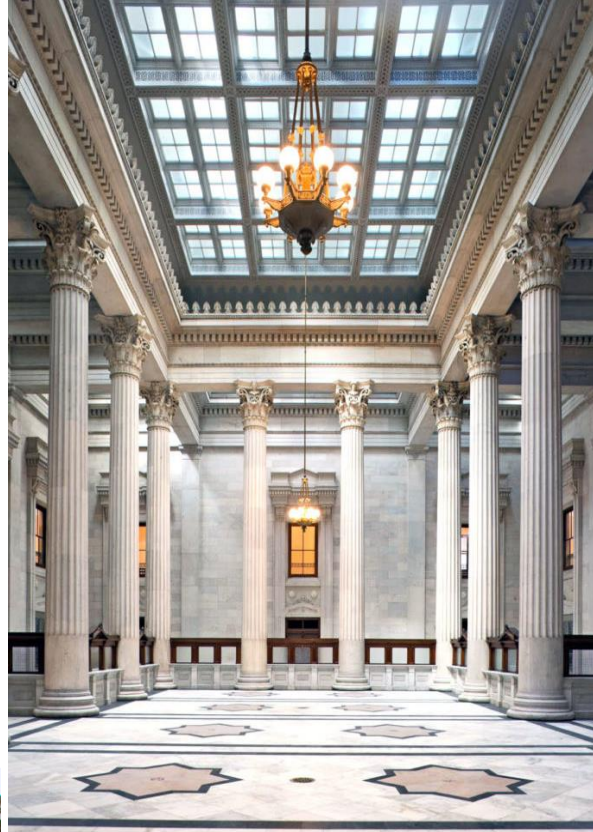
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RESTORATION

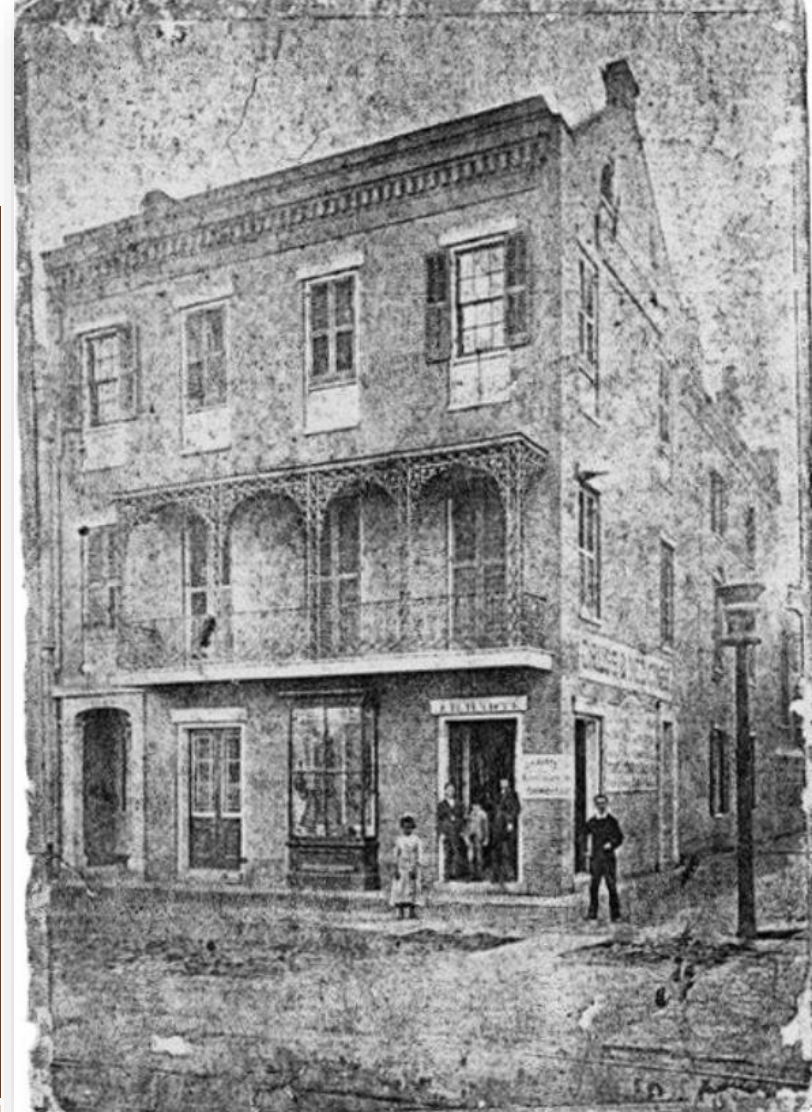
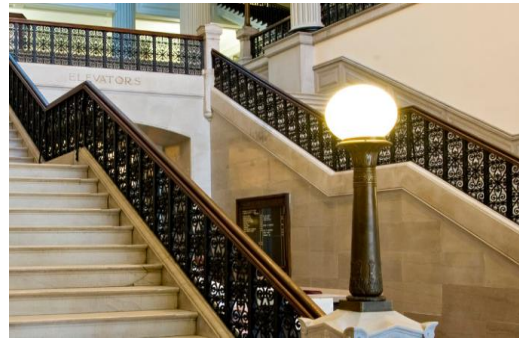
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Waggonner & Ball is an Architecture and Engineering Firm that approaches design with an emphasis on water, culture, and history. They focus on solutions to the most critical environmental challenges; therefore, they pride themselves on adaptive reuse, resilient landscapes, and historic preservation.



Company began here 50 years ago and is still in this same location. A historic structure built in 1849, located in the Garden District of New Orleans

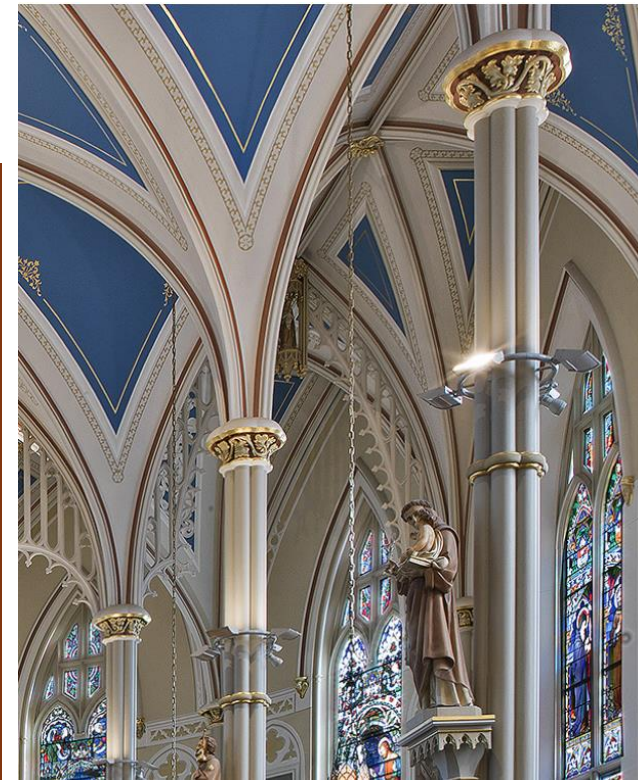
RESTORATION

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Restoration by the 2 firms was implemented in two phases. The first was the exterior damage caused by the storm. However, records only indicate that pinnacles were toppled. The second was to restore interior finishes caused by a deterioration from natural aging in St. Mary's 157 years.



On the interior, an investigation of paint treatments, techniques and decorative elements were studied. Samples were created for approval. Intricate stenciling and design work in 23 kt gold leaf was implemented. Plaster was repaired and repainted, as well as Trompe l'oeil and other free-hand artistry.

More weather-related damages:

An ice storm caused water to flood the building, prompting new carpeting in the nave and exposing original wood flooring around the narthex.

Another ice storm prompted roof repairs above the tower and a structural assessment for adding more bells, as well as an electronic striker for a ringing of funeral bells.

Lightening prompted repairs and upgrades to HVAC, electrical, and sound systems.

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Today, at 182 years old, St. Mary Basilica is a landmark building for the small town of Natchez, the oldest city in the state. It's one of the oldest religious buildings in the south, the first cathedral in the state, consecrated by the Roman Catholic church, and remains the state's only Basilica, of which there are less than one hundred in the country.

