

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

#### 1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 8500 Frankford Avenue

Postal code: 19136

#### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church

Current/Common Name: St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church

#### 3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

#### 4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: active worship site

#### 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

#### 6. DESCRIPTION

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

#### 7. SIGNIFICANCE

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1890 to 1910

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1896; addition in 1955

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Henry Albert Roby (1844-1905)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Michael Kilcoyne

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: Associated with family of Francis A. Drexel

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☒ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date February 25, 2019

Name with Title Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA Email N/A

Street Address 1234 S. Sheridan Street Telephone 215-334-6008

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19147

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: February 25, 2019 (revised)

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: March 14, 2019

Date of Notice Issuance: March 15, 2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church

Address: 8500 Frankford Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19136

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: April 17, 2019

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: August 9, 2019

Date of Final Action: August 9, 2019

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected Criterion C

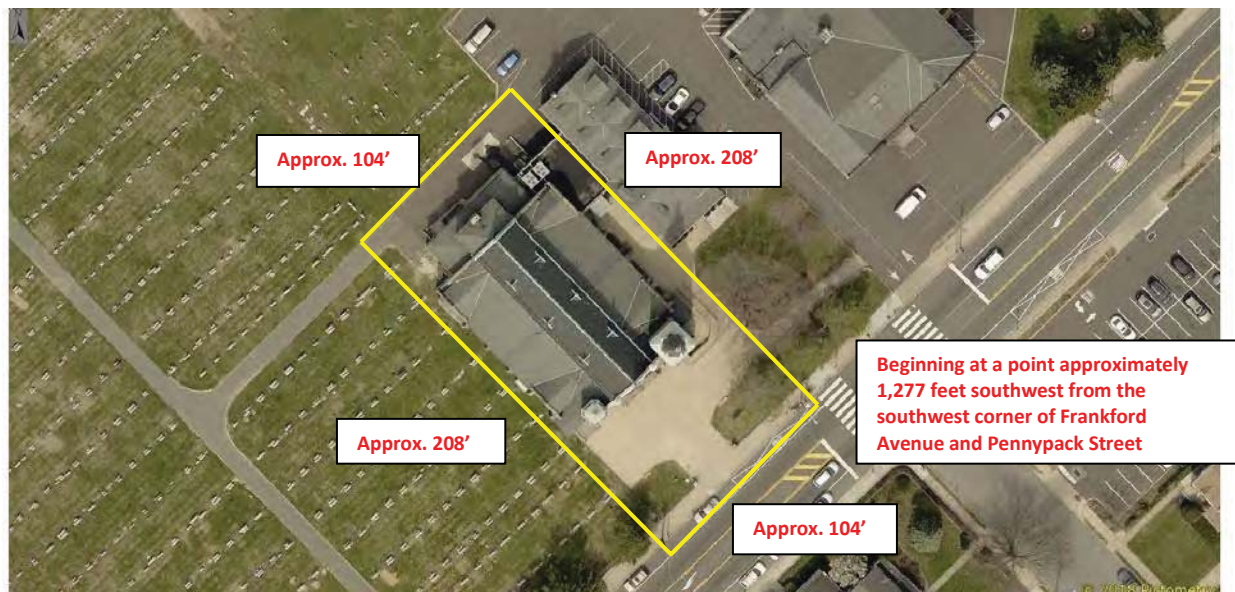
12/7/18

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nomination proposes to designate St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church, one building on a larger parcel of 8500 Frankford Avenue that currently includes several buildings and a large cemetery. The overall parcel is bounded by Frankford Avenue at the southeast, Blakiston Street and Pennypack Park at the southwest, privately owned residences at the northeast, and railroad tracks separating St. Dominic's Cemetery and Pennypack Park at the northwest.



The boundary of the church building begins at a point approximately 1,277 feet southwest from the southwest corner of Frankford Avenue and Pennypack Street. The proposed boundary includes the footprint of the church, with a perimeter buffer.









## Description:

St. Dominic's Roman Catholic church building faces Frankford Avenue, about three blocks north of Pennypack Creek. It is a two story Victorian Gothic constructed of "Trenton brown-stone" and "Hummel stone" with copper cornice details for contrasts in textures and color. Measuring 55' by 127' in length and 60' in height,<sup>1</sup> the facade is reached from street level by five steps, 10' long, with 12" high treads<sup>2</sup> to a concrete platform, then additional steps to the portal. Two sets of double doors separated by two projecting pediments supported by twin 6' granite columns at the far ends of the portal and single columns towards the center have the "cornerstone" with the years of the first church, then this nominated one. The center bay is "squared" at the second level with a series of narrow pointed arches between attached columns defining the large round, 45' wide "rose window." This window has a quatrefoil outline inserted within a square. The bell tower is 150' high.<sup>3</sup>

There is a separate side entrance to the baptistry which is its own bay (as a turret) with a "layered" cupola oxidized over its decorative base. Remarkable to this church, and guided by Victorian Gothic concepts, are the varieties of stone and metal surfaces from the cresting on the roof, to the copper (now in a contrasting patina to the stone) cornice, details at the portals' surrounds and handling of the shapes of the stone. Architect H.A. Roby's design called for the masons to manipulate the stone to the "ebb and flow" of the church's facade and walls circling around to the western wall at the rear (or altar area) then eastward where the rectory forms an attachment through an addition between it and the church. The landscape around this church contributes to the naturalness of the entire construction.

---

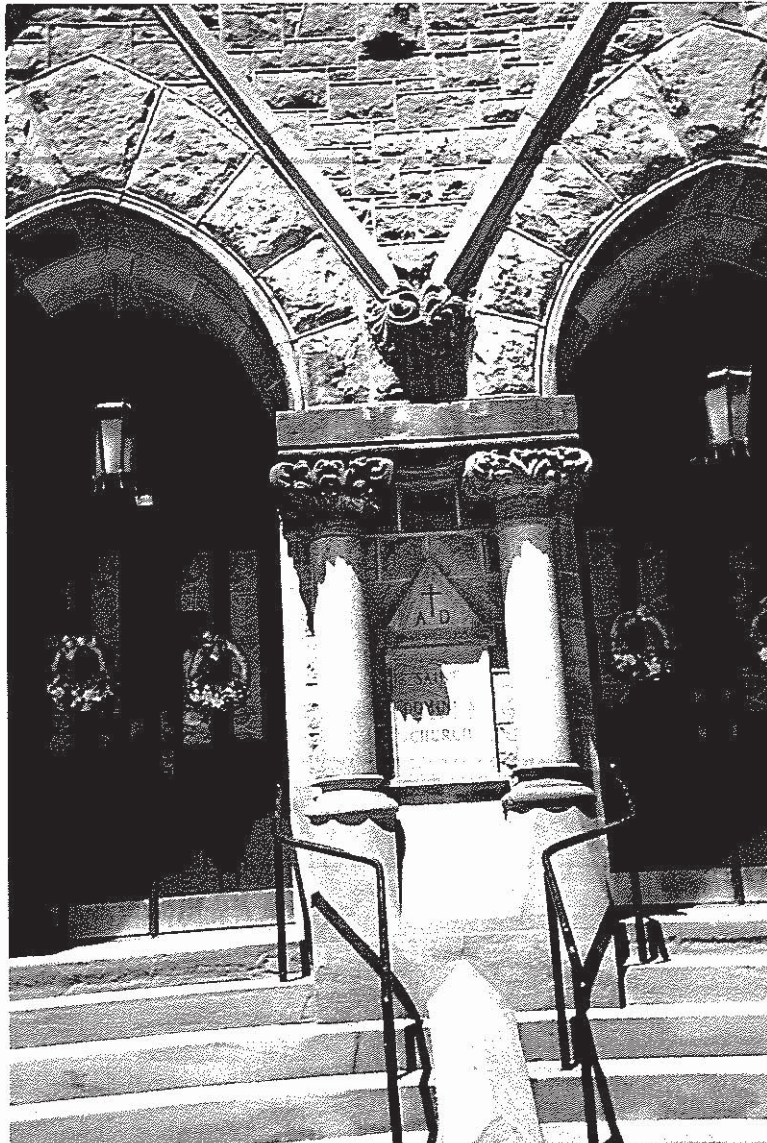
<sup>1</sup>"The Public Ledger" and "Times," of June 21, 1897.

<sup>2</sup>"The Catholic Standard and Times," August 29, 1896.

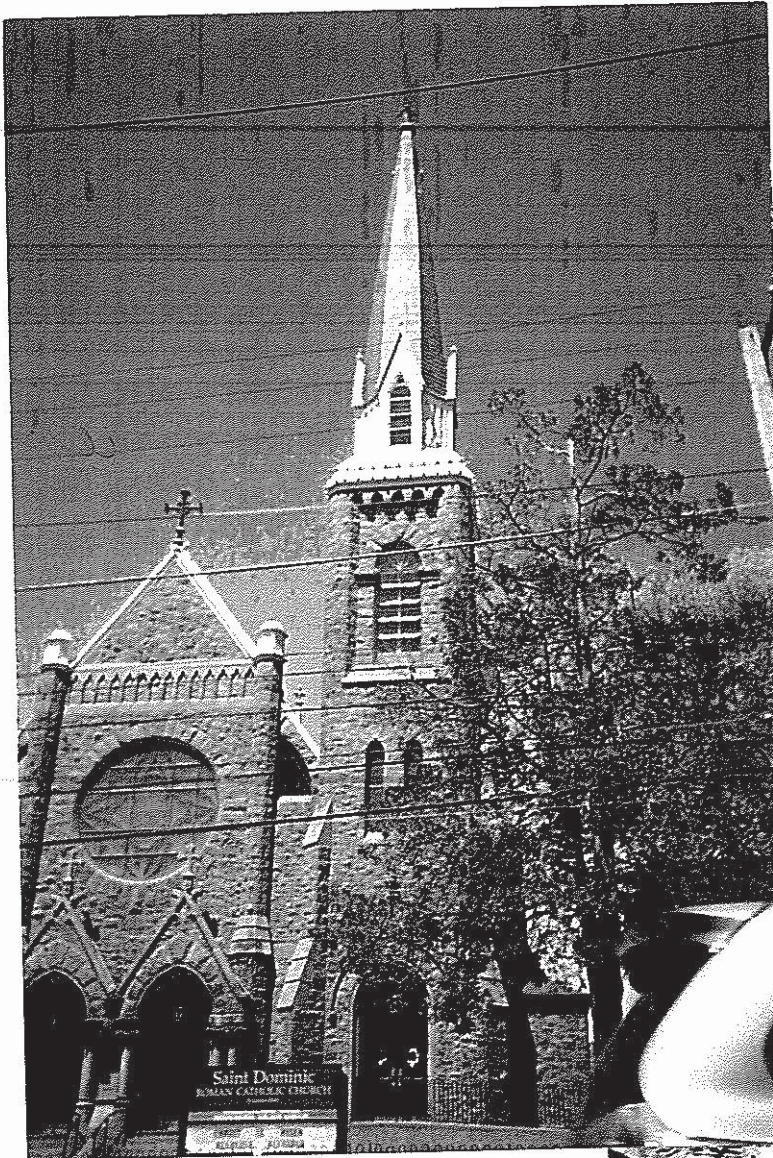
<sup>3</sup>"The Times," June 21, 1897.

The church has a westward orientation. At the corners of the church's lower level's south and north sides are gabled roofs over shallow transepts by the baptistry, bell tower and towards the west wall. There, a three-sided projected "apse" is attached to the altar area where two additional, separated one-story additions emerge at the corners for the sacristy and altar boys' dressing room.

The church is carefully maintained, with no visible wear. The photograph below is of the "cornerstone" placed after the 1955 rectory. Incised are the years "1849" (founding date), "1896" (year of present church's consecration) and "1955."



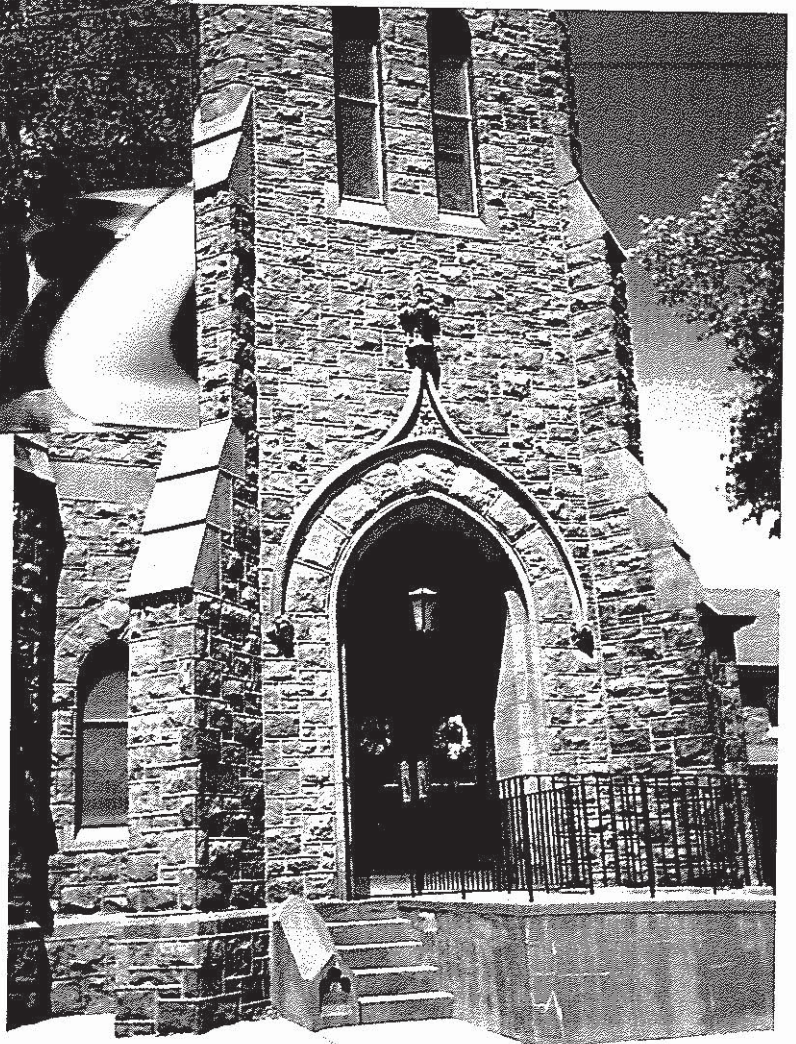




Views from Frankford Avenue:  
St. Dominic's bell tower.

Architect Roby's steeple  
closely resembles Durang's  
at St. Thomas of Villanova  
(campus) church.  
(See page 20.)

Tower's separate entrance  
was modified since the  
1992 Disabilities Act  
required ramp for access.



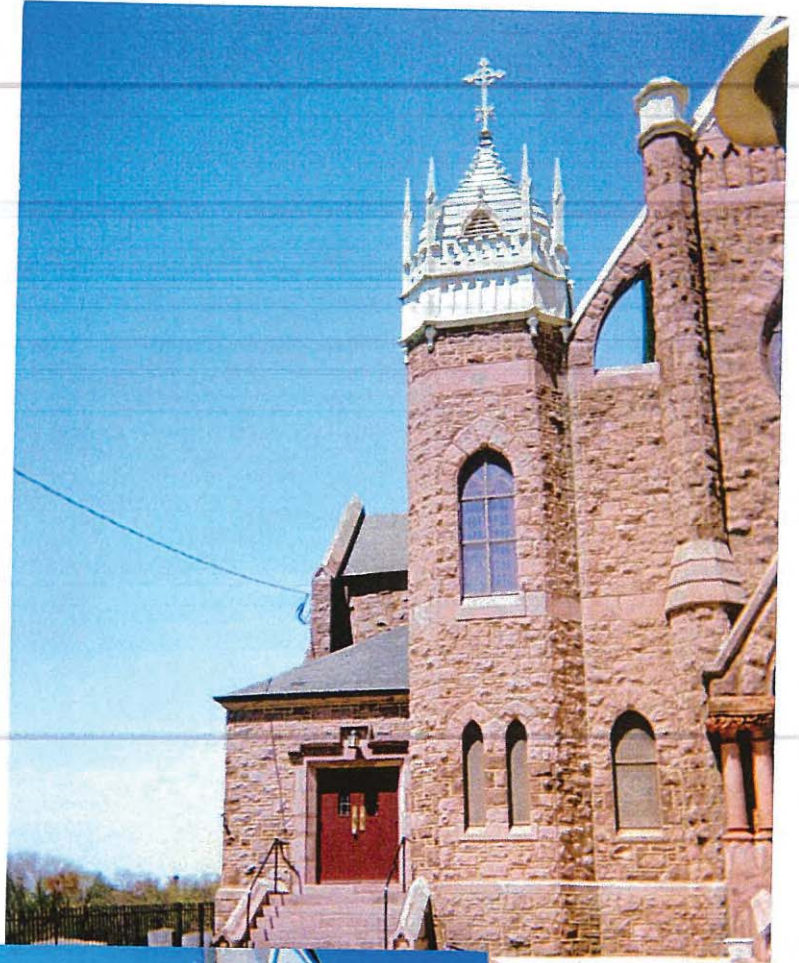


Two views showing "Gothic dome" from Frankford Avenue vantage.

Side entrance to baptistry is part of Roby design.

Upper part of facade shows range of textures.

The quatrefoil within the rose window carries this motif from the north and south walls forward.

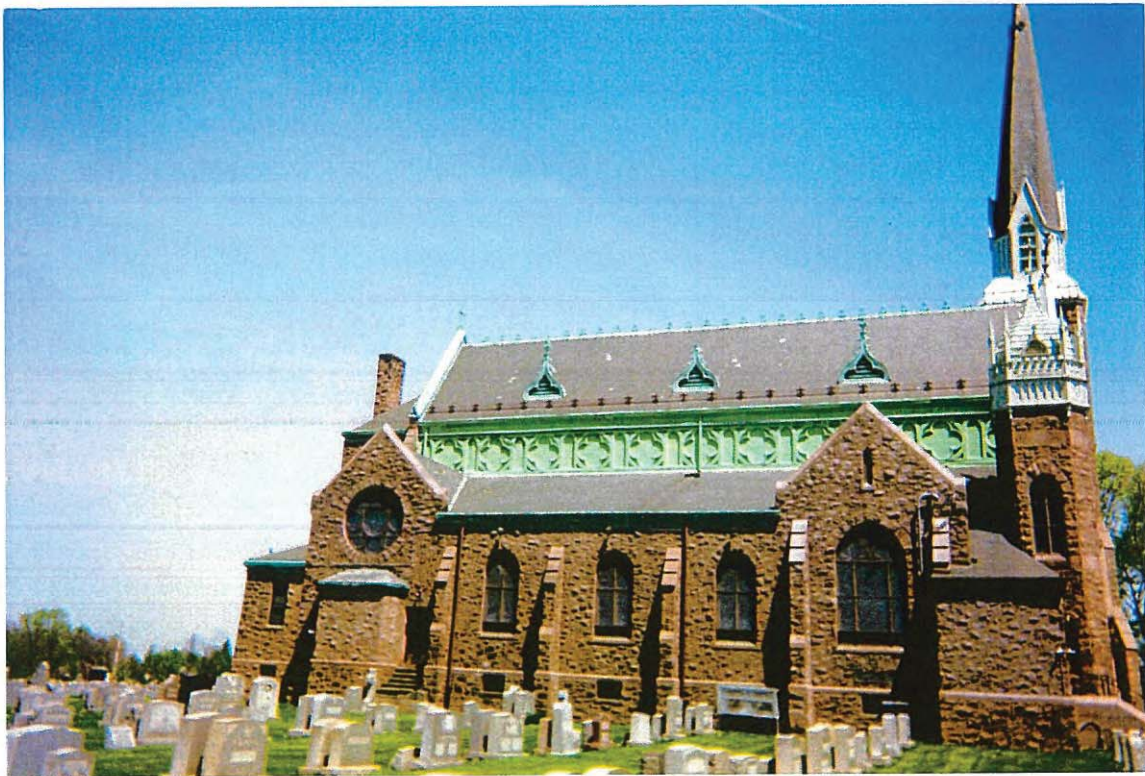




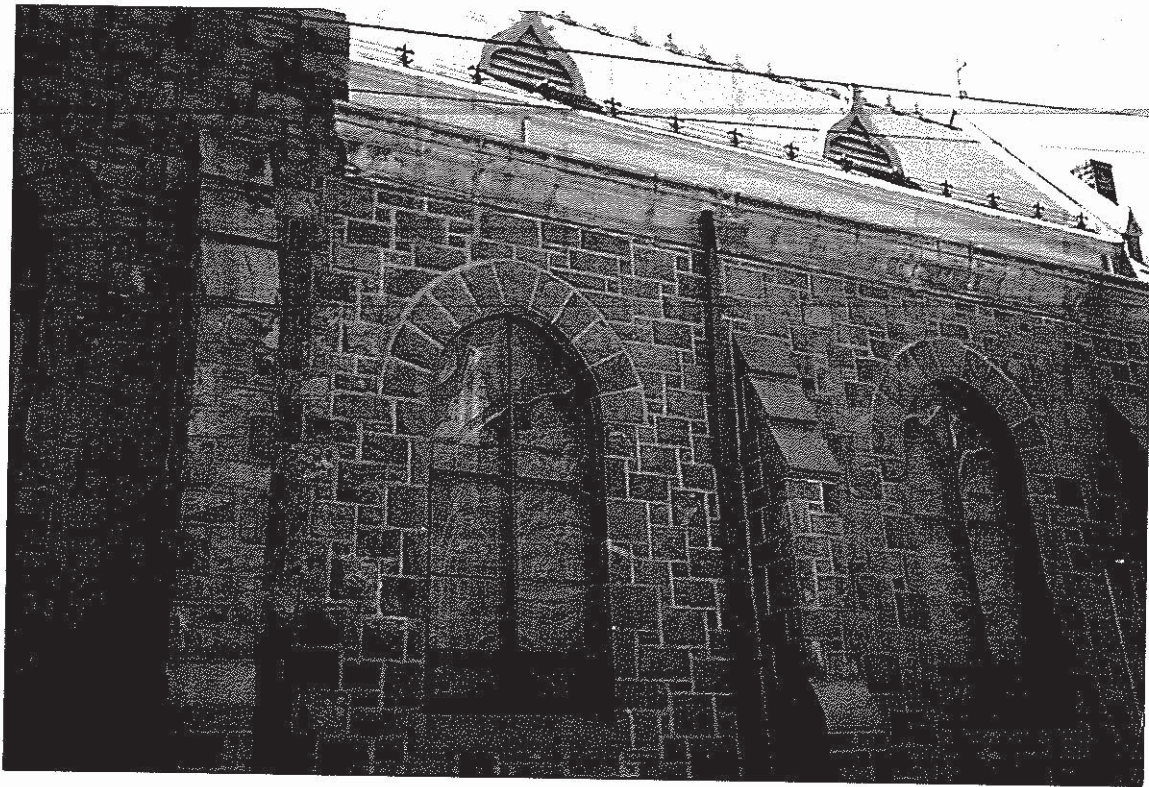


Roby's quatrefoil copper design seems as if a florid contrast to the brownstone's roughness.

Cresting at the roof exemplifies the Victorian Gothic elements.







Detail of masonry, buttresses and copper gutters.  
Below, view from cemetery looking eastward of St. Dominic's  
and its physical position within the community of Holmesburg,





Statement of Significance:

St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church is a fine, distinctly Victorian Gothic with its whimsical details and ornamentation. It is the only building in Philadelphia designed by architect Henry "H.A." Roby (1844-1905). He had an office in Lebanon, Pennsylvania when he was hired to design a new church for St. Dominic's after a fire in May of 1896 had destroyed the previous church. This nomination is then, of the rebuilt St. Dominic's, the Victorian Gothic design, dedicated in 1897. This church and parish are active in the Holmesburg section of the city.

Roby had become an architect in Baltimore and moved north to Lebanon in Pennsylvania by the early 1890s. His only other building in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was St. Katharine of Siena Roman Catholic Church which no longer exists. This church also was a Victorian Gothic which at the time (1896-97) was still fashionable in the country.

The significance of St. Dominic's architectural design is more than its contemporary use. The Victorian Gothic had arisen in the 1870s through the work of Philadelphia architect Frank Furness (1839-1912) with his fascinating Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts building in Center City. Subsequently, the attention that Furness gained from this in the early 1870s had influenced other Philadelphia architects to interpret the Gothic with more ornamentation, less symmetry and to add more color and varied textures. Ecclesiastical architect for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911) began designing churches in the Victorian Gothic at St. Agatha's in West Philadelphia, then at St. James, whose buildings were visible during Roby's travel from Lebanon to northeast Philadelphia for St. Dominic's.

Thus, Furness and Durang provided a strong instructional list of projects in Philadelphia for Roby's immediate use, which Roby would not have available to him in Lebanon.

St. Dominic's church building, in a less developed and less urbanized area of Philadelphia, also contributes to the success of Roby's Victorian Gothic design as the church takes on a natural movement in the landscaped setting on Frankford Avenue. This planning of the building and how it integrates with the site enhances the qualities that characterize the Victorian Gothic apart from the Gothic Revival where the natural textures and contrasting man-made textures combine with colors and forms that deviate from the tailored, streamlining in standard Gothics.

This nomination propounds in narrative the probability that Roby learned and was inspired by Durang's churches that Roby had encountered as he rode from Lebanon into West Philadelphia, then to Center City northward to railroad lines that would run farther north, to Holmesburg, passing Roman Catholic churches constructed from the 1870s to 1890s. Roby designed St. Dominic's to be part of these designs approved by the Archdiocese and not to challenge the architect who held the most commissions from the Archdiocese. In this manner, St. Dominic's Victorian Gothic design added to the Archdiocese's trove of individually wonderful churches from the late 19th century when parish complexes peaked in construction and when neighborhoods in Philadelphia began more to identify with their Roman Catholic churches.

Architecturally, St. Dominic's qualifies for historical certification under criterion (c).



The newspaper's image of St. Dominic's shows some minor changes in the removals of finials.

# St. Dominic's Church, Holmesburg

## Dedication

The Public Ledger 21 June 1897.

the earth among the catacombs.  
The terrible persecutions which swept over



ST. DOMINIC'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

for graces now, no need of baptism or of repentance, or of preaching. What did Christ do? He prepared His treasury, but gave the keys of that treasury to His Church. He prepared the medicine for our sick souls, but appointed His ministers to dispense that medicine. 'Let men look on us,' says St. Paul, 'as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.'

'On Calvary He prepared the reservoir of His graces, but instituted the Sacraments, which are the great channels by which those graces are brought down to our individual souls.'

'But our churches are more than houses of prayer and temples of sacrifice. They are the storehouses of grace, the hospitals of sick and wounded souls.'

The preacher in closing referred to the gratification which the congregation must feel over having erected the new church. Towards the end of the Mass Archbishop Ryan, before imparting his blessing, congratulated the pastor and people upon the result of their faith and zeal as evidenced by the new house of worship.

The music, rendered by an augmented choir with orchestral accompaniment, was Haydn's Imperial Hymn.

The New Church.  
St. Dominic's new church, which was designed by H. A. Roby, of Lebanon, is of pure Gothic design. It has a frontage of 55 feet on the East front, and a depth of 127 feet. The structure is 60 feet high, with a tower on the northeast corner rising 150 feet, and surmounted by a gilt cross. It is constructed of Trenton brownstone, with trimmings of brown and Hummel stone. There are two main entrance doors at the front, and one at each tower. Above the central entrance is a large rose window. The exterior is elaborately ornamented with copper cornices and mountings.

The interior, which is finished in hardwood, and has a seating capacity for 600, is of a clere-story style, without columns. The walls are of rough sand plaster, while the mouldings and decorative work are of white. The baptistery is at the south end, at the base of a turret. The roof is carried on steel trusses extending the full length of the church and giving a groined arch ceiling. Along the lines of trusses are open-work Gothic arches carrying the electric light system on the under sides. The pews and confessionals are of handsomely carved oak, and the stations, of imported bas relief, are designed in keeping with the interior. The sanctuary, which is roomy, is divided from the auditorium by a handsomely carved altar wall of oak. One of the principal decorative features is an altar piece modeled in high relief, representing St. Dominic.



St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church...

- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

The nomination is the second church for this parish that was founded in 1849. A fire of unknown origins destroyed this first church, described as "Gothic" in May of 1896, and shortly after architect H.A. Roby from Lebanon, Pennsylvania was contracted to draw another, larger church building.

Henry A. Roby (1844-1905) had an office and was working in the rural town and county seat of Lebanon County in Pennsylvania for a few years prior to his work at St. Dominic's. Of the types of buildings he had previously designed while in Lebanon from the 1880s to the early 1890s, they may have also been drawn with his partner, Abner A. Richter. Lebanon was a small town and knowledge of trendy architectural styles in more cosmopolitan areas such as Philadelphia or Baltimore (Roby's hometown) was obtained from visits, reading materials or dialog with the busiest architects. A commission for a Roman Catholic church building is given when the architect can distinguish between the building requirements for that religious denomination from non-Roman Catholic church buildings. Roby was Roman Catholic, but none of his work in the Archdiocese of Baltimore has been found to establish his qualifications<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's premier architect, Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911) was recorded to have done two churches in Lancaster County just before and during Roby's office was active: St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (1875) and St. Joseph's Church (1882). Durang's work was also known in two popular buildings in Lebanon, the Schuylkill seminary and Eagle Hotel, both designed or completed by "1886."<sup>5</sup> Roby had to have known the name "Durang" from these projects.

<sup>4</sup> Research on Roby in Baltimore was done by that Archdiocesan Archivist Alison M. Foley who also provided information submitted by Eli Pousson for the Baltimore Architecture Foundation (BAF). Pousson also collaborated with The Athenaeum's Sandra Tatman on biographical information on Roby.

<sup>5</sup> Tatman, S. & Moss, R., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Boston: Hall & Co., 1985, p.230.



Roby's name also became known to some benefactors of ~~the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's expansion into suburban areas.~~ A plot of ground near the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Wayne, Chester County, Pennsylvania on Lancaster "Pike" or "Road" was given to Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan to construct a church<sup>6</sup> which would be an obvious site on Lancaster from the rails or by horse or carriage travel from the near-center of the Commonwealth. Durang would have been the architect of choice: in 1883 he had designed the Villanova "College" campus church, St. Thomas of Villanova overlooking Lancaster Pike.<sup>7</sup> Ryan held onto this lot, a donation from Anthony J. Drexel the world-known financier and his best friend, George W. Childs. (They owned "The Public Ledger" newspaper among other businesses.) Drexel and Childs poured excessive amounts of money to further the interests of the Archdiocese--and neither was a Roman Catholic. (Drexel converted to the Episcopalian faith from Catholicism.) Upon this ground by 1895, St. Katharine of Siena Roman Catholic church was constructed from a design by H.A. Roby of Lebanon. It would be dedicated in 1896.

Why Durang did not get this job, or why he may have declined the St. Katharine's commission is not recorded. By 1895, one of Durang's assistants, Frank R. Watson (1859-1940) had been in his own office and had four Roman Catholic churches completed or near their dedication dates. Watson's designs for that era, in the late 1880s to early 1890s were Gothic or Romanesque, with an elaborate Our Lady of the Rosary (Romanesque) not far from the rails or Lancaster Pike in West Philadelphia. Watson's Gothics (St. Leo's and Annunciation, BVM churches)<sup>8</sup> were far simpler. Much far too simpler than any Durang Gothic church. Roby could learn from the same "teacher" as Watson and from Durang's interpretations of Gothic or Romanesque, or the "Victorian Gothic," in vogue.

<sup>6</sup> "Public Ledger"; "Record"; and "Times" of June 10, 1895.

<sup>7</sup> Middleton, Rev. Thos., Historical Sketch of the Augustinian Monastery, College and Mission of St. Thos. of Villanova. 1895, pp.50-51.

<sup>8</sup> Tatman, op.cit., pp. 830-833.

## THE VICTORIAN GOTHIC

St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church building qualifies for historical designation mainly because it is in the Victorian Gothic style, which had its origins in Philadelphia with architect Frank Furness (1839-1912) and spread nationally in popularity. Art historians attribute this "short-lived" style to Furness' Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1872-1876) where Furness used an "imaginative" "pseudo-Gothic" design manipulating the pointed arches of the Gothic and pediments to bear a variety of color and textures everywhere on the building. Furness was one of the "first-rate practitioners"<sup>9</sup> of the Victorian Gothic, along with Henry H. Richardson of Boston, who quickly turned to reviving the medieval Romanesque, which was more associated with him.

This local genesis of the Victorian Gothic with Furness had not been ignored by architects as busy as Durang who would design Victorian Gothics contemporaneously with Furness' Academy. How Durang would have known about Furness' plans for the Academy's highly ornate facade for Durang to present plans for St. Agatha's in West Philadelphia by about 1873 for the ground-breaking in "1874" (Webster dating) is unknown and uncanny. Webster recognized Furness' "...notable expression of America's High Victorian Gothic" at the Academy on North Broad and Cherry Streets. Furness also designed at least one church, the First Unitarian (22nd and Chestnut Streets) in the mid-1880s.<sup>10</sup> However, Webster did not explain how Durang's "High Victorian Gothics" at St. Agatha's and then St. James--both in West Philadelphia--were not only part of the Victorian Gothic period, but were significant in the history of the Archdiocese's expansion while constructing churches that were markedly identifying the period and the latest architectural styles.

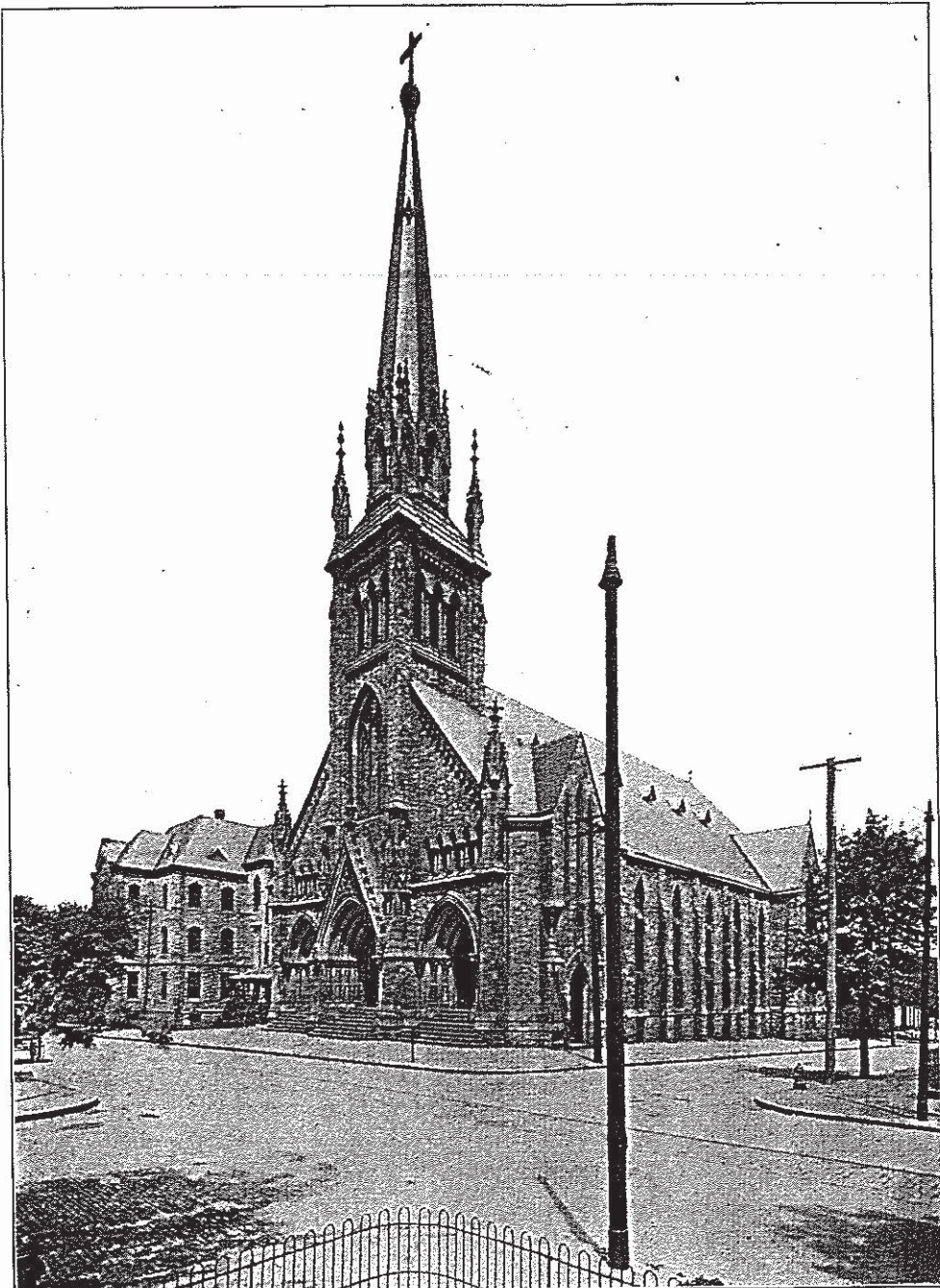
---

<sup>9</sup> Brown, Milton (Ed.) American Art. NY: Abrams, 1979, pp. 249-252-252.

<sup>10</sup> Webster, Richard, Philadelphia Preserved. Phila.: Temple University Press, 1981, pp. 129; 214-15. Be advised of the construction dates cited by Webster that often conflict with the dates in Tatman and Moss, op.cit. Durang's Sacred Heart of Jesus Church also dated from the time the Academy's construction was on-going, c.1875. Sacred Heart is a wonderful design that escaped Webster's attention.



Roby was able to see St. Agatha's, at 38th and Spring Garden Streets, while travelling towards Center City by rail, or by carriage. St. James, a few blocks south of St. Agatha's was also en route, to compare variations of the Victorian Gothic, with one church's ornamentation and architectural elements offering alternative designs than the other. In each example, Roby could, and did use some conventions from these churches and other Durangs at St. Dominic's to unite the far Northeast church with those closer to Center City and the Archdiocesan offices.



ST. AGATHA'S CHURCH, THIRTY-EIGHTH AND SPRING GARDEN STREETS, PHILA.



As this narrative has propounded, Roby, from Lebanon (City) in Pennsylvania, may not have been fully informed on architectural trends in the 1890s, despite his success at St. Katharine of Siena in Wayne. But even then, Roby could have gone into Philadelphia where Furness and Durang were applying the Victorian Gothic for decades. (Locating any architectural record of Roby's projects in Lebanon had not been productive except for some residential properties.)<sup>11</sup> There is, as yet, no record of Roby's churches or past projects where he may have used Victorian Gothic; he depended on what Philadelphia architects designed and how these buildings were regarded. Durang, especially, the Archdiocese's architect for most of the construction of parish complexes and churches since the late 1860s, was the likely "teacher" for Roby from afar.

Brown had explained that the Victorian Gothic was "short-lived" in use, but two of the United States' better known architects, Furness and Richardson popularized the style in Philadelphia and in Boston respectively, laying a launching foundation in two cities where architectural history had been occurring in earlier decades. With St. Dominic's, Roby tried a plan similar to that at St. Katharine's where the curve of the building meandered and assumed an organic, natural place within the landscape. Roby did at these two churches what could not be done in more developed neighborhoods towards Philadelphia's center and adjoining communities focussed around factories or rowhouses lining streets. At St. Dominic's, Roby could do what Brown, the art historian wrote to describe the Victorian Gothic: "Every inch of the surface became expressive through color, texture and ornament." Durang's Catholic churches in West Philadelphia accomplished what he designed because the Victorian Gothic was adaptable to that neighborhood.

---

<sup>11</sup>Contacts were made to the Lebanon Historical Society which could not timely search for Roby. Ms. Michele Hawk of the Lebanon Community Library provided the Roby residential design information.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, op.cit.



Indeed, Roby used the Victorian Gothic for St. Dominic's ~~at the same time when Durang was hired by the Augustinians to~~ design Our Lady of Good Counsel in Bryn Mawr, another church visible from and located between the Pennsylvania Railroad line and Lancaster Pike. Good Counsel, like St. James and Sacred Heart (in South Philadelphia, constructed and dedicated in 1876), had turret-like bays to the left of the center bays, which Roby used at St. Dominic's. (Refer to photographs.) The Durang churches described as "Victorian Gothic" or "High Victorian Gothic" (to Webster) can be compared to Durang's St. Thomas of Villanova to appreciate where there was more liberal decoration and ornamentation on asymmetrical facades in the Victorian Gothics. Roby's overall design at St. Dominic's however, has a broader, more complex plan that lures one to see the entire church because each wall presented a different element with accompanying textures.

#### ST. DOMINIC'S

The topography of this once-outlying parish above Pennypack Creek on the well-travelled Frankford Road (formerly "King's Highway" and "Bristol Pike") was more akin to Wayne than as part of the City of Philadelphia. The Holmesburg neighborhood of St. Dominic's still had nearby farms; the church stood amidst a large burial ground of rolling grass. In May of 1896, Roby was still directing the final stages of St. Katharine's in Wayne which was under Augustinian pastor Reverend Matthew Hand's charge. Father Hand, in 1888 had been at St. Dominic's in Holmesburg, his first mission since his ordination.<sup>13</sup> Hand was an assistant to Father Lawrence J. Wall, St. Dominic's pastor from 1876 who had "renovated the church and beautifully decorated its interior."<sup>14</sup> His parish was growing to "about 1300 souls" when the total loss by fire occurred<sup>15</sup> on May 14, 1896. Father Wall immediately wanted

<sup>13</sup>"The Public Ledger," August 18, 1896.

<sup>14</sup>Mahoney, D., Historical Sketches of Catholic Churches..., Phila.:

<sup>15</sup>Mahoney Pub., 1895, p. 93.

<sup>15</sup>Marra, Rev. Harold, St. Dominic's 100 Years. Phila.: Jefferies & Manz, 1950, p. 40.



to rebuild a new church which would be "somewhat larger and more elaborate than the old one." Just three months after the fire, "The Public Ledger" would report that "Work is progressing rapidly on the new church building for St. Dominic's." Roby's plans were published in that August 25, 1896 edition, along with the types of building materials he planned to use. This news coincided with St. Katharine's completion, allowing Roby to be busier in this part of the Commonwealth. That August, St. Dominic's church was determined to "be of Gothic architecture."

Pennsylvania's railroad history is one of the early locomotives that were constructed to substitute in transportation in what the canal system could not do in the beginning of the Industrial Age: bring natural resources into Philadelphia where they could be processed for use. Transporting individuals came in due course, with railroads linking westward to the capitol in Harrisburg and points between, which included Lebanon and Lancaster. Architect Roby could travel to Philadelphia to work either by rail, or along Lancaster "Pike" (which is still used today by Amish in Lebanon County.) En route to St. Dominic's in Holmesburg, Roby passed several Roman Catholic churches that had been designed by Durang from St. Thomas of Villanova (1883), to West Philadelphia's St. Agatha's (1874-1878) and St. James' (1887) towards the rail on Lehigh Avenue up to Visitation, Blessed Virgin Mary Church (1887) to venture northward in a route parallel to Frankford Avenue, up to the St. Dominic's church site. (See images of these churches on following pages for visuals of some Victorian Gothics.) This palette of Roman Catholic Durang-designed churches gave Roby all he needed to know in how to plan a Victorian Gothic especially when Durang's Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Bryn Mawr, just about 100 feet from Lancaster Pike was under construction while St. Dominic's began.

Thus, Philadelphia's Roman Catholic churches provided a full sampling of the Victorian Gothic through Durang's work and Roby's St. Dominic's church building.



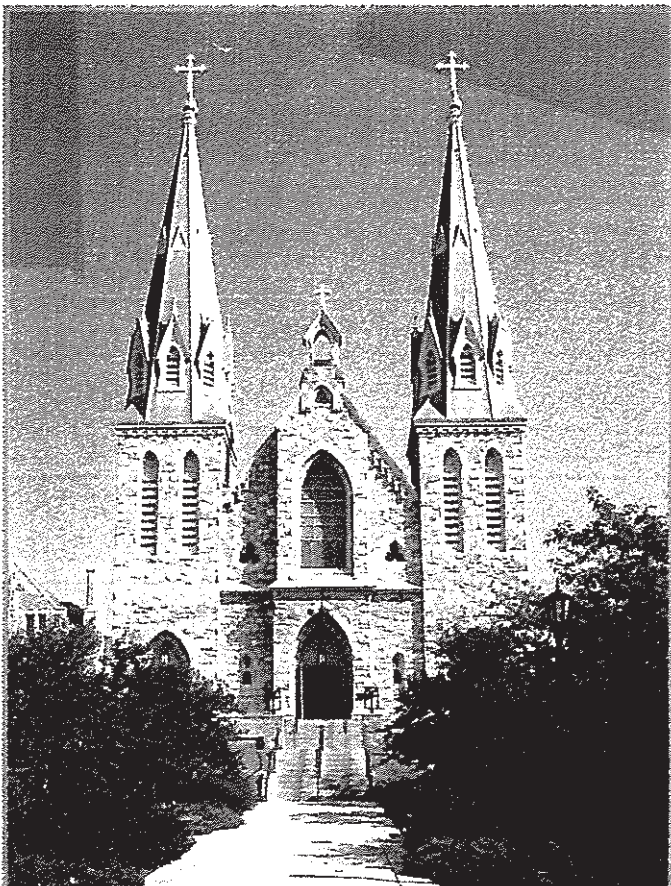
Press 6/10/93



ST. KATHARINE'S R. C. CHURCH, AT WAYNE.

Architect H.A. Roby's travel to the site of St. Dominic's in northeast Philadelphia from Lebanon would pass these churches (below) on and off Lancaster Avenue eastward from his design at St. Katharine of Siena R.C. Church (left) in Wayne (Chester County). Durang designed the Villanova (1883) and Bryn Mawr churches, the latter which was in progress, and a Victorian Gothic dating to "1896," near St. Dominic's rebuilding.

Note the similarity between St. Thomas' spire and Roby's at St. Dominic's on next page.

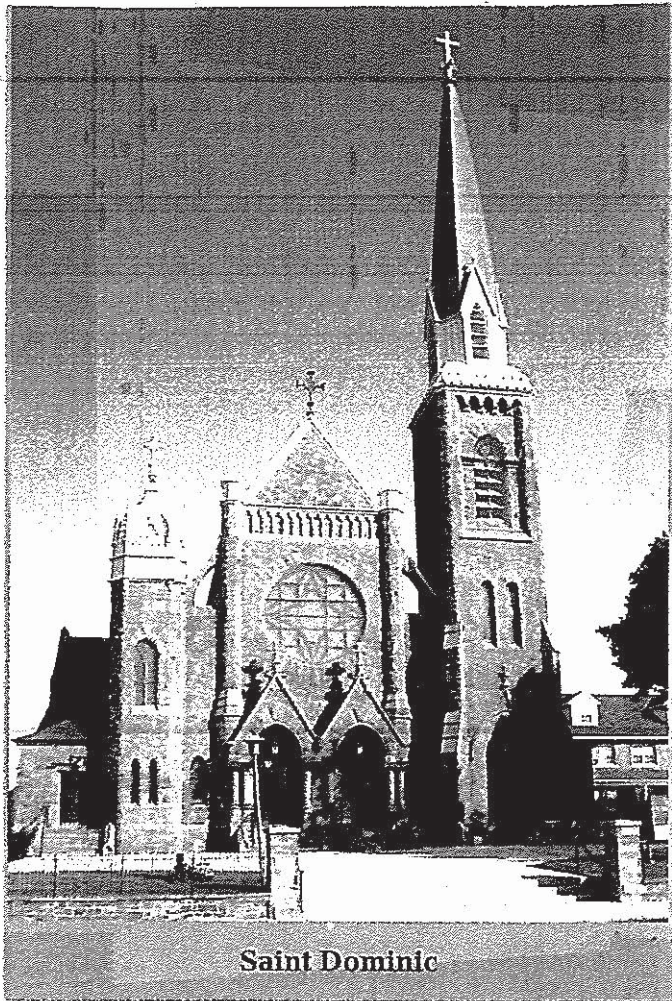


Saint Thomas of Villanova, Villanova



Our Mother of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr

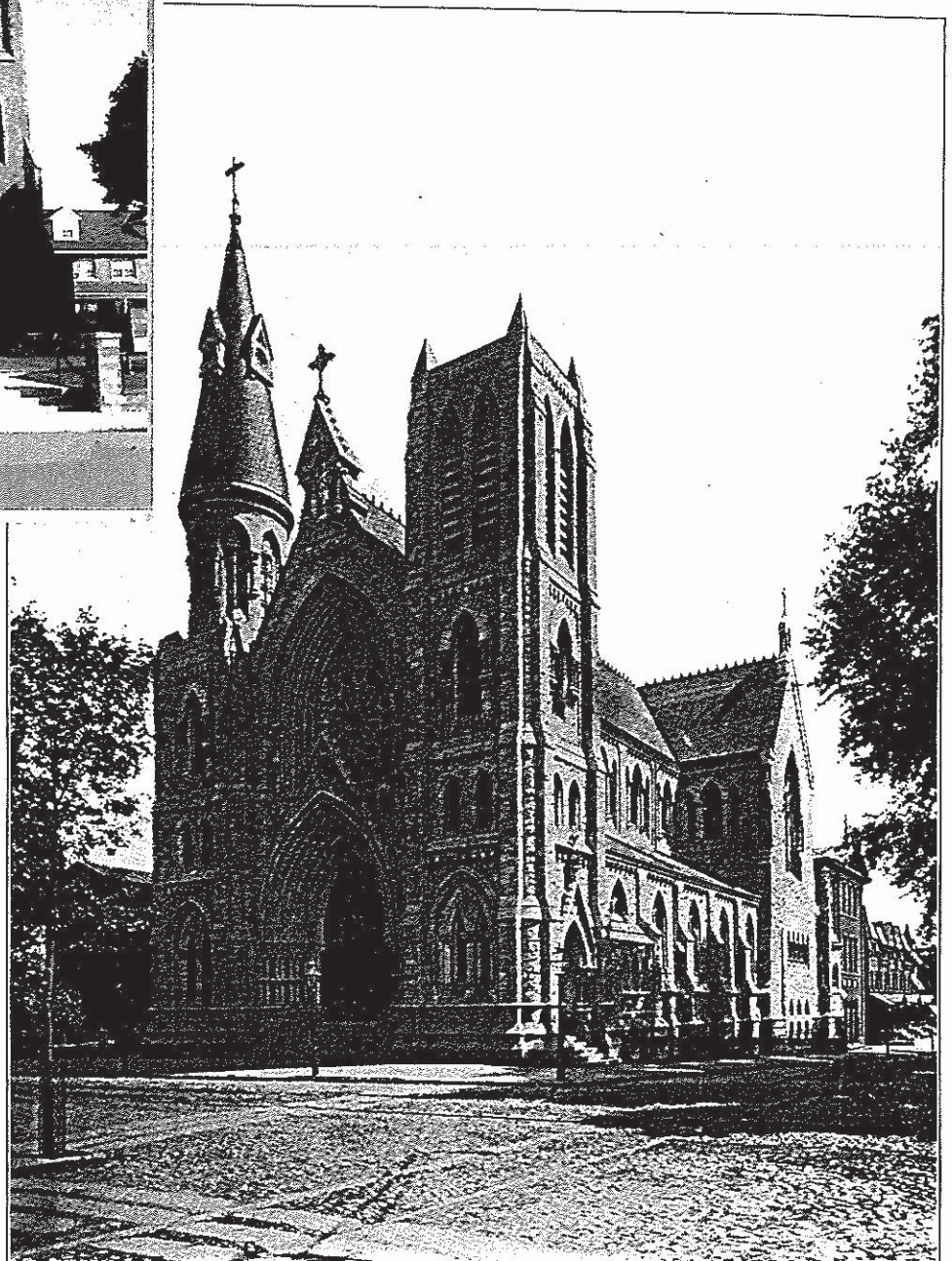




Saint Dominic

Photographs on previous page, above and next page from Archdiocese's Our Faith-Filled Heritage. Image on right from Edwin F. Durang's "Album."

There are many similarities between Durang's St. James (below) and Roby's St. Dominic's on left to see how the Lebanon-based architect grasped what architectural style was most popular, as well as how the Archdiocese's architect had applied the Victorian Gothic already since the 1870s.

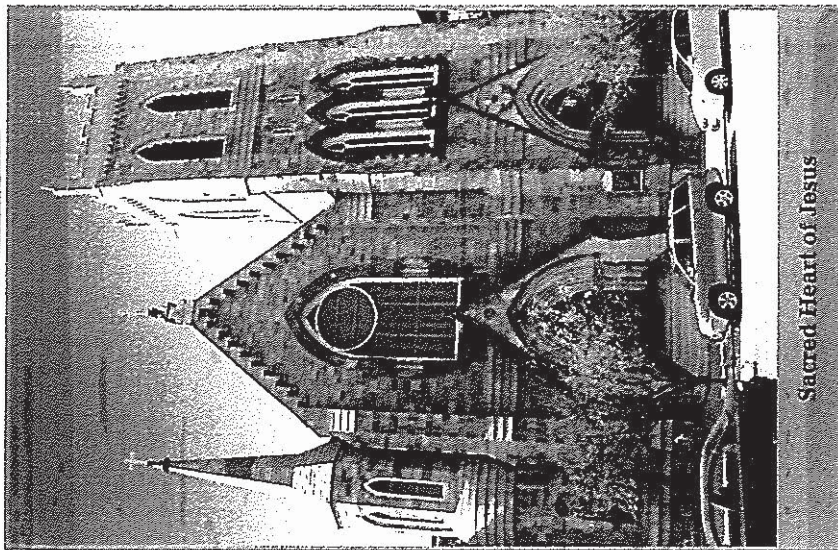


ST. JAMES CHURCH, THIRTY-EIGHTH AND CHESTNUT STREETS, PHILA.



Sacred Heart's steep pediment at the portal and Visitation's quatrefoil (copper) inset at its pediments are also found at St. Dominic's.

Sacred Heart dates from 1876; Visitation at 1887, both by Durang.





Roby gained experience and priceless knowledge while designing St. Dominic's and overseeing its construction from 1896 to 1897. This architect brought an architectural style to Northeast Philadelphia that was in vogue in Center City, as well as in other active urban centers where wealthy Gilded Age clientele cared what types of architecture were trend-setting. Here, in Philadelphia, a center of architectural development and of architects who created historical designs, Roby was beholden to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's main architect for decades, Durang, who was consciously designing churches within the styles that were popular in that period. Roby recognized that Durang, Furness and other Philadelphia-based architects competed with the nation's best while they produced architecturally-significant designs that are still iconic today.

St. Dominic's church's Victorian Gothic design then, is historically important as part of this era and role in the use of this style that continues to enchant all who see it.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA  
February, 2019



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

- Archdiocesan Staff, Our Faith-Filled Heritage. Strasbourg: 2007.  
Kirlin, Reverend Joseph, Catholicity in Philadelphia. 1909.  
Mahoney, Daniel, Historical Sketches of Catholic Churches...  
Phila.: 1895.  
Marra, Reverend Harold, St. Dominic's 100 Years.  
Phila.: Jefferies & Manz, 1950.  
Middleton, Reverend Thomas, Historical Sketch of the Augustinian  
Monastery, College and Mission of St. Thomas of Villanova.  
1895.  
Scharf & Westcott's History of Philadelphia. 1884.  
Tatman, Sandra & Moss, Roger, Biographical Dictionary of Philadel-  
phia Architects. Boston: Hall & Co., 1985.  
Webster, Richard, Philadelphia Preserved. Phila.: 1981.  
Zarnecki, George, American Art. NY: Abrams, 1979.

---

Other sources and research centers with information:

Associated Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

Baltimore Architecture Foundation (BAF)

Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Phila.

"The Catholic Standard and Times," "Public Ledger,"  
"The Times," "Record" and Album of Edwin F. Durang.

Lebanon Community Library, Lebanon (city), Pennsylvania

---

Special thanks to:

PHC's Mrs. Meredith Keller  
Athenaeum's Messrs. Bruce Laverty and Michael Seneca  
CHRC's Messrs. Patrick Shanks, and Shawn Weldon  
Ms. Michele Hawk, Director, Lebanon Community Library  
Ms. Alison M. Foley of Baltimore.

---

S O U R C E S / R E F E R E N C E D

P A G E S

---

In chronological order.



**Associated Archives**  
**At St. Mary's Seminary & University**  
**5400 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210**  
**Phone: 410-864-4074 \* Fax: 410-864-3690**  
**E-mail: archives@stmarys.edu**

---

## **FACSIMILE**

**DATE:** June 5, 2018  
**TO:** Celeste Morello  
**FAX NUMBER:** 215-334-2682  
**FROM:** Alison Foley  
**PAGES:** 7 (including this page)

---

Dear Celeste:

I'm sorry to report that we were unable to locate any information to indicate that Henry Roby designed any of the Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Attached are a few items we found online and in the historic Baltimore Sun. We did not find any citations to him in the Catholic Mirror, although it was not being published in 1905 when he died. I also did not find anything from him in the Cardinal Gibbons papers.

I'm sorry I wasn't able to be of more help. If you have any additional questions, or if you need anything else, please let me know.

~Alison M. Foley  
Reference Archivist





Baltimore Architecture Foundation

Search ...

## Henry Albert Roby

Henry A. Roby (1844-1905)

Lupus & Roby are among our least known architects because the partnership lasted but 6 years due to the death of Edward Lupus. Few of their works still stand and few others are known by prints and photographs. Those designs that are known are equal in quality to any by their contemporaries.

Born in 1834 in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, Edward Lupus arrived in Baltimore at age 19 on November 8, 1853 from Bremen. At the time of his immigration to the United States, he reported his profession as a joiner. By 1860, Edward Lupus had married and lived at 16 West Baltimore Street with his wife, Sophia Lupus, their children, Rudolph and Charles, as well as another Rudolph Lupus, a watchmaker and likely relative of Edward, and Rudolph's wife, Louisa Lupus. Rudolph and Edward also shared an office at 297 West Pratt Street where Edward worked as a carver and Rudolph worked as a watchmaker. The two continued to share both residences and offices throughout the 1860s. Edward Lupus appears in the 1864 city directory as a "photographer," working at the southwest corner of the Centre Market building and residing at 61 Conway Street where he remained in 1865 when he was again identified as a "wood carver." 1870 is the first year Lupus is identified as an architect, both in the city directory and census, and is the same year that Edward and Louisa shared their household with Christopher Stick, a gardener, and his wife, likely household employees.

Born in Massachusetts in March 1844, Henry A. Roby joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland Regiment of the Confederate Army at age 18, fighting in the Battle of Gettysburg and serving through the end of the Civil War. When Roby was imprisoned following the war, his mother, Mrs. Mary C. Roby, petitioned Ulysses S. Grant for his release, on May 8, 1865 writing, "I appeal to you to allow my son Harry Roby to return to his home in Baltimore." Roby began work as a draftsman in 1868 at 81 Park Avenue, his mother's home since at least 1865. By 1870, Roby is identified in directories as an architect with an office at 155 Park Avenue and in 1871 Lupus and Roby began a partnership that would continue for six years, up until Lupus' death in 1877. Roby continued to work as an architect in Baltimore through at least 1880, moving his office from 49 Lexington Street to 49 St. Paul Street in 1879 while residing at 197 Park Avenue. During the 1890s, Roby resided in Lebanon, Pennsylvania where he had a second short-lived partnership, Roby & Richter, with Abner A. Richter of Reading, Pennsylvania. A rare example of Roby's later work is the 1896 St. Katharine's Church at East Lancaster Avenue & North Aberdeen



Avenue in Wayne, Pennsylvania. By 1900, Roby had returned to Baltimore where he lived at 891 Park Avenue, with his mother Mary C. Roby, his wife Lucia M., their daughter, and a servant, Hanna Gibson. To the end of his life, Roby remained active in the Baltimore Catholic community and Confederate veteran organizations. He composed several patriotic poems before his death in June 3, 1905 at his residence on Park Avenue. Roby is buried in Philadelphia, according to his obituary in the *Baltimore Sun* June 4, 1905.

Lupus & Roby began their partnership in 1871. One of their earliest projects was a shooting range and bowling alley for the Schuetzen Park formerly on Belair Road near the then Baltimore City limits, following work Lupus had done at the park in 1866. The Schuetzen Association included 800 members from first- and second-generation German families. The pair continued to work primarily within the German community. The Baltimore General German Orphan Asylum, formerly at Orleans and Aisquith Streets (1873), is known by prints and photographs. The Hebrew Orphan Asylum (1874) still stands at Rayner & Dukeland Streets in west Baltimore, its exterior in good condition and little changed. Unfortunately their partnership was cut short by Edward Lupus' death at his home in Sextonville, Baltimore County on February 13, 1877 at the age of 43 following a three month illness. He is buried in Loudon Park Cemetery. Other projects identified in his obituary included the Germania Clubhouse (1874) formerly on West Fayette Street near North Eutaw Street, St. Matthews' German Lutheran Church (1873), formerly on Fayette Street between Central and Eden Streets (known by good photographs), the House of the Good Shepherd, the "villa of Gen Meem, Va.," and the Virginia House which still stands at the Orkney Spring Hotel (1873) in Orkney Springs, Virginia.

(Baltimore street numbers cited above prior to 1886 are the old street numbers; after 1886 they are the same as today's street numbers.)

By Eli Pousson, on behalf of Baltimore Heritage.

#### SUPPORT THE BALTIMORE ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION



#### ARCHITECT BIOGRAPHIES

- Jacob Wall, Jr. (1800 – 1855)
- William H. Reasin
- Henry Albert Roby
- Robert Cary Long, Jr.
- John W. Hogg
- John E. Ellicott
- Thomas Dixon



## Roby, H. A.

ARCHITECT

[Add to My Architects](#)

Born: 3/1844, Died: 6/3/1905

Born in Massachusetts in March 1844, H.A. Roby joined the 1st Maryland Regiment of the Confederate Army at age 18, fighting in the Battle of Gettysburg and serving through the end of the Civil War. When Roby was imprisoned following the war, his mother, Mrs. Mary C. Roby, petitioned Ulysses S. Grant for his release, on May 8, 1865 writing, "I appeal to you to allow my son Harry Roby to return to his home in Baltimore."

Roby began work as a draftsman in 1868 at 81 Park Avenue, his mother's home since at least 1865. By 1870, Roby is identified in directories as an architect with an office at 155 Park Avenue and in 1871 Roby began a partnership with architect [Edward Lupus](#), [Lupus & Roby](#), that would continue for six years, up until Lupus' death in 1877. Roby's membership in the American Institute of Architects lapsed in October 1878, perhaps reflecting the challenges of continuing his practice following Lupus' death, based on American Institute of Architects, Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects. Roby continued to work as an architect in Baltimore through at least 1880, moving his office from 49 Lexington Street to 49 St. Paul Street in 1879 while residing at 197 Park Avenue.

During the 1890s, Roby resided in Lebanon, Pennsylvania where he had a second short-lived partnership, [Roby & Richter](#), with [Abner A. Richter](#) of Reading, Pennsylvania. An example of Roby's later work is the 1896 St. Katharine's Church at East Lancaster Avenue & North Aberdeen Avenue in Wayne, Pennsylvania. By 1900, Roby had returned to Baltimore where he lived at 891 Park Avenue, with his mother, Mary C. Roby, wife, Lucia M., their daughter, and a servant, Hanna Gibson. Near the end of his career, Roby remained active in the Baltimore Catholic community, Confederate veteran organizations, and composed several patriotic poems before his death in June 3, 1905 at his residence on Park Avenue.

Henry Albert Roby is also identified as Harry A. Roby and his name is frequently shortened to H.A. Roby.

*Written by Eli Pousson, and Sandra L. Iatman.*

[Philadelphia Architects and Buildings](#) | [About](#) | [Participating Institutions](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Search](#) | [Logout](#)

Website and System: Copyright © 2018 by The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Data and Images: Copyright © 2018 by various contributing institutions. Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

[E-mail a Link to This Page](#)

## Roby & Ritcher (fl. 1890-1900)

ARCHITECTS

### [Add to My Architecture](#)

This appears to be a short-lived partnership. [A. A. Ritcher](#) had actually obtained office experience with [H. A. Roby](#) of Lebanon, PA. However, at least one citation for this partnership appears in the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* during the 1890-1900 period.

*Written by Sandra L. Tatman.*

[Philadelphia Architects and Buildings](#) | [About](#) | [Participating Institutions](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Search](#) | [Logout](#)

Website and System: Copyright © 2018 by The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Data and Images: Copyright © 2018 by various contributing institutions. Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

[E-mail a Link to This Page](#)

---



and was ordained in 1832. The universal regret at the demise of this prelate was nowhere more sincere than in St. John's parish, where Father Gartland had labored. Sad were the hearts of the people when they assembled to assist at the celebration of pontifical requiem mass by Rt. Rev. Bishop Kenrick, on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 1854. In 1855, Rev. J. Sourin, S.J., was pastor, the Jesuits having been given charge of the church. In 1856, Very Rev. James Ryder, S.J., was pastor. He continued in the pastoral charge until 1857, when he was succeeded by Rev. John McGuigan, S.J., who was assisted by Rev. Father Paccharini, S.J. In 1858, Rev. John Blox, S.J., was pastor, assisted by Fathers Lachat and Ward. In 1860, January 9th, the funeral obsequies of Rt. Rev. John Neumann, late bishop of this diocese, took place at this church.

On April 27th, Rev. John Blox, the pastor, died. His assistants in the pastoral charge at this time were Fathers Lachat and Immasso, the latter of the seculars, and stationed at the church to assist the Jesuits.

In 1861 the Jesuits surrendered the control of the church, and Rev. John Brannagan, of St. Patrick's, was appointed pastor, in which position he remained but a few days, being transferred to the interior of the diocese. He was succeeded by Rev. John P. Dunn, of St. Theresa's, who continued in pastoral charge until his death, in 1869. During his pastorate he had been assisted by Rev. P. R. O'Reilly, the present rector, Rev. Richard Keenan, Rev. Father Immasso, Rev. Peter McGrane, Rev. John Fitzmaurice, at present rector of St. Agatha's Church, West Philadelphia, Rev. James Powers, and Rev. James Fitzmaurice, now rector of the Church of the Sacred Heart. On Feb. 27, 1861, Rt. Rev. Bishop Wood blessed the present bell. It weighs sixteen hundred and forty pounds. The present rector is Rev. P. R. O'Reilly, who has been stationed at St. John's for the past twenty years. He succeeded Rev. John P. Dunn in 1869.

St. John's parish extends from the south side of Vine to the north side of South, and from the west side of Ninth to the east side of Broad. This is a populous and wealthy district, and within it reside a number of influential Catholics, but as many who possess wealth are not the most liberal in its distribution, so to the working classes, principally, must be given the honor of contributing the means for the support of the church, as theirs was the first contribution toward its beginning.

The assistants to Rev. P. R. O'Reilly are Rev. J. Ferry, Rev. J. J. Donnelly, and Rev. P. Burke.

On Sunday, April 16, 1882, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the church was celebrated by solemn pontifical mass being offered by Rt. Rev. William O'Hara, D.D., Bishop of Scranton, Pa. The sermon was delivered by Rt. Rev. J. R. Shanahan, Bishop of Harrisburg, Pa. In

the evening solemn pontifical vespers was sung by Bishop Shanahan, and the sermon was preached by Rt. Rev. Martin Crane, bishop of the diocese of Sandhurst, Australia.

**St. Dominic's Church (Holmesburg).**—The corner-stone of this church was laid Sept. 9, 1849, by Very Rev. F. X. Gartland. Rev. Dominic Berrill, O.P., was its first pastor, and remained until 1855, when he was transferred to St. Stephen's Church, Nicetown. He died May 11, 1856. His successor at St. Dominic's was Rev. M. A. McGrane. In 1867 he was transferred to Wilmington, Del., being succeeded by Rev. P. A. Lynch. He remained until 1870, when he was transferred to Bristol, his successor being Rev. Thomas W. Power, who, after a pastorate of two years, was appointed to build the church of St. Cecilia (now the Visitation). On Nov. 10, 1872, Rev. James O'Connor, D.D., formerly rector of St. Charles Seminary, was appointed pastor. He made many improvements. On Aug. 20, 1876, Dr. O'Connor was consecrated Vicar-Apostolic of Nebraska. On Oct. 8, 1876, Rev. Lawrence J. Wall, who had been first assistant at the church from June 22, 1872, was appointed rector, and still continues. He has added to the pastoral residence, purchased land for a cemetery, established a convent, and much improved the church.

**St. Joachim's (Frankford).**—The corner-stone was laid Sept. 28, 1845, by Rt. Rev. Celestin de la Hailandiere, Bishop of Vincennes, Ind., assisted by Rt. Rev. P. R. Kenrick and Rev. Dominick Forestal, the pastor. The ground was purchased on which to erect the church in 1843, but the riots of 1844 delayed the beginning of the edifice until 1845.

Rev. Dominick Forestal died in 1847, and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, South Fourth Street. In 1864, while Rev. John McGovern was pastor, a church was purchased from the Presbyterians and opened as a parochial school in care of Sisters of Immaculate Heart. In 1873 the old church was taken down, and on June 28, 1874, the corner-stone of the present church was laid by Most Rev. James F. Wood, archbishop. Rt. Rev. William O'Hara, Bishop of Scranton, preached; Right Rev. J. F. Shanahan, Bishop of Harrisburg, was present. On Oct. 20, 1880, the church was dedicated by Archbishop Wood. Rev. B. A. Maguire, S.J., preached. The present rector is Rev. J. P. Byrnes.

**The Immaculate Conception (Front and Canal Streets).**—The corner-stone of this church was laid Sept. 11, 1870, Rev. Michael A. Filan, now rector of the Church of the Annunciation, being its first pastor. On the festival of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 1872, the church was dedicated. In 1880 the parochial school was erected, and on August 29th dedicated. Early in 1881, Rev. M. A. Filan was transferred to the Annunciation Church as successor to Rev. J. McAnany, deceased. Rev. P. J. Daily, of the Annunciation, then became rector of the Immaculate Conception, and is such at present.





## CHAPTER V.

### VILLANOVA FROM 1883 TO 1892.

In 1883, the Fathers began the erection of a church worthy of St. Thomas of Villanova, patron of their monastery, college and mission. In the earlier pages of this sketch the reader has seen the little oratory in the monastery parlor—the church of 1843, then the chapel of 1844 and the gymnasium church of 1872.

On Easter Thursday, March 29, 1883, ground for the new building was broken by Prior Coleman and the Brethren, each digging a spadeful; on St. Mark's Day, April 25, the first stone was laid in the trenches; on Sunday afternoon, June 3rd, Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, the corner stone of the new church was solemnly blessed and laid in place by Rt. Rev. Jeremiah F. Shanahan, Bishop of Harrisburg; Dr. Stanton delivering the dedicatory oration. In a cavity of the stone, inside a glass jar, are enclosed a memoir of the proceedings, and a collection of relics, of *Agnus Dei*s and of coins of the United States—presented by Mr. Charles McKeone, a member of the parish. On Sunday, November 23, 1884, the cross on the front gable was blessed by Very Rev. Maurice A. Walsh, vicar of the diocese, and the sermon delivered by Rev. John P. Gilmore, O.S.A. In 1887, Fr. Coleman having been transferred the year before to the Australian missions of the Order, the church was completed by Rev. James J. Blake—his successor in the parish, and, on Sunday, July the 3rd, blessed by Most Rev. Patrick J. Ryan, of Philadelphia; the Right Rev. Michael J. O'Farrell, of Trenton, delivering the benediction sermon.

The church is Gothic in style, and, exclusive of the sacristy, measures 143½ feet in length, and 60 in breadth; the facade of the building is flanked by two towers, each 18

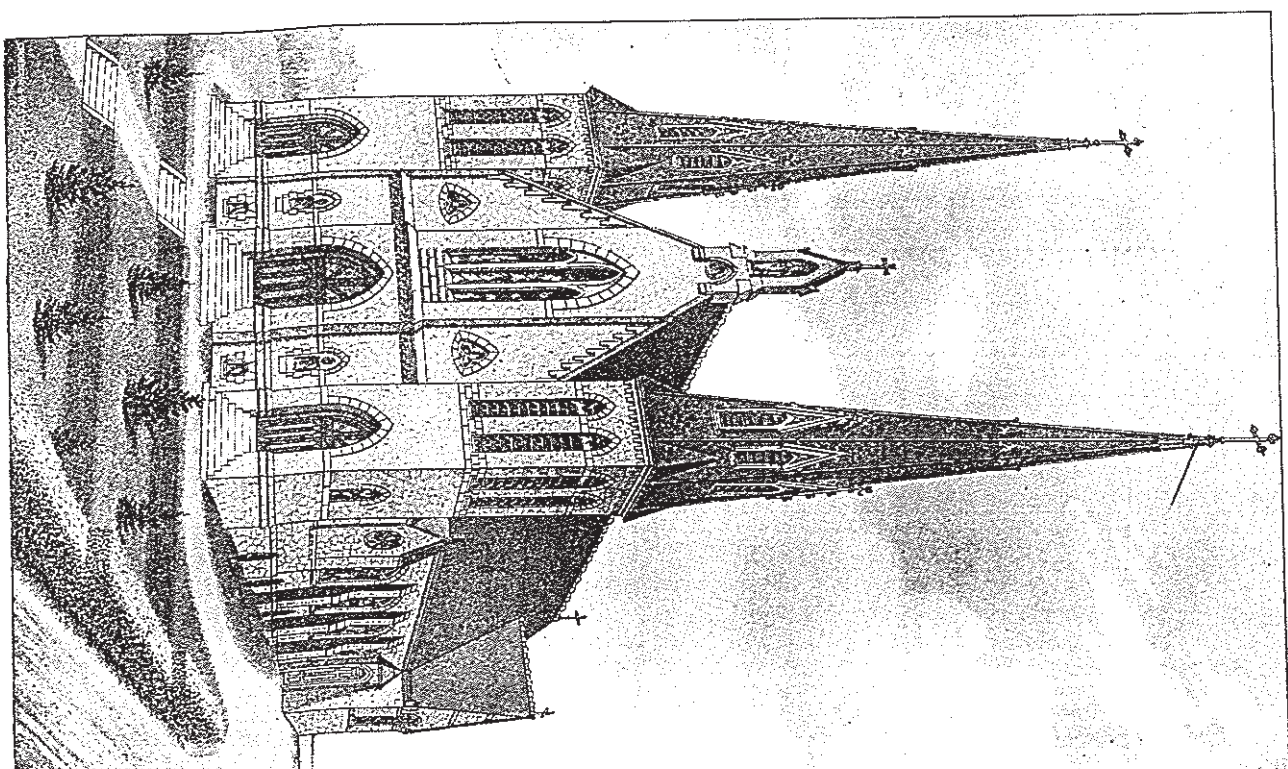


PLATE XIII.—CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, from the south.

feet square and 63 feet high, surmounted by eight-sided spires that make their total height, 126 feet. Over the central gable of the church is a corbelled niche with a pedestal for a statue of St. Thomas of Villanova. Three front doorways, reached by 8 granite steps, give entrance to the church from the south; the ground plan of the church embraces in its inner arrangement a singular feature, common enough in Europe, but rarely seen in this country, a prolongation of the sanctuary, terminating in a large and deep apsidal choir for the use of the religious. There are seven altars in the church, four of them for the congregation, one being in the beautiful side chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel, and the other two in the retro choir. The mural decoration of the church—in distemper, the altar-pieces—"The Assumption of St. Joseph" and "Our Mother of Consolation", in the choir, and the seven figures—the four Evangelists in medallions, and Saints Augustine, Patrick and Thomas of Villanova, in panels—on the choir vault, are by the Venitian artists Achille Gobatto and Ferdinando Baraldi.

In the Lady Chapel, decorated at the expense of the Total Abstinence Society, in memory of Rev. Father Fleming, their founder, is a beautiful altar-piece—a "Mother of Good Counsel"—in oil, that was touched to the original at Genazzano; and in the rose window over the altar a charming little copy—in glass—of Raphael's "Madonna della Sedia."

The stalls, pews and chancel railings are of oak. Mr. Edwin F. Durang was architect in charge.

With the opening of the new and the dismantling of the old church, the gymnasium was refitted in accordance with its original plan, and the chapel of '44 reserved for the collegians' week-day Mass, meetings of church societies and Christian Doctrine classes for the children of the parish.

In 1885 the Fathers, after a fruitless attempt some thirteen years before, succeeded in opening a mission at Bryn Mawr, about two miles east of the monastery. On



## ST. DOMINIC'S, HOLMESBURG, 1849.

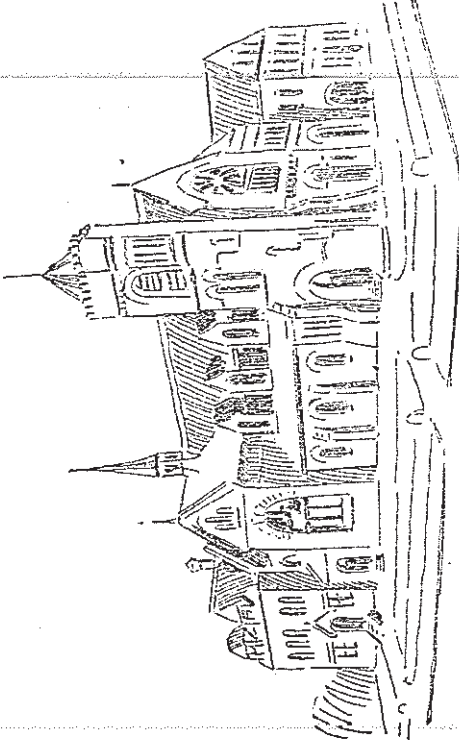
IN the organization of new parishes in the county of Philadelphia, the year in which this church was built was the busiest in the exceptionally active career of Bishop Kenrick. Two others, as will be seen, were formed this year in suburbs of the city, and that of the Assumption, in the Spring Garden district, begun the year before, was now completed. The new one in Holmesburg is remarkable in that it was intrusted to the care of the only Dominican Father regularly stationed here since the departure of the Harolds in the time of the Hogan schism.

This was the Rev. John Dominic Berrill, O.P., and in honor of his patron saint and the founder of his Order he had the church placed under the tutelage of St. Dominic. It was originally a very modest building, but long sufficient for the needs of the few Catholics then residing in that comparatively small town. Having thoroughly prepared the way for the needed structure, he had its corner-stone blessed and laid on September 9, 1849. Very Rev. Father Gartland, V.G., officiated. Ere long the church was ready for use, and was dedicated. Father Berrill remained in charge until 1855, when he was transferred to St. Stephen's, where he died May 11, 1856. He was succeeded at St. Dominic's by the Rev. Matthew A. McGrane, who was to spend the last years of his life in Wilmington. He remained in Holmesburg until 1867, when he was succeeded by Rev. P. A. Lynch, who had charge until 1870, when he was made pastor of St. Mark's, Bristol. Then Rev. Thomas W. Power became pastor, but was to stay only two years, as he was intrusted in 1872 with the new parish of St. Cecelia, now that of Our Lady of the Visitation. It was on Nov. 10th, of this year, that Very Rev. James O'Connor, D.D., who had been rector of the Seminary, came to Holmesburg as pastor. He made many improvements to the property during his short stay of four and a half years, until his promotion to the honor of the episcopate as second Vicar-Apostolic of Nebraska, which title was soon to be supplanted by that of Bishop of Omaha. On October 8, 1876, he was succeeded at St. Dominic's by Rev. Lawrence J. Wall, the present rector, who had been assistant at the same church since June 22, 1872. The most marked improvements have been made during this last pastorate. He enlarged the pastoral residence, thoroughly renovated the church and beautifully decorated its interior. He also purchased land for a parish cemetery. But his chief work is his latest, the building in 1893 of a fine parochial school, which he soon afterwards opened with Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in charge, and which has flourished from its very beginning.

Makerney (1895)

Laying of Corner Stone of St. Katharine's Church

Record 10 June '95



THE NEW ST. KATHARINE'S CHURCH AT WAYNE.

WAYNE'S NEW CHURCH.

The Corner-Stone Laid Yesterday by Archbishop Ryan.

Several thousand people gathered at Wayne yesterday to see Archbishop Ryan lay the corner-stone of the new Catholic Church at that pretty suburb. It was a red-letter day in the history of the members of the Catholic faith there, and hardly less interesting to many of other denominations, who were present throughout the ceremonies.

The Archbishop was assisted by Father Mullen as master of ceremonies, and Rev. James Monahan, of the Cathedral, preached the sermon. This was supplemented by a few words from the Archbishop, who referred to the doubts that filled his mind six years ago when the late George W. Childs presented him the lot on which the church is being built. He said the Catholic population of Wayne was then so small that he was afraid it could not support a church, but he was now convinced that the work so well begun would be successfully completed, and help materially in the work of creating love and loyalty to God and the country.

The ceremonies were of the usual character on such occasions. The children of the parish and a delegation of Catholic Knights of America from Philadelphia participated in the solemn procession be-

Ledger 10 June '95

SPECIAL TO THE PUBLIC LEDGER.  
WAYNE, June 9.—The corner-stone of St. Katharine's Church was laid yesterday afternoon by Archbishop Ryan in the presence of several thousand people, residents of Wayne and of the adjoining villages.

The church, which has already been described at length in the LEDGER, has risen about four feet beyond the ground to the line of the first floor. The rafters were covered with loose boards, forming a platform as long and wide as the church foundations.

At the spot where the altar will stand a simple cross of oak had been erected. The corner-stone is in the front of the church wall, near the northeast corner. The stand for the use of the clergyman was directly in front of it. It was decorated with American flags, and along the rail in front of the speaker's place were along the Papal colors.

At 4 o'clock the ceremony was held. The Rev. J.

A CORNER-STONE LAID.

Archbishop Ryan Presides at the Services at St. Katharine's, Wayne.

Special Despatch to "The Press."

Wayne, June 9.—The corner stone of St. Katharine's Roman Catholic Church, at this place, was laid and blessed this afternoon by Archbishop Ryan, of Philadelphia, assisted by Rev. J. V. Monahan, of the Cathedral; Rev. Dr. Dennis Erskan, Rev. J. Patrick, Rev. James Mullin, Rev. William McDowell, Rev. James O'Neil, Rev. P. V. Sullivan, of St. Edward's; Rev. S. B. Spaulding, of St. Agnes'; West Chester; Rev. Michael Donovan, Rev. David Egan, Rev. F. M. Sheehan, Rev. Michael Ryan, Rev. James O'Reilly, Rev. Henry Drungood, Rev. M. McCabe, Rev. D. O'Connor, Rev. Daniel C. Brenning.

Addresses were made by Rev. P. J. Monahan and Archbishop Ryan. The Archbishop congratulated the Catholics of Wayne on their good work in aiding the Rev. Matthew A. Hand in the affairs of the church. He closed by giving his Episcopal benediction.

Solemn vespers and benediction in the temporary church of St. Katharine's completed the day's services. Over 3000

Record 10 June '95  
WAYNE TO HAVE

A NEW CHURCH

ARCHBISHOP RYAN LAYS A CORNER-STONE FOR A FINE STRUCTURE.

ON A LOT GIVEN BY MR. CHILDS

Impressive Services Attend the Beginning of St. Katharine's Church at the Beautiful Suburb—Many People From This City and From Near-By Places Visit the Scene and Listen to an Eloquent Sermon.



pure white and wearing on their white wreaths and veils.

A large delegation from Philadelphia of the Catholic Knights of America also participated in the services.

The new church, which is to cost \$33,000, is situated south of the Pennsylvania Railroad, about seven minutes' walk from the station, and at the intersection of Lancaster and Aberdeen Avenues. It is in the Gothic style 65' architecturally, fronting 50 feet, 8 inches on Lancaster Avenue and having a depth of 135 feet 10 inches on Aberdeen Avenue. The structure being set back from both avenues and the front of dark Conestoga sandstone, with trimmings of Indiana limestone, with a tower 80 feet high, surmounted by a roof of copper tiles and a gabled cross.

The interior of the church will consist of a nave and clerestory with a groined arch ceiling, well lighted by large windows, and two side aisles, also well lighted. There will be an organ gallery over the vestibule, lighted by a window 12 by 20 feet. The columns supporting the clerestory and roof will be of steel, encased with fire-proof material, with moulded arches and carved caps. The seating capacity will be 400.

*In given 10 June 10/95*

**WAYNE CATHOLICS' NEW CHURCH.**  
**Archbishop Ryan Officiates at the Corner-Stone Laying.**

Special to The Inquirer.

WAYNE, Pa., June 9.—The ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the new Roman Catholic Church of St. Katharine of Sienna at this place this afternoon was witnessed by about 2500 people. There were large delegations from the Catholic Knights of America and the A. O. H., of Philadelphia.

The procession left the rectory at 4 o'clock, one hundred members of the visiting societies in the lead, followed by Father Ward, with acolytes bearing the cross and candles. The girls and boys came next, followed by a number of priests. Archbishop Ryan, clad in cope and mitre, sprinkled the walls after the usual manner. The corner-stone was laid by the archbishop.

The sermon was preached by Rev. James C. Monahan, of the Cathedral, and Archbishop Ryan made an earnest address.

the impressive atmosphere of the corner-stone of St. Katharine's Church, Lancaster and Aberdeen Avenues, Wayne, was yesterday performed by Archbishop Ryan, assisted by several prominent priests. At 4 o'clock a procession was formed at the pastor's house, several hundred feet south of the site of the new church, headed by seventy members of Branch No. 118 of the Catholic Knights, of this city. Fifty girls and boys of the parish followed, the former being daintily clad in white, with veils of the same color draped around their heads.

The priests, who were as follows: The Rev. Matthew A. Hand, pastor of the church; the Rev. Francis M. Ward, assistant pastor; the Rev. Daniel Brennan, of the Church of the Assumption; the Rev. Daniel O'Connor, of St. Agatha's; the Rev. James Mullen, of the Lady of Lourdes; the Rev. Luke McCabe, of the seminary at Villa Nova; the Rev. Michael Donovan, of St. Paul's; the Rev. James Monahan, of the Cathedral; the Rev. P. V. Sullivan, of St. Edwards; the Rev. Henry Drumgoole, of the seminary at Villa Nova; the Rev. James O'Reilly, of St. Joseph's, Downingtown; the Rev. Joseph O'Neill, of St. Francis Xavier, and the Rev. Daniel Egan, of St. Ann's. After the acolytes came the Archbishop with his crozier borne before him.

The procession first halted at the cross, which was blessed by the Archbishop, and then moved onward to the platform surrounding the corner-stone, hymns murmuring being sung by the children.

**A PROMISE OF MANY BLESSINGS.**

The corner-stone was then laid by Archbishop Ryan, assisted by the pastor and the assistant pastor. Many of the large audience were accommodated upon the platform, but the majority stood below it, and many were so far away as to be almost out of hearing. The crowd was very quiet, however, so that the words spoken during the solemn service were distinctly heard for some distance around. The beauty of the afternoon attracted to the scene many persons from this city and also from the surrounding suburban towns.

The sermon was preached by the Rev. James Monahan, of the Cathedral, who said during the course of it: "In the building of this church great things will be accomplished for the glory of God, for it is clear testimony of the zeal in spreading his kingdom upon earth, and that the people truly believe that the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob still lives and reigns over the earth. God will dwell here not in symbols, but as a real, living, comforting Father, giving unto you that peace which the world cannot give."

Archbishop Ryan then spoke a few eloquent words of encouragement and congratulation, speaking of the small beginning that the church had when the lot was given for that purpose by George W. Childs. He then brought the service to a close by a prayer.

"The church when finished will cost \$35,000 and will be built of Conestoga sandstone with Indiana limestone trimmings in the Gothic style of architecture. It will have a front on Lancaster Avenue of 58 feet 8 inches and a depth on Aberdeen Avenue of 135 feet 10 inches. A tower 80 feet high will be surmounted by a gilt cross and the portions of the exterior usually built of wood will be of galvanized iron.

The interior will be finished in oak, and the walls will be of rough-tinted plaster. The seating capacity will be four hundred and the entire building will be lighted by

O'Neill, Monahan, Drumgoole, Egan, Sullivan, Mullen, Drumgoole, Garvey, McCabe and Ryan.

The location of the new church is one of the best in Wayne, being on the corner of Lancaster and Aberdeen Avenues. The church will be a handsome edifice when completed, at a cost of \$35,000. The style of the edifice is to be Gothic, and it will have a frontage of 58 feet on Lancaster Avenue and 135 feet on Aberdeen Avenue. Pink Conestoga sandstone will be used with trimmings of Indiana limestone. A tower 80 feet high, surmounted by a roof of copper, will set off the front. The seating capacity will be 400, and the pews, as well as the whole interior, will be finished in oak. An organ gallery over the vestibule will be lighted by a window 12 by 20 feet, and the sanctuary will contain space for three altars. Under the entire church will be a basement for the Sunday school.

A handsome rectory will be built next to the church of the same quality of stone.

*Our Mother of Divine  
 Sacred Communion  
 Standard 15 June 95*

**OUR MOTHER OF SORROWS.**—About eighty little girls and seventy-five boys received their first Holy Communion at the 9 o'clock Mass on Sunday. Rev. Father Conway officiated, and delivered a touching and fervent address to the children on the joy and happiness which it was their great privilege to enjoy in having received for the first time in their pure bodies the great Sacrament of the Altar. He congratulated the parents on witnessing such an edifying sight, and hoped that the children will always remember this, the greatest day of their lives, and do all in their power to continue the graces they received, and merit the great reward of a well-spent life, the enjoyment of their Heavenly Father for all eternity.

On next Sunday afternoon within the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi the usual procession through the grounds of the cemetery and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament will be held. The procession of Socialists, Sacred Heart Society and other organizations of the church, with the faithful laity, bids fair to excel all former efforts.

America, Branch 158 Philadelphia, headed the line. Following them came children in white, singing a hymn to the Sacred Heart. Accompanying the Archbishop were Rev. James Monahan, of the Cathedral; Rev. Matthew A. Hand, Rector of the new church, and the following clergymen:

Rev. Daniel Brennan, of the Assumption, Philadelphia; Rev. Daniel O'Connor, of St. Agatha's; Rev. James Mullen, of Our Lady of Lourdes; Rev. Luke McCabe, and Rev. Henry Drumgoole, of the Seminary at Downingtown; Rev. Michael Donovan, of St. Paul's; Rev. P. V. Sullivan, of St. Edwards; Rev. David Egan, of St. Ann's; Rev. Joseph O'Neill, of St. Francis de Sales, and Rev. James C. Monahan, of St. Joseph's, Downingtown.

The procession stopped first at the cross, which was blessed with holy water. The Hymn of the Saints was sung by the priests, and the corner-stone was then blessed by the Archbishop, assisted by Rev. Father Ward and Rev. Father Hand.

Afterward Monahan preached the sermon, after which the Archbishop gave the benediction. "I remember," he said, "that six years ago, when the late lamented Mr. Childs offered to give a lot so that a Catholic church might be built in Wayne, it was found upon inquiry that a priest could hardly be supported here, so few were the Catholics in the neighborhood.

"Conditions have altered since then. These foundations of the magnificent church that is to be here, these evidences that I see now of your generous and holy in seconding the efforts of your zealous Pastor, are the tokens that which has been commenced will be carried through to its perfection."

*Standard 15 June 95  
 Port of the Standard  
 Distribution Premium*

**SEMINARY OF ST. CHARLES BORROMEO.**  
**OVERBOOK.**—The annual distribution of awards to the students will take place next Monday, the 17th inst., and the summer vacation will begin next day.

Then the building will be put in order for the annual Retreat of the Rev. Clergy of the Archdiocese, the first week of which will be opened on Monday, June 24th.

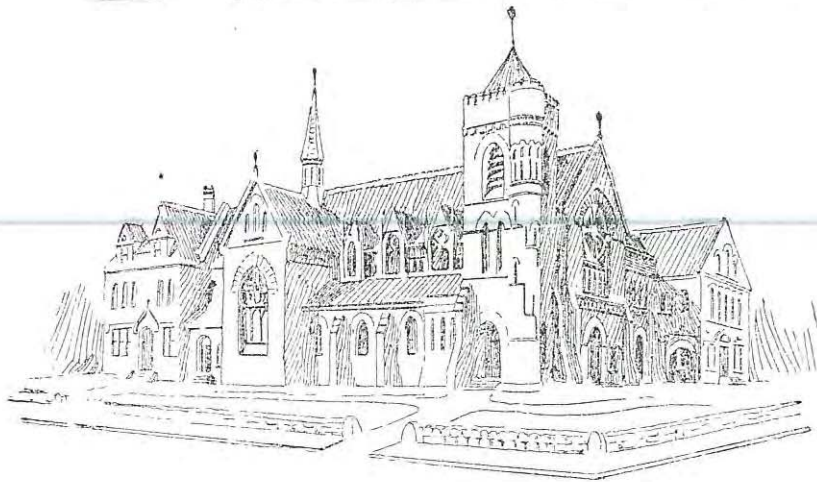
*Parochial School  
 Examination begins  
 Standard 15 June 95*

**DIOCESAN SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS.**—The annual examination of the Parochial Schools of the Archdiocese will begin on Monday, the 17th inst. Detailed instructions were issued this week by the Reverend Superintendent.



Contemporaneous newspaper coverage on St. Katharine of Sienna R.C. Church in Wayne and the beginning of St. Dominic's new construction, both by H.A. Roby.

*Wayne St. Katharine's Church*  
*The Ledger 18<sup>th</sup> August 1896*



ST. KATHARINE'S CHURCH, WAYNE.

**Description of the Church.**

The new building, which stands on the southwest corner of Lancaster and Aberdeen avenues, at Wayne, is of Gothic design, and has cost nearly \$33,000. It has been erected from the plans and under the direction of H. A. Roby, architect, of Lebanon, and it is constructed of pink Conestoga sandstone, with trimmings of Indiana limestone. The edifice has a frontage of 56 feet 8 inches on Lancaster avenue, with a depth of 135 feet 10 inches on Aberdeen avenue, and has a tower 80 feet high, which is surmounted by a roof of copper tiles and a gilded cross. All

the exterior work, usually constructed of wood or galvanized iron, is of copper, a material which, besides being practically indestructible, harmonizes in color with the stonework.

The interior consists of a nave and clerestory, with grained arched ceiling, well lighted by large windows and two side aisles, also well lighted. The seating capacity is 400, with an organ gallery over the vestibule, lighted by a large window 12 feet by 20 feet. The sanctuary is ample in size, well lighted, and containing three altars, with a sacristy communicating with the rectory. The columns supporting the clerestory and roof are of steel, encased with fireproof material, with moulded arches and carved caps. The entire interior is finished in rough sand plaster and handsomely frescoed. In the basement under the church is an assembly room, well lighted, with a concrete and cement floor, to be used for Sunday school purposes, communicating with the rectory and having an entrance from the outside on Aberdeen avenue. The rectory, situated at the south, and

*St. Dominic's Church*

*Ledger*  
*Aug. 25<sup>th</sup> 1896*

**ST. DOMINIC'S UNDER WAY**

**CORNER-STONE OF HOLMESBURG'S NEW CHURCH SOON TO BE LAID.**

The New Edifice Will be More Commodious and More Imposing than its Predecessor  
 —To Cost \$25,000.

Work is progressing rapidly on the new church building for St. Dominic's Roman Catholic parish, Holmesburg, on the site of the edifice recently destroyed by fire of supposed incendiary origin. In a few days the foundation walls will be sufficiently under way to admit of the laying of the corner-stone, and it is the intention of the rector,



# Dedication of St. Dominic's Church Holmesburg.

The Times 21 June 1897

## DEDICATION OF ST. DOMINIC'S HOLMESBURG'S NEW CHURCH.

### BUILT ON ASHES OF OLD EDIFICE

Archbishop Ryan and many clergymen of prominence participated in the services of Dedication at the New Catholic Church of St. Dominic, Holmesburg, built to replace the Edifice destroyed by fire over a year ago—Delegations of Catholics from almost every parish in the city were present, and large as the new structure is, it could not accommodate all who attended.

Amid the singing of Haydn's third Mass by a splendidly trained choir of sixty voices and the chanting of a dozen of priests, St. Dominic's new Roman Catholic Church at Holmesburg was dedicated yesterday with a beautiful service, which began in the morning and was continued in the evening. The beauty of the interior of the magnificent edifice was added to by elegant floral decorations, which banished all sombreness and lent to the church a reflection of that appearance of joyousness manifested by the congregation.

The morning service began at 10:30 o'clock, and, although the church is one of the largest in the northeastern section of the city, it was crowded with contingents of Catholics from many parishes in the city, who had gathered to encourage and assist in the Christian work which is being done by Rev. Lawrence J. Wall and his assistants. The cars of the Holmesburg, Frankford and Tacony Electric Railway were packed for an hour or more during the morning with people anxious to be present at the dedication services. Archbishop Ryan and a number of

The Press 21 June 1897

## DEDICATION OF ST. DOMINIC'S.

Archbishop Ryan Conducts  
the Ceremonies at Holmes-  
burg's New Church.

### SERMON BY FATHER M'KENNA

Rev. Dr. James F. Loughlin Was Mas-  
ter of Ceremonies, and the Rector,  
Rev. John F. Ward, the Cele-  
brant—Description of  
the Edifice.

Archbishop Ryan dedicated the new Catholic Church of St. Dominic, Holmesburg, yesterday morning, with imposing ceremonies. The church stands upon the site of the beautiful Gothic edifice which was burned a little more than a year ago, and cost \$50,000 to build.

The Archbishop and his party were conveyed from the railroad station to the church by special cars, placed at his disposal by the trolley company, and were received by the rector, Rev. L. J. Wall.

At 10:30 the Archbishop and a retinue of priests entered the church, and proceeded up the center aisle, chanting the Litany of the Saints, and blessed the sacred edifice, this ceremony being preliminary to the service that followed, in which the officiating priests were Rev. John Ward, celebrant; Rev. F. F. Fogarty, deacon; Rev. James Parker, sub-deacon; Rev. Dr. James P. Loughlin, master of ceremonies, and Rev. L. J. Ward, assistant master of ceremonies.

Speaking of ancient temples, he said: "Prior to the days of Solomon, the tabernacles of God were provided with no other roof than the blue canopy of heaven. David was inspired with a desire to erect a temple in Jerusalem, and his wish was carried out by his son, Solomon. The Almighty showed his appreciation of that work of man's hand by filling it with His glory. Solomon's temple was destroyed, and another was erected in its place, more glorious still

because it was to it that the desire of all nations came. It passed away, and for nearly 300 years believers in Christ had no other place in which to worship, than beneath the blue canopy of heaven, in some log hut, in their own humble homes, or among the catacombs. But following the victory of Constantine over the enemies of the cross, there arose those grand basilicas, some of which remain to this day, testifying to the faith of our forefathers and to their desire to do honor to their Creator. To these later were added other grand edifices by the wealth of the faithful.

"A hundred years ago our churches in this country were mostly rude log structures, at great distance from each other, and our people were among the poor and despised. This period was followed by a time of increase and of wealth, and our people have since evinced great readiness to make sacrifices by the erection of magnificent churches, and nowhere has this spirit been more apparent than in this diocese of Philadelphia."

Father McKenna concluded by saying that the modern temple is a place in which a continuous sacrifice is offered by priests ordained of God.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S ADDRESS.  
Before giving the Episcopal blessing Archbishop Ryan said: "I desire from my heart to congratulate you and your earnest pastor upon having completed this work so admirably. It is not only an evidence of grace, but an incentive to piety. That you should celebrate the festival of Corpus Christi by presenting to God a temple in which the body of Christ may be offered, here you can come for solace in the hour of affliction, or when burdened by sin. Here will be the home of the soul, and the home of the Father, to which each child can come and in the day of temptation

interior is finished in natural wood, with beautifully tiled floor. There are both electric and gas lights, and the sun pours his rays through a series of beautiful windows. The altars are in the highest style of religious art. Over the main altar stands a fine piece of alto relievo, 12 by 17 feet, representing St. Dominic receiving the rosary from the blessed Virgin, surrounded by figures of angels. Above the altar is a statue of the blessed Virgin, and on either side of the altar is the statue of St. Joseph, also in a shrine. A series of the "Sacred Heart" is set to be placed in position on the side of the main altar, and on the opposite side the statue of St. Anthony. The side walls are adorned by a beautiful set of stations of the cross in alto relievo.

The Record  
21 June 1897

ST. DOMINIC'S DEDICATED  
Archbishop Ryan Blesses the Fine  
New Edifice.



Rev. C. H. McKenna's Sermon.

The Mass was celebrated by Rev. John J. Ward, of the Church of the Sacred Heart, with Rev. D. J. Fogarty, of Muncieville, Schuyler county, as deacon; Rev. James Tarkenton, of the Church of the Nativity, as sub-deacon, and Rev. Dr. James A. Loughlin, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, as master of ceremonies. There was a procession of cler- gues, followed by acolytes, a cross bearer and Archbishop Ryan. The priests who par- ticipated in the service included Rev. Wil- liam B. Masterson, of St. Anthony's; Rev. H. B. McElroy, of St. Leo's; Rev. Francis J. Quinn, of the Church of the Nativity; Rev. Francis B. Fitzmaurice; and Rev. J. E. Kavanaugh, of St. John the Evangelist's; Rev. John J. Donnelly, of St. Vincent's; Rev. Richard E. Cowley, Rev. J. C. Freund, Rev. Father Kerlin and Rev. M. J. Brady. The soloists of the Mass were Miss Gorman, soprano; Miss Lizzie Gillen, alto; John Len non, tenor, and Daniel J. Cunningham, basso.

The sermon was preached by Rev. C. H. McKenna, of the Dominican Order of French- ers, and during its delivery his auditors seemed to be deeply impressed with its sig- nificance, listening with the most profound attention. He said: "It is a source of joy to you and gratitude to God that you have completed your labor of love and that to-day you have presented it in all its loveliness to be dedicated to the work of Almighty God." The speaker told how God had inspired David to build his temple and the inspira- tion of the work which was carried to a suc- cessful issue by Solomon.

Tribute to Church Pioneers.

Father McKenna paid a tribute to the pioneers who battled for Catholicity in this country. More than one hundred years ago, he said, a new spirit began to manifest itself and nowhere more than in America. The churches in those days were log cabins, crudely erected at that, and the poor were poor. Gradually they began to wax stronger in numbers and the log cabin began to be re- placed by splendid temples of worship, and those in Philadelphia are to-day equal to any. That fidelity characteristic of the faithful Christian was exemplified on all sides, by his successful labors and the same has con- tinued until to-day.

Archbishop Ryan made a few remarks complimenting the congregation upon its new place of worship and requesting it to support the rector in his efforts to pay off the indebted- nesses.

A Description of the Church.

St. Dominic's Church, which replaces the old one destroyed by fire May 14, 1896, is a handsome structure. It stands where the former church stood, but it covers a greater area. The architecture is Gothic. The structure fronts on Bristol pike, one of the most attractive places in the Thirty-fifth ward. On both sides of the church there are stately elms and the tallest of maple trees, planted fifty years ago when Bishop Kendrick laid the original corner stone. The church is 60 feet high, with a front of 55 feet and a depth of 127 feet. The northeast corner is graced by a tower 150 feet in height, surmounted by a handsome gilt cross. On the opposite corner there is a tower 80 feet high. The building is of Trenton brown- stone. The interior is of hard wood, and it has a seating capacity of 1,000. The entire cost is about \$85,000.

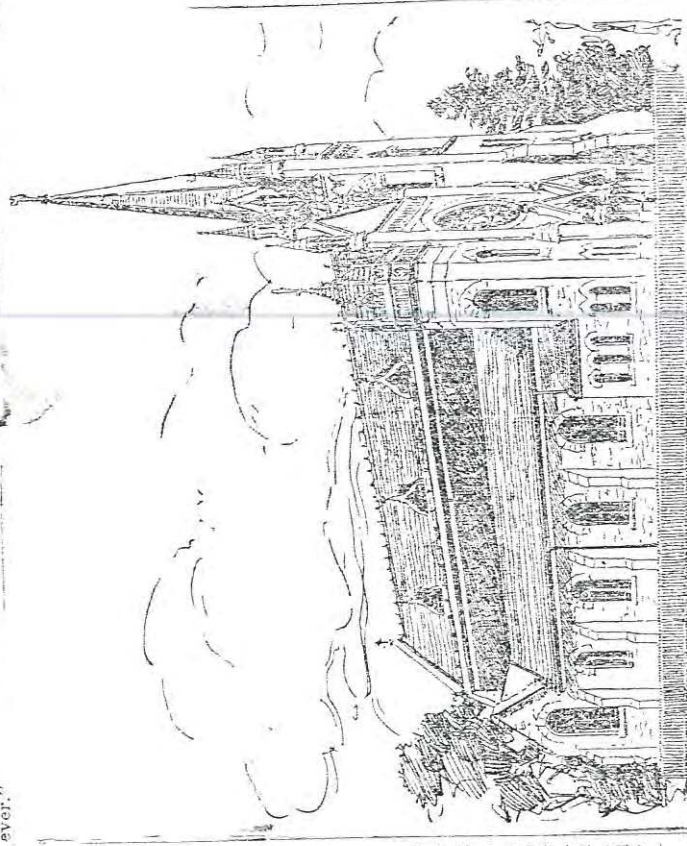
an augmented choir under the direction of John J. Griffin. The offertory selec- tion was "Jesu Del Vini."

THE SERMON.

The sermon was preached by Father McKenna, the celebrated Dominican preacher, from the words: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." Father McKenna congratulated the great audience upon the completion of the church, which had been accomplished in a little over a year, and continued:—"You have assembled this morning to present it with all its loveliness and wealth of ornament to your beloved Archbishop, that it may be by him con- secrated to the service of God for- ever."

A HANDSOME EDIFICE.

The church is built of brownstone and is Gothic in style. It has a spire 150 feet high, and will seat 700 persons. The



ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH, HOLMESBURG.

Special Effort Being Made to Swell the Historic Church's Endow- ment Fund—The Lesson of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

With the usual impressive ceremonies Archbishop Ryan yesterday dedicated the new Catholic Church of St. Dominic, built on the site of the old edifice which but a few months ago was destroyed by fire. The church was crowded to its ul- most capacity when, at 10:30 o'clock, the Archbishop, attended by a long pro- cession of prominent clergymen, entered and proceeded up the main aisle to the front of the altar. The procession chant was sung by a large choir, accompanied by a full orchestra. The congregation knelt while the ceremony of blessing the church was performed, and the clergy chanted the Litany of the Saints.

Rev. Charles H. McKenna, a Domini- can missionary, preached the sermon, taking for his text, "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." He sketched the progress of the Catholic Church from the days of Adam through the centuries to the present day and paid particular attention to the growth of Catholicism in America. At the conclu- sion of the services Archbishop Ryan spoke briefly and concluded with the apostolic benediction upon the church and all within its walls.

Among the clergymen present were Rev. L. J. Wull, pastor of the church; Rev. E. P. Cowley, Father Fitzmaurice, Rev. J. P. Loughlin, Rev. William Kier- an, Rev. John J. Donnelly and Rev. G. P. Cozshup. The Mass was celebrated by Rev. John Ward, with Rev. J. P. Fogarty as co-accom and Rev. James P. Loughlin as sub-deacon. Rev. James P. Loughlin was master of ceremonies.

St. Dominic's Church was built in 1849 and destroyed by fire May 14, 1896. The contract for the new church, dedicated yesterday was awarded to Michael Kib- corne, of Holmesburg, and the first stone was laid by his son, Frank Kibcorne, who superintended the construction of the new edifice. During the building of the new church it is noted that there was not an accident of any kind or descrip- tion. The new church is of brownstone, 70x130 feet, and 45 feet from the floor to the top of the arch inside. It is built in the Gothic style of architecture, with a steeple and belfry on the north corner, 154 feet 4 inches high, including 80 feet of stone work to the belfry.

The seating capacity of the new church is 650. It is adorned by a beautiful altar made from each stone imported from France, by the pupils of St. Francis' In- dustrial School, at Eddington, under the supervision of Brother Tellow. The in- stations of the cross adorn the walls, side, while the large windows of stained glass represent scenes in the life of the Saviour. The church stands on a ele- vation, and the gilded cross which many mounts the spire is a landmark for miles around. The bell in the belfry is the only relic of the old church left, and that, having been cracked by its fall at the time of the fire, was recast



1849—1949

# ST. DOMINIC'S 100 YEARS



By REV. HAROLD J. MARRA  
New Hope, Pa.



*Published 1950 During the Jubilee Holy Year*



PHILADELPHIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

as an

ARCHDIOCESE



*The Year of the Holy Father's Definition  
of the dogma of*

The Assumption  
of  
Our Blessed Mother Mary

Press of Jefferies & Manz, Philadelphia 6, Pa.

## The Beginning

"THE OWNERS OF THE LAND WHICH IS NOW ST. DOMINIC'S, FROM ITS FIRST OCCUPATION BY THE SWEDES."

(By AN UNKNOWN AUTHOR)

THE first white settlers in this section of the country were the Swedes. Three Swedes took up all the land from the Pennypack to the Poquessing Creek, fronting on the Delaware River, and extending inland to a line beginning at a point on Pennypack Creek, by the dam, near the point where the Bustleton R.R. crosses — thence following a line N.E. at the back of the old cemetery and back of the lots on the N.W. side of the Pike in Collegeville. (N.B. Holmesburg at one time was known as Collegeville.) The fence of the Lower Dublin Academy lot nearest the Pike and parallel to it, marks the boundary of these earliest grants. The line, in some deeds, is still sometimes called the "Swedes' Line."

Peter Rambo, Jr., in 1677, applied for a grant of land between Pemipkam Creek, and Paequessin Creek. On November 12, 1678, by virtue of a warrant from the Court of Upland, there was layd out for Peter Rambo, Jr. a tract of land called Ram's Doer scituate and being on the West side of Delaware Rive and on the North East side of Pemippackes Creek. 310 Acres.

Peter Rambo, Sr., Father of Peter Rambo, Jr. came from Sweden in 1638, and lived until 1698.

Those who owned land here before William Penn were called "Old Renters." When Penn came he required the "Old Renters," to make good their titles, to take out a grant from him. Accordingly, May 10, 1684, 310 acres were confirmed to Peter Rambo by Patent from the Proprietor, William Penn.

When Thomas Holme obtained a grant, one of his boundaries was the "Swede's Line." Peter Rambo's tract was from the mouth of the Pennypack, up the Delaware to Pennypack St., by Pennypack St. to the rear of Zitter's and the old cemetery to the Creek, down the Pennypack Creek to its mouth.

In 1710 Peter Rambo, Jr., made a deed of gift to his eldest son, Swen Rambo — 80 acres. This 80 acres took in the ground on the N.W. Side of the Pike, from Blakiston St. to King's Lane, back to "Swede's Line" and a narrow strip along the R.R. to the creek. 60½ acres of it lay on the opposite side of the road, between Blakiston St. and Pennypack St.



In 1728, Swen Rambo sold the 80 acres to Lawrence Boore. Lawrence Boore was the eldest son of Laers Laerson. Laers Laerson was the first owner of the land fronting the Delaware River — located between Pennypack St. and Linden Ave. extending back to the "Swede's Line."

Amongst the Swedes it often happened that one man went by different names. Laers Laerson was Lasse Boore.

Erick Ustenberg (who owned land on the West side of Pennypack Creek, near Holmesburg Junction) was Ollie Nellson, etc.

Lawrence Boore died in 1746, and by will gave two acres next to Blakiston St. to his son Andrew, another two acres adjoining to the East to a granddaughter. These two lots are now the General Wayne Hotel property. The remainder of the 80 acres went to his son, Joseph Boore. About 1750 John Paul bought that portion of the Joseph Boore Estate which lies on the N.W. side of the Pike.

The old mansion on the King Estate — where the old Parishioners, Michael Kerwig, and his sons after him, have lived for forty years or more — was the homestead of John Paul.

In this neighborhood, John Paul was the largest landowner of his day. He owned the land fronting on the Pike from the General Wayne Hotel to the east side of Mrs. Burns'. His holdings extended up the Pennypack Creek — out the Welch Road — thence N.E. back of L. Lower Dublin Academy — across Academy Road — several hundred acres. He died in 1786 and divided his property amongst his sons. The mansion in the angle formed by Academy Road and Willett's Road became the homestead of Thomas Paul. The old homestead on the King place he willed to his son, Joseph, and the land on the Pike, now the church property. Joseph Paul died, and in 1800 his eldest son, Jonathan Paul, became the owner.

Between 1800 and 1804, Jonathan Paul sold in lots all the frontage between the Hotel line and King's Lane. Lewis Rue bought the lot six perches front (where the church now stands). John Pass bought the next, then John McMullen, Charles Endicott, Isaac Comly, and Asa Knight. There was a lane thirty-three feet wide between Endicott and Comly.

In 1804 John Comly owned the land from the back of these lots to the Pennypack. In 1808, William Glenn bought the Comly property. By 1809, William Glenn owned all the frontage on the Pike from the hotel to Zitter's.

Going out King's Lane from the Pike, by the roadside, to your left, about 100 feet from the R.R., at the foot of the first big beech tree which you meet, is buried the body of William Glenn. In 1829 William Glenn died, and in 1831 his executors sold the property to Edward Murray.

Fi  
and a s  
John M

O  
Francis  
six incl

O  
John E  
upon v

In  
of the  
He die

H  
C  
sister,

W  
Berrill

T  
dollars  
Murra  
bidder

J  
offerec  
11, 18  
eleven

Edward Murray died, leaving a widow, and two brothers, Patrick and John, and a sister Cecilia Murray. In 1845 division was made and 11 acres came to John Murray.

On August 17, 1849 John Murray and Bridget his wife, convey to Rt. Rev. Francis Patrick Kenrick one acre. 80 feet front on the Pike, depth 544 feet six inches. The lot was that upon which the church was built later.

On August 17, 1849, John Murray and Bridget his wife, convey to Rev. John Dominic Berrill three acres, to the east of and adjoining the church lot, upon which the rectory, convent and school now stand.

In 1850 John Murray and his wife sold to Rev. J. D. Berrill, all the residue of the 11 acres. All except one acre was the personal property of Father Berrill. He died in 1856, intestate, and his property went to his heirs.

His heirs at law were:

Children of his brother, William Patrick Berrill, deceased. Children of his sister, Marcella Plunkett, deceased.

With the exception of Margaret Wood, a daughter of William Patrick Berrill, all the heirs lived in Ireland.

The Court ordered a sale of the property which was appraised at 3300 dollars. At the sale Patrick Murray (this man was not the brother of John Murray who originally sold the property to Father Berrill) was the highest bidder, 3700 dollars.

James Mullen petitioned the Court to set aside the sale; Murray then offered 4000 dollars. On June 9, 1859, Murray offered 4200 dollars. On June 11, 1859, the Court ordered the sale to Patrick Murray. This land included the eleven acres, excepting the one acre which belonged to the Church.





The following day marked the clerical celebration. Archbishop Ryan and Monsignor Cantwell, who baptized Father Wall, came to Holmesburg at the head of a large group of the clergy. They were met by the band from St. Francis Industrial school and escorted to the church. There in the presence of the Archbishop, Father Wall sang his Solemn Jubilee Mass at 10:30. The deacon, Rev. John J. Ward, was a classmate and fellow-jubilarian. The Reverend P. J. Fogarty, Father Wall's nephew, was sub-deacon. The Mass concluded, Archbishop Ryan delivered the address and read a cable from Rome in which the Pope sent to the Pastor the Papal Blessing.

That evening, a committee of parishioners invited Father to attend a gathering in the new school hall. Representatives of the various parish societies welcomed him with warm addresses, with vocal and instrumental music filling out the program. The non-Catholic citizens of Holmesburg were present also, to add their congratulations. At the conclusion, Mr. Walter George Smith presented to Father a check for \$2,100, a splendid gift from his people, his spiritual children.

#### FIRE DESTROYS CHURCH

By 1896 the population had so grown that Father Wall began to consider enlarging the church. But it was not to be. Just forty days after his jubilee celebration, the church was struck by a devastating fire. Occurring early in the morning of Ascension Day, the flames destroyed the church and sacristy, and caused considerable damage to the convent. The catastrophe was so extensive that the loss amounted to more than \$50,000.

About 2:30 A.M. Father Richard F. Cowley was awakened and found the church a mass of flames. He awakened the people in the rectory, and aroused the Sisters in the convent. An attempt was made to send in an alarm from the local box, but it was found out of order. A messenger was obliged to hasten on foot to the nearest fire house, Engine Company #36, nearly a mile distant. Help was asked from the Tacony Company, a mile and a half away, and from the upper Frankford company, another four miles. Over a half-hour elapsed between the discovery of the fire and the arrival of the first firemen.

They found the interior of the church a seething mass of flames. The immense cathedral stained-glass windows were bursting out with machine-gun rapidity. This created a draft which, fanned by a brisk breeze from the west, whipped the flames out of control. Tongues of fire curled upward, licking the cornices and firing the roof. The whole interior of the church was practically gone by then. The firemen recognized this, and while they made some efforts to pour streams of water on the blazing structure at first, they finally abandoned

any efforts to save it, and bent their energies to protecting the rectory and the convent. The new school was out of real danger. Rectory and convent were several times ignited by sparks, but, by continual watering down, these buildings were eventually saved from complete destruction.

Almost with the arrival of the firemen, the roof of the church collapsed with a tremendous roar. Unopposed, the church fire burned on. The steeple began to burn. The heat soon caused the slate roofing thereon to fly off in showers. Intense heat softened the iron bar on which the great bell, weighing over 1400 pounds, was hung; with a series of crashes it finally fell through the interior to the floor of the cellar, carrying with it the gallery and the steeple stairs. It was found a cracked and shapeless mass, completely ruined. Tongues of flame gradually ascended the great steeple, 104 feet above the ground, in a serpentine course, eventually licking the bottom of the immense copper cross. With the flames devouring each supporting piece, one by one they burned and fell. But the iron supporting rods held firm, and throughout the fire the big cross stood in place while flames roared around it. It was long after eight o'clock before the weary fire-fighters were certain that they had conquered.

On the site of the church, all was a scene of wreck, ruin and debris, water logged. Only the major parts of the walls were standing, black and seared. But above all could be seen the gaunt skeleton of the steeple, still surmounted by the great cross.

The only items of importance saved were the sacred vessels in the steel tabernacle safe. It was dug up quickly from the ruins, badly damaged, but with the contents, including the blessed Sacrament, intact.

Everything in the building was a total loss. In the sacristy, all beautiful and costly vestments, many of which had been presented to Father Wall shortly before for his silver jubilee, were consumed. In the church, the rich and expensive altars, the imported stained-glass windows and stations of the cross, valuable paintings, costly statues, new baptismal font, brass chandeliers, ornaments and fixtures, the grand \$1400 organ, all were gone. It represented an almost irreparable loss, for many of these items were memorial gifts from members and societies of the parish.

#### RECONSTRUCTION

During the progress of the fire, Inspector-General Edward Morrell arrived from his home near Torresdale. He had been married to Miss Drexel in the church, and was one of its leading members. He offered his services to the pastor.

ERR



Father Wall and his people were crushed. But with strong faith and trust in Almighty God, he announced that Holy Mass would be celebrated that very morning in the school hall, and that on the following Sunday two Masses would be said there, with an additional Mass in the private chapel in the home of Colonel Morrell

A meeting of the men of the parish was called for Thursday evening, May 21, to formulate plans for a new church. It was well attended. A Rebuilding Committee was speedily formed with the following members: Walter George Smith, president; John McFadden, vice-president; Father Wall, treasurer; Frank Kilcoyne, secretary; and John M. Mack, John Hart, William Fitzgerald and John Cody.

The old church seated about 500; and at the time of the fire the congregation numbered about 1300 souls.

It was agreed on motion that a subscription campaign was as good a means as any to raise funds. Father Wall issued an appeal for pledges. So strongly did the catastrophe affect the citizens of the neighborhood, that at the first meeting \$8,785 was raised. Father Wall generously gave the \$2,000 that he had received a few weeks previously for his Silver Jubilee. Two prominent non-Catholics donated \$1,000 and \$500 respectively. This was sufficient to warrant the immediate drawing of plans for the new church. Michael Kilcoyne was instructed to begin the preliminary work of clearing up the site, and of tearing down the walls where they were weakened. In the course of the demolition, the workmen discovered the old cornerstone laid so many years before in 1849. It was at the bottom of the foundation on the northeast corner, evidently the very first stone laid. Of roughly finished marble, it measured 14 by 21 by 20 inches, and was hollowed out to receive a tightly sealed tin box. This old stone, with the box unopened, was reset beside the new cornerstone between the two main entrances, directly behind the tablet containing the dates.

### THE NEW CHURCH

It was decided to make the new church larger, to afford extra seating capacity for the growing congregation. The front and south side walls were reared on the old foundations, but were made longer; new foundations were built for the new north side and the new rear wall, also lengthened from the figures of the old building. The new steps rest on the foundations of the old bell tower. A baptistery was added on the side opposite the new bell-tower; the old bell, melted and destroyed in the fire, was recast and hung in the new tower, which soars 150 feet towards the sky.

On  
the south  
feet in w  
well whic  
was exter  
present w

The  
additiona  
the laying  
level. On  
in the pre  
large grou  
ing the m  
"St. Domi  
delphia, n  
the sermo

By w  
Monday, 1  
church wa:  
1897, to c  
once more  
was immec  
the deacon  
erend Jame  
the Pevere.

As his  
Assistant, F  
titled "The  
raphy, Scie.  
dollar a ye.  
Catholic w  
Egan, Fathe  
ever, its life

Not fo  
Society in 1  
He introduc

On August 4, 1896, the feast of St. Dominic, the first stone was laid on the south side of the church. It measured six feet in length, two and one-half feet in width, and was eight inches thick. It had served as a cover for the old well which furnished water for the parish plant before the public water system was extended to this area. Only Michael Kilcoyne and Thomas McGinnis were present with Father Wall when he blessed it.

#### CORNERSTONE AND DEDICATION

The work progressed rapidly. John McMenamy had the contract for the additional excavation for the basement and cellar. When the time came for the laying of the cornerstone, the walls were already eight feet above the floor level. On September 13, 1896, the stone was formally laid by Archbishop Ryan in the presence of a gathering of more than two thousand of the laity and a large group of the clergy, with the St. Francis Industrial School Band furnishing the music. For the occasion, a silver trowel was used, on which was inscribed "St. Dominic's Church, 1896." It was the gift of the Misses Lawlor of Philadelphia, nieces of Father Wall. The Reverend William Masterson preached the sermon.

By winter, the building was under roof, and the interior plastered. On Monday, March 31, 1897, the last stone was placed in the steeple, and the church was finished. The newly hung bell rang out joyously again on June 20, 1897, to call the people to the dedication of the new edifice. Archbishop Ryan once more officiated, and after the ceremonies a Solemn Mass of thanksgiving was immediately sung in his presence. The Reverend John Ward was celebrant, the deacon was the Reverend P. J. Fogarty, and the sub-deacon was the Reverend James Parker, a former assistant at St. Dominic's. The noted Dominican, the Reverend Charles H. McKenna, preached the sermon.

As his contribution to the effort to erect the new church building, the Assistant, Father Richard Cowley, began the publication of a monthly magazine titled "The Catholic Home Journal," and devoted to Religion, History, Biography, Science and Art, Poetry and Fiction. The subscription cost was one dollar a year. For its columns he secured the services of some of the finest Catholic writers of the day, including Walter George Smith, Maurice Francis Egan, Father Bannister Tabb, Eleanor Donnelly, Margaret Halvey, etc. However, its life was short, the first issue of the second volume being the last.

Not forgetting the spiritualities, Father Wall reorganized the Holy Name Society in 1911, receiving 161 men into the society after a three days retreat. He introduced the public observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1913.



# AMERICAN ART

PAINTING • SCULPTURE • ARCHITECTURE  
DECORATIVE ARTS • PHOTOGRAPHY

BY  
MILTON W. BROWN

*Executive Officer, Doctoral Program in Art History, City University of New York*

SAM HUNTER

*Professor, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University*

JOHN JACOBUS

*Chairman, Department of Art, Dartmouth College*

NAOMI ROSENBLUM

*Instructor in Art History, Brooklyn College*

DAVID M. SOKOL

*Chairperson of the History of Architecture and Art Department,  
University of Illinois/Chicago Circle*

PRENTICE-HALL, INC., ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NEW JERSEY

HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC., NEW YORK

1979

# Architecture: The Battle of Styles

The architecture of the nineteenth century as a whole, and of the second half specifically, has commonly been described as an epic struggle between the forces of reaction expressed in eclecticism and those of progress embodied in functionalism. However, it was an exuberantly productive era, fascinating in its failures as well as in its successes. What was once seen as a single undeviating line of development from Darby's iron bridge over the Severn to the International Style now seems too simplistic. Recent historians have rediscovered aspects of eclecticism which had either an important influence on the mainstream or aesthetic validity in their own right. The separation between architect and engineer in the latter half of the century was real, but architects were not blind to advances in technology. Many had engineering training, some even made important contributions to building technology, and every large architectural firm had its engineer. However, the gap between the purely utilitarian construction of bridges, railroads, canals, dams, or factories and that of traditional structures such as public buildings and dwellings had become irreconcilable. Architecture and engineering had become distinct and specialized professions.

It was in the gray area between engineering and architecture that aesthetic confusion occurred. The problem showed itself clearly in the railroad station, where the train shed was entrusted to the engineer and the station building itself to the architect. Commercial architecture in general teetered between utility and public presence. To be profitable the commercial building had to be serviceable and economical, but it often had to appeal to aesthetic taste as well. Ornateness was directly related to the status consciousness of the client.

Building activity fell off with the financial depression of 1857, and the decline naturally continued through the Civil War, but the postwar boom fostered public and private building on an unprecedented scale. The period is characterized not only by a new level of extravagance but also by an uninhibited and often misguided mingling of elements from various historical sources. The result was

at times a provincial pastiche, labeled aptly enough the "General Grant Style," since its life span coincided with the General's term as President (1869-77).

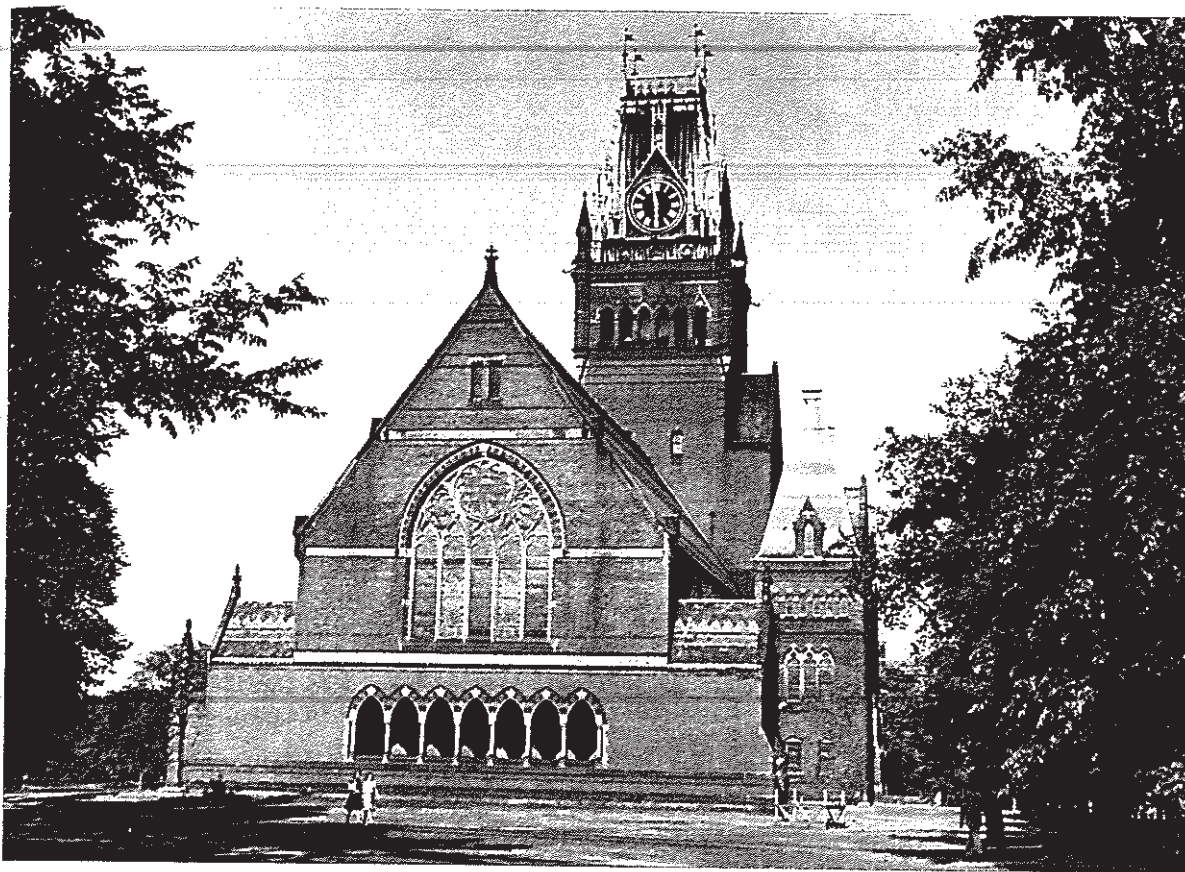
From the end of the Civil War to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, American taste accepted with equanimity two distinct revival styles, the Victorian Gothic and the French Second Empire. On the face of it, no two modes could be more disparate: the one medieval, towered, pointed-arched, asymmetrical, and polychromed; the other Classical-oriented, mansard-roofed, round-arched, symmetrical, ordered, and, at least in its origins, essentially monochromatic. Yet, somehow the two were converted to a common aggressively plastic picturesqueness expressive of the brash adventurism of the period itself. Churches, schools, libraries, and museums were normally Gothic, while governmental and commercial buildings, or anything intended to appear palatial or luxurious, were more frequently Second Empire.

(continued on page 250)

## DECORATIVE ARTS

The Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 introduced several conflicting trends in decoration, from the revival of our colonial heritage to exotic Eastern modes. Various decorators and designers began then to mingle Moorish, East Indian, and Japanese elements, not always distinguishing among the styles they were incorporating. Interest in the Near East was evident in the use of cushions and divans, inlaid tables, brass objects of all kinds, and decorative screens. Many clients had special corners treated in exotic manners, and some even had entire Moorish rooms. The finest such room (colorplate 34) was designed for Arabella Worsham and later owned by John D. Rockefeller. Here divans, cushions, and the rich Oriental rug are almost subordinated to the lavish overall decorative scheme. The woodwork is covered with both deep carving and polychromed ornament taken from Moorish models. The furniture is attributed to George Schastey, who was known for





279 Ware & Van Brunt. Memorial Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 1870-78

and Navy Department Building (1871-88), now the Executive Office Building, in Washington, D.C., remains one of the prime examples of the style. It has served for so long as a model of bad taste that modern eyes can scarcely see it in its own terms, as a coherent, insistently plastic mass with a distinct personality. The Philadelphia City Hall (1871-81), designed by John McArthur, Jr., has been equally denigrated, perhaps because of the ungainly, out-of-scale tower capped by a gilded statue of William Penn, which was added more than a decade after the building was finished.

The Second Empire style was short-lived. Certainly not many buildings in the style postdate the panic of 1873. Although it was never a major manner in American architecture, two of the earliest skyscrapers in New York City, George Post's Western Union Building (1873-75) and Richard M. Hunt's Tribune Building (1873-75), both sported mansard roofs.

For urban houses the style became common in the late 1850s and remained popular through the mid-1870s, but it had perhaps its most successful and telling effect in suburban domestic architecture, where its sculptural qualities pleased the picturesque taste of the times. It

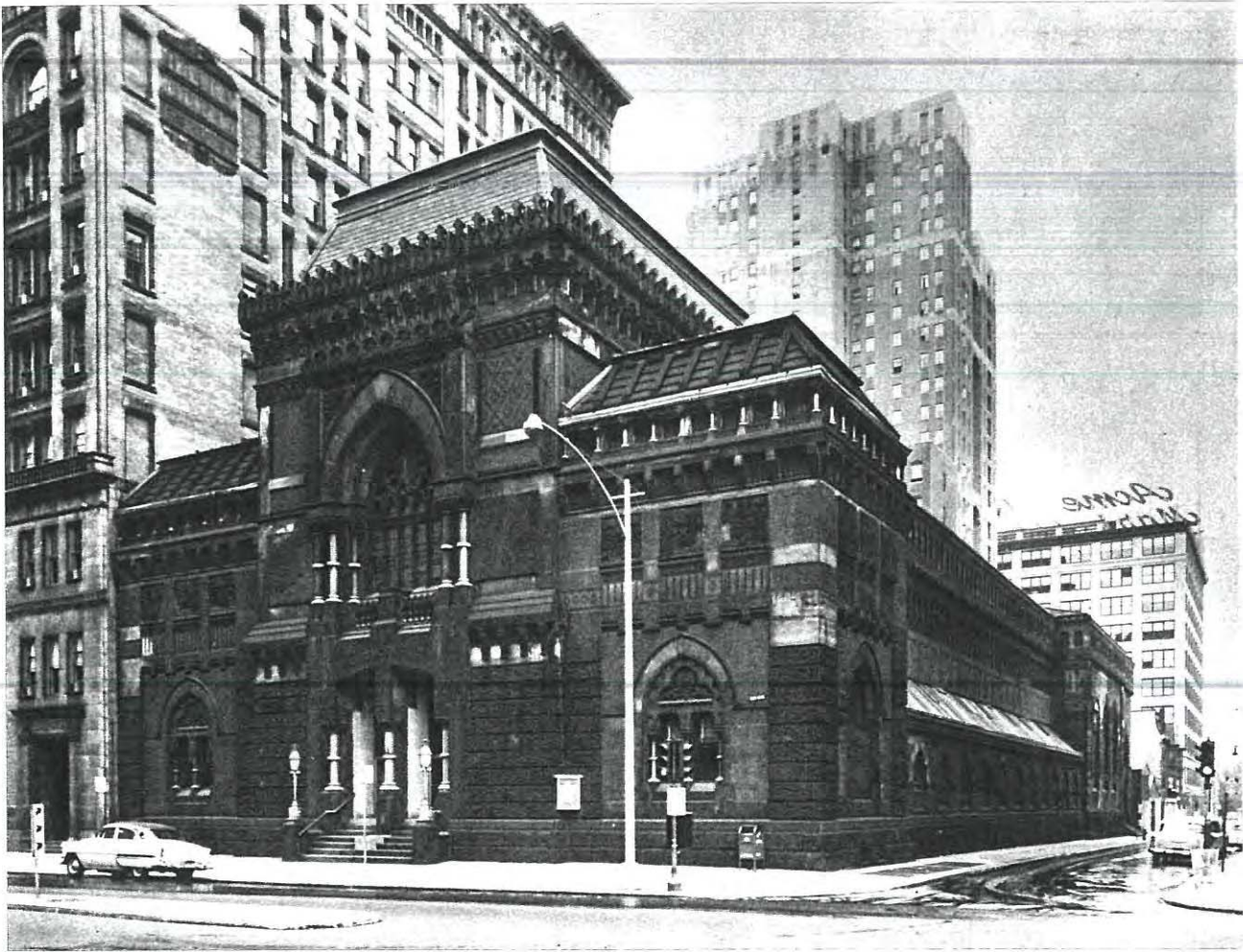
was freely substituted for, and even combined with, the earlier pointed Gothic or flat Italian Villa roofs.

The great resort hotels of the period were among the most original confections of Second Empire style. Splendid hostleries of gargantuan proportions were built in the Catskills, Saratoga, Newport, and Atlantic City. Nothing else quite exemplified the social pretensions and essential instability of the General Grant era as did those giant tinderbox fantasies. Economics, time, and fire doomed the delightful dinosaurs to extinction. Only a few crumbling relics can still be seen in such places as Cape May, N.J., and Block Island, R.I.

#### VICTORIAN GOTHIC

The Gothic Revival continued into the postwar era, although its character was radically altered. The newer, so-called "Victorian Gothic" was the achievement of a new generation influenced by John Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, lauding the English Gothic, and his *Stones of Venice*, in which he shifted allegiance to the Italians. The style, like the Second Empire, was short-lived; absorbed eventually by the Romanesque, it produced few notable monuments.





280 Frank Furness. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. 1872-76

However, a new level of Romantic imaginativeness appeared in the Victorian phase. By emphasizing craft more than structure, Ruskin opened up a range of decorative possibilities. Every inch of the surface became expressive through color, texture, and ornament, producing an often indigestible richness. Victorian Gothic was less a revival style than an imaginative pseudo-Gothic manner in which medieval details were manipulated for picturesque effects. It had no first-rate practitioners, except for Richardson, who converted it to Romanesque, and Frank Furness, who made of it an idiosyncratic personal style. It lent itself most readily to ecclesiastical architecture, as exemplified by Ware & Van Brunt's apogee of the style, Memorial Hall (1870-78, plate 279), Harvard University, a building that is too large to be charming, and not good enough to be important. It was long singled out as a prime example of bad taste, chiefly because the style was out of fashion. It runs the Ruskinian gamut, from plain walls to filigreed spires, banded courses, polychromed tiles, richly textured and vari-

colored masonry, through an extensive repertory of window, roof, and finial forms.

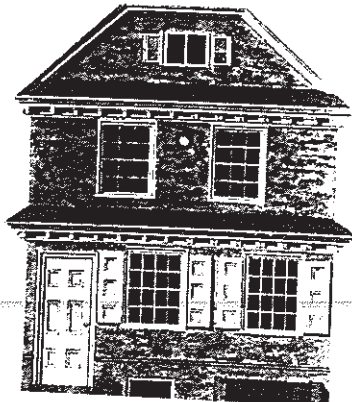
Ruskin's identification with the style may have influenced its use for art museums, as in the old Boston Museum of Fine Arts (1876-78), by John H. Sturgis and Charles Brigham, and the still extant wing of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1878-80) by Calvert Vaux and J. Wray Mould. Academic institutions continued the preference for the Gothic.

Frank Furness (1839-1912) fits somewhere within the Victorian Gothic but not comfortably. An architect of brutal power and perverse originality, he seemed for a long time the epitome of General Grant vulgarity. His first important commission, the new Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1872-76, plate 280), planned for the Centennial Exhibition, was a Ruskin-inspired mélange of materials and textures—rusticated brownstone, dressed sandstone, pink granite columns, red and black brick. In the 1880s Furness designed several banks in Philadelphia. His major commission in the 1890s was the massive en-



Commission  
Buildings Survey  
ce,  
ent

# Philadelphia Preserved



Catalog of  
the Historic American  
Buildings Survey

Richard J. Webster

With an Introduction by  
Charles E. Peterson

Temple University Press  
Philadelphia 1981

World-famous for its acoustics since its opening in January, 1857, the Academy was the work of LeBrun and Runge, who won the architectural competition in 1854.<sup>35</sup> Marble facing was intended for the exterior walls but a shortage of funds caused the directors to postpone this final step,<sup>36</sup> and like so many temporary solutions, it has become permanent. Consequently, the "Old Lady of Locust Street," as the Academy is affectionately known, remains clothed in modest brick. Yet its lavish interior and unsurpassed acoustics make it a suitable home for the Philadelphia Orchestra, one of the world's greatest. Perhaps not as well known but equally significant is the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (illus.) at Broad and Cherry streets, the nation's oldest art school and museum. The Academy is a notable expression of America's High Victorian Gothic and the most important and best-known work of Furness and Hewitt, a Philadelphia architectural partnership that ended in 1875, a year before the Academy's completion.<sup>37</sup> Both men, Frank Furness and George W. Hewitt, continued their energetic work throughout the last quarter of the century in other partnerships. The exterior of the Academy was cleaned in 1966, exposing to even the most casual observer a fascinating variety of forms, materials, and decorations. A restoration project completed in 1976 brought back the same richness to the interior and replaced some missing elements on the front. No nineteenth-century theaters have survived on Broad Street, but an extant example in the area is the former Arch Street Opera-House at 1005 Arch Street. It was rather casually named, since it was originally built in 1870 for minstrelsy, which made its conversion to a burlesque house in 1896 barely noticeable.<sup>38</sup> It now holds the dubious distinction as the oldest if not the only, burlesque theater in Philadelphia, but its long tenure in this barely remunerative enterprise has preserved it from ruinous remodelings. *Clarke*

Clubs and fraternal societies were also part of nineteenth-century social life. The oldest and most prestigious of the city social clubs is the Philadelphia Club at Thirteenth and Walnut streets.<sup>39</sup> Built in 1836 as a city mansion and the club's headquarters since 1850,<sup>40</sup> the building's scale is so great and its condition so pristine that many casual observers mistake it for a twentieth-century example of the Georgian Revival. Architecturally more conspicuous is the Union League of Philadelphia at Broad and Sansom streets. The Union League was founded in 1862 as a semipolitical organization of businessmen and civic leaders who pledged "unqualified loyalty to the government of the United States and unwavering support of its



1850. Extensively enlarged and remodeled c. 1876; Joseph M. Wilson, architect. Front porch removed 1943. Joseph D. Potts, a wealthy steamship and railroad executive lived here 1876-93. Center for foreign students 1918-59; University of Pennsylvania building since 1960. Certified, PHC 1963. 5 ext. photos (1961, including 1 of stable and carriage house, \* 6 int. photos (1961), \* HABSI form (1962). \*

#### St. Agatha's Roman Catholic Church

(PA-1639), 3801 Spring Garden St., at N.W. corner Thirty-eighth St. Brownstone ashlar, approx. 70' (three-bay front) × 150', one story on raised basement, gable roof with cross-gables, three-stage center tower with pinnacles and battlements, three-aisle plan, galleries, apsidal chancel.

Fine High Victorian Gothic design by a leading late-19th-century church architect. Built 1874-78; vacated 1976; Edwin F. Durang, architect. Octagonal spire erected 1882-83, dismantled 1909. Chapel built and church interior altered 1901, one-story rear addition built 1912; Edwin F. Durang, architect. Interior extensively remodeled 1924-26; Maginnis and Walsh (Boston), architects. Roof and top of tower demolished by fire 1966, replaced 1967. Rectory (3813 Spring Garden St.) built 1892; P. Albert Welsh, architect. 2 ext. photos (1973), including 1 color photo, \* 1 photocopy of old ext. lithograph (c. 1880). \*

#### St. Francis De Sales Roman Catholic Church. Illustrated

(PA-1640), 4629-35 Springfield Ave., at N.E. corner Forty-seventh St. Coursed rock-faced limestone ashlar with dressed limestone and marble trim, approx. 90' (three-bay front) × 150', one story with two-story facade, gable roofs, central green, yellow, and white tiled Byzantine dome with arched lantern and four small tiled domes at base, arched parapet between corner octagonal minarets with tiled domes, round-arch windows with engaged columns and hoods, large oculi at second story of each facade, sculpture over round-arch entrances, three-aisle plan, rectangular chancel.

One of America's finest examples of Late Victorian Byzantine architecture. Built 1907-8; Henry D. Dagitt, architect, Melody and Keating, contractors. Sanctuary elements redesigned to conform with eumenical reforms 1968; Venturi and Rauch, architects. 4 ext. photos (1973, including 3 color photos), \* 1 photocopy of architectural drawing (1907). \*

#### St. James Roman Catholic Church

(PA-1641), 3728 Chestnut St., at S.E. corner Thirty-eighth St. Rough-hewn limestone ashlar with marble trim, approx. 67' (three-bay front) × 157', one story on raised basement, gable roof with cross-gables, twin front four-stage towers with pinnacles, rose window, large superimposed pointed-arch entrance, pointed-arch windows, three-aisle plan, apsidal chancel.

Fine example of High Victorian Gothic church. Built 1881-87; Edwin F. Durang, architect. Spire on northeast corner tower removed after 1900; towers altered 1930. 1 ext. photo (1973), \* 1 photocopy of old ext. lithograph (c. 1880, including school), \* 1 photocopy of old ext. photo (c. 1900), \* 1 photocopy of old int. photo (c. 1900), \* 2 data pages (including 1869 insurance survey of school). \*

#### St. Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church, Hamilton Village

(PA-1642), 3916 Locust St. (now closed, known as Locust Walk). Random rough-hewn granite ashlar with limestone trim, approx. 85' × 128' with one-story rough-hewn limestone entrance porch and limestone enclosed cloister leading to rear two-story coursed rough-hewn parish house, one story, polychromatic gable roofs with cross-gables, two-stage square tower with pinnacles and spire at northwest corner, pointed-arch, quatrefoil and trefoil windows, one-story brick addition at southeast corner, three-aisle plan, semihexagonal chancel with notable marble and mosaic high altar, exposed wooden trusses.

Small Gothic Revival suburban church whose architecture and function reflect a century of change in its neighborhood. Built 1872-73; Thomas W. Richards, architect. High altar imported from Rome 1875, exhibited at Centennial Exhibition 1876, installed in chancel 1890. Chancel, western entrance porch built 1890; Charles M. Burns, architect. Parish house built 1897; George Nattress, architect. Tower raised to two stories, spire and terra cotta pinnacles added 1907; Herbert J. Wetherill, architect. Enclosed cloister added, chancel altered c. 1910; parish house renovated after fire damage 1936, renovated 1965; spire removed 1973. Founded 1830 as parent parish of family of Woodlands and was officially incorporated into borough of West Philadelphia 1844. Certified, PHC 1974. 3 ext. photos (1973). \*

#### Tabernacle Presbyterian Church. Illustrated

(PA-1099), 3700 Chestnut St., at S.W. corner Thirty-seventh St. Granite ashlar with limestone trim, approx. 50' (three-bay





# Our Faith-Filled Heritage

The Church of Philadelphia

Bicentennial as a Diocese

1808–2008

THE CHURCH OF  
*Philadelphia*

CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL AS A DIOCESE  
1808–2008







## Far Northeast Philadelphia

1849/1850

When Philadelphia and Bristol were established in the early 1680s, a well-known Native American footpath that paralleled the Delaware River became the route of travel between them. Over the next few decades, a road was created and improved with public funds and called the "King's Highway." This road permitted easy travel for government officials and others between Philadelphia and the Middle Atlantic and New England colonies. After the American Revolution, the road was renamed the "Bristol Turnpike," and later, in Philadelphia, "Frankford Avenue."

A stone bridge was built by the colonial government where the King's Highway crossed Pennypack Creek. As stagecoach travel along the road increased in the early 1800s, the bridge was a logical stopping-off point, and a mill house and several taverns were built in the area. John and George Holme bought large tracts of land and subdivided them for farms and residential tracts. The area became known as Holmesburg and developed rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Shop Kenrick founded the first parish in Holmesburg in 1849, at the same time that other parishes were being established outside the original borders of the City of Philadelphia. Father John Dominic Berrill, O.P., a Dominican priest serving at Old Saint Mary's, named the new parish SAINT DOMINIC, after the patron saint and founder of his Congregation. Mass was celebrated in a little stone house until the first



parish church was dedicated in 1850. This church was destroyed by fire in 1896, and the present church (enlarged in 1957) was dedicated the following year. The parish school, founded in 1874, was entrusted to Immaculate Heart Sisters in 1884, and moved to a new building in 1892.

1897

After Father Berrill was transferred to Saint Stephen's in 1855, the pastors of Saint Dominic's were diocesan priests. The fifth pastor, Father James O'Connor, appointed in 1872, became the spiritual advisor and friend of Katharine Drexel, whose family owned an estate in Torresdale, a short distance away. Father O'Connor was named the Vicar

Apostolic of Nebraska in 1876, and later became the first Bishop of Omaha. There he became familiar with the plight of Native Americans confined to reservations in the Plains states. He shared his concerns with Katharine Drexel, and encouraged her to found the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, dedicated to service among African American and Native American communities.

Saint Dominic's was the only parish in the farther northeastern part of the County—and, after 1854, the City—of Philadelphia. In the middle of the century, Mr. John Williams established a calico-printing fabric mill among the farmlands along Pennypack Creek in the Bustleton neighborhood. To work the mill, he brought Irish immigrants with him from Holmesburg. These Catholic families invited priests from Saint Joachim in Frankford to come to Bustleton for Sunday Mass, and Mr. Williams allowed them to use the mill's engraving room as a worship site.

This little mission was the beginning of the parish of the MATERNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, founded in 1870 on a plot of land donated by Mr. Williams. When the work day was over, the mill workers volunteered their labor to build a small stone chapel, dedicated in December of that year on Bustleton Avenue. A new school building, containing a chapel as well, was dedicated in 1949, and Sisters of Mercy arrived to staff the school. The present church was dedicated in 1964.