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UMI
BUILDING A BAROQUE CATHOLICISM: 
THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCHES OF EDWIN FORREST DURANG

By

Gregory William Oliveri

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Early American Culture.

Summer 1999

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ABSTRACT

Edwin Forrest Durang emerged after the Civil War as the single-most prolific architect of Roman Catholic buildings in Philadelphia. Between 1866 and 1902 Durang designed twenty Roman Catholic churches and renovated or rebuilt at least ten others in Philadelphia; with seventy-two parishes established in Philadelphia by 1900 the number is significant. Despite this astonishingly active architectural practice Durang has not figured prominently in the architectural history of the city. While this is due in part to the lack of surviving drawings and business papers and to Durang's absence from professional organizations such as the AIA, it is also a symptom of the general lack of scholarship on the material culture of Roman Catholics in America.

During the first half of the 19th century the transformation of industry and the development of transportation in cities such as Philadelphia attracted immigrants in search of opportunity. Many Catholics, mostly Irish and German, settled in Philadelphia because of an already prominent Catholic presence. Philadelphia had been unique in British North America for fostering the first permanent public place of Catholic worship and continued to attract Catholic immigrants through the 19th century. The Irish had come to Philadelphia as early as the 1830s and were later joined by German, Italian, and Eastern European Catholics. Most churches built for newly established parishes were humble structures but as parish membership grew churches were rebuilt on more ambitious plans drawn up by architects such as Durang.
The following essay places Durang and his churches in the context of Catholic history in Philadelphia while delineating changes in Catholic devotional practice that would have specific architectural implications. The Counter-Reformation revival that began to take place during the first quarter of the 19th century catalyzed a dramatic shift in Catholic piety. A return to a rigorous outward devotionalism, or so-called baroque Catholicism, would influence the way in which church buildings were imagined. Thus, while the lack of surviving business papers and drawings places certain limitations on understanding Durang the architect, his churches reveal much about the nature of 19th century American Catholicism. A chronology of Durang’s Philadelphia churches has been included.
Introduction

The architecture firm of Edwin Forrest Durang dominated Roman Catholic building activity in Philadelphia between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century. Durang was the single-most prolific architect of Catholic churches in Philadelphia during this period; by 1900 he had designed or renovated at least one third of the city’s 72 Roman Catholic parish churches. Engendered by a baroque Catholic piety, these churches express the largely urban nature of Catholic growth in America during the 19th century. From the 1840s the founding and building of Catholic parish churches kept pace with a growing influx of Catholic immigrants seeking work in America’s newly industrializing cities; as immigrants settled near employment, Church authorities established parishes to meet their spiritual needs. In Philadelphia, Roman Catholic churches and parish buildings had an especially significant role in structuring its burgeoning fabric. Looking back at Durang through the lens of his Philadelphia church commissions may reveal only an incomplete portrait of the architect (figure 1), but the extant majority of Durang’s city churches testifies to the contribution of Catholic piety in the life and fabric of an industrializing city (figure 2).

Scholarship on Roman Catholic architecture in 19th century America is almost nonexistent. References to “a Catholic architecture” exist in the standard social histories
of Catholicism in North America but these are useful only in making generalizations and
tend to overlook the specifics of place or individual architects. ¹ Peter Williams’
magisterial *Houses of God* attempts an encyclopedic summary of all sacred architecture in
the United States utilizing region rather than religious denomination as the overall
organizing rubric. Williams’ aim is to present a total picture, and detail is thus sacrificed
to the greater general sketch. Scholars such as Phoebe Stanton have approached Roman
Catholic architecture and the interpretation of style, but primarily in the context of
understanding its impact on the development of an appropriate Protestant Gothic
expression.² A biographical dictionary of Catholic architects, *Architects in America of
Catholic Tradition* published in 1962, is a useful but incomplete compendium of
biographical sketches.

“New historicism” combined with a renewed interest in urbanism during the
1970s generated some scholarship on Catholics in 19th century Philadelphia, but none
attempted to interpret the most prominent artifact Catholics would build in the city, the
parish church.³ These scholars emphasize the study of patterns of settlement and urban
expansion as immigrants flocked to the city in hopes of gainful employment.

¹ Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History From Colonial Times
This continues to serve as an excellent overview of Catholicism in North America.

² Phoebe Stanton, *The Gothic Revival & American Church Architecture*,

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The most recent attempts to present American Catholic architecture have been organized and published by the scholarly journal *US Catholic Historian*. Recognizing the uncharted territory of research in the interpretation of Catholic architecture the journal sought recently to redress this void by dedicating an entire issue to religious architecture. These preliminary forays into an area largely neglected by architectural historians is long overdue and it is hoped that this paper too will contribute to a greater understanding of an important contributor to a distinctly American manifestation of Roman Catholic church architecture.

The Roman Catholic churches of Philadelphia designed by Edwin Forrest Durang span a period from 1866 to 1902 and correspond roughly with a second phase of Catholic settlement in the city that began in the late 1830s. Philadelphia’s first Catholic churches were constructed before the Revolutionary War and reflect the small population of the early Catholics. Philadelphia is unique in British North America as having fostered the first permanent public place of Catholic worship and would continue to attract Catholic immigrants after the revolution. During the first half of the 19th century the transformation of industry and transportation taking place in cites such as Philadelphia

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represented a powerful magnet to immigrants. Large numbers of Irish immigrants came
to Philadelphia as early as the 1830s transforming the nature of the Catholic community
in the city. Most of these parishes’ first churches were humble structures; as
parishioners achieved some modicum of financial success parishes grew and churches
were rebuilt on more ambitious plans. Many of the churches Durang would later design
were for parishes established during this period of immigration. Before examining the
Roman Catholic church commissions of Durang, a word on the history of Catholics in
Philadelphia.⁵

Four Philadelphia Churches: The Founding Parishes

While John Adams in 1765 declared that “Roman Catholics are as scarce as
comets” in New England, one might have more easily encountered them in the mid-
Atlantic.⁶ Catholics were present in Maryland and New York toward the end of the 17th
century but many soon fled to Philadelphia to enjoy the religious protection of Penn’s
Charter and the gentle rule of the Quakers. By 1720, the Catholic community in
Philadelphia would include settlers who had come directly from England, Germans from
the Rhineland and Bavaria, French, and some Irish who came as bondservants. This
ethnic mix, with Irish and Germans predominating, would remain largely intact through

⁵ The parish histories often reveal rich histories of each parish and more often
than not chronicle the history of church building campaigns.

⁶ Kirlin, Joseph L. J., Catholicity in Philadelphia from the Earliest
the middle of the 19th century when it was augmented by the arrival of Italians, Poles, and, after 1880, Eastern Europeans.7

Before the heirs of Lord Baltimore and William Penn had settled the territorial boundaries between Maryland and Pennsylvania in 1732, no Catholic place of public worship was constructed in the city. Maryland claimed, by the terms of its charter, that its boundaries extended along a 15 mile-wide strip into southern Pennsylvania including the city of Philadelphia. The laws of Maryland forbade the construction of Catholic churches and thus, as long as the dispute remained unresolved, the city’s first Catholic pastor, Father Joseph Greaton, S.J., celebrated mass among Philadelphia’s nascent Catholic community in so-called “chappells,” really the private homes of the faithful.8

After 1733, finally free from the Maryland interdictions, Father Greaton acquired a lot at Walnut and Fourth and by the end of the year dedicated a plain two-story brick church in the name of his patron, St. Joseph. St. Joseph’s Church, now off Willing’s Alley in Philadelphia, the oldest surviving public Catholic sanctuary erected in British North America, would mark the beginning of a public Catholic presence in the city. As the city’s population grew the protection of Penn’s Charter continued to draw Catholics from less tolerant places. By 1763 Philadelphia’s second Catholic church, St. Mary’s, was built to accommodate the increasing number of Catholics in the city. Although religious practice was legally protected, anti-Catholic sentiment persisted even in

Philadelphia; St. Mary’s was attacked during its erection and the placement of sentries was required until its completion.9

The Revolution brought about important administrative changes to the Church in America. Catholics in the English colonies had been under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic10 of London but during the war communication was impossible. During this time, priests were obliged to obtain from the Bishop of Santiago the Holy Oils necessary for administering the sacraments. By 1789, Rev. John Carroll S.J., then Prefect Apostolic, petitioned the Pope for establishment of an episcopal see in the United States.11 The request was granted and Carroll was unanimously elected as first Bishop of the United States. Philadelphia might have been a fitting choice for the site of the episcopal seat, having been the first city where the Church was granted absolute freedom, but Baltimore was ultimately chosen, “this being the principal town of Maryland and that State being the oldest and still the most numerous residence of our religion in America.”12

8 Kirlin, Catholicity in Philadelphia, 34.

9 Ibid., 94.

10 A titular bishop who administers a region that is not yet a diocese as a representative of the Holy See.

11 The Prefect Apostolic is the recognized head of a mission. After the close of the Revolutionary War the Church in America remained only a “mission” without its own jurisdictional structure.
Bishop Carroll presided over the Church in America during the so-called “Catholic Enlightenment.” Toward the end of the 18th century leading Catholic intellectuals “attempted to bridge the ever-widening gap between the Roman Catholic Church and the social and intellectual forces of the Enlightenment.”\textsuperscript{13} Carroll embraced the writings of mostly English Catholic thinkers who were striving to maintain the relevance of Catholicism in the context of the Age of Reason. In America the acceptance of the separation of church and state among Catholics was perhaps the most important issue that stemmed from the movement. The Catholic Enlightenment also gave rise to the application of reason and intelligibility in the performance of religious ceremonies; for a time this meant advocating the use of vernacular languages in the performance of the mass and framing the celebration of the Eucharist as the single most important expression of Catholic piety. The spirit of republicanism too animated the nature of Catholicism during this period and early experiments with congregational parishes and trustee systems could be found in the administration of individual church government.

The Enlightenment view of the individual was a positive one, affirming each person’s unique access to the Spirit and the supernatural. Joseph Chinnici has suggested that, as a result of this positive conception, “the necessity of structures, the mediation of the Hierarchical Church and the saints and external religious behavior (e.g. baroque

\textsuperscript{12} Whitemarsh Clerical Committee cited by Kirlin, \textit{Catholicity in Philadelphia}, 131.

\textsuperscript{13} Dolan, \textit{The American Catholic Experience}, 108.
devotionalism) did not play a preponderant role.\textsuperscript{14} While contemporary accounts reveal that paintings, crucifixes, and portable stations of the Cross were used, it appears that the churches built during this period were plain style structures in keeping with those of other denominations; emphasis on the primacy of the altar as the site for reenacting the Eucharistic miracle was the primary element that set a Catholic church apart from a Protestant one.

After the Revolutionary War a number of German Catholics from St. Joseph's, where services were held both in English and in German, formed their own church under the trustees of the "German Religious Society of Roman Catholics called the Church of Holy Trinity in the city of Philadelphia." Architecturally, both St. Mary's and Holy Trinity were sober brick affairs, "substantial but severely plain in interior and exterior." They conformed to the tradition of east-west orientation, the altar being placed at the eastern end. The establishment of Holy Trinity was America's first so-called "national" parish; language and ethnicity, not territorial boundaries, determined the parish's founding.\textsuperscript{15}

As the city grew north and west from its nucleus along the western shores of the Delaware, a fourth church was established in order to provide a place of worship for the Catholic residents of this northward expansion. The parish of St. Augustine was founded in 1796 and its church was dedicated on June 7, 1801. Due to site constraints, the design

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 122.
for St. Augustine’s departed from the norm by placing the altar in the west rather than
the east. The church was designed and built by Michael Fagan and was in the
“Romanesque” style, 62 feet wide, 125 feet long, with walls 40 feet high.\textsuperscript{16}

In a pattern that would later become typical of Catholic church building, and
would have a significant bearing on the way in which they were designed, St. Augustine’s
was finished in stages over a period of years. This phased construction was due to the
nature of financing the building of Catholic churches. Funds came from donations given in
the form of subscriptions by parishioners, and from fairs organized to supplement this
fundraising. Most commonly, churches were completed over a period of years and
successive fundraising drives were necessary to finance discreet phases. The facade of St.
Augustine’s church was completed as late as 1826. In 1829 the congregation added a 75-
foot high tower. The following year saw the installation of a clock and bell from
Independence Hall.

The first four Catholic churches of the city were, from the start, embedded in its
fabric. They were prominent city landmarks, and along with the churches of other
religious sects, demonstrate the level of religious pluralism that was the legacy of Penn’s
charter. Catholic parishioners, whether of English, French, German, or Irish ancestry,
were often successful merchants, artisans, and prominent citizens of the city. They had

\textsuperscript{15} Kirlin, \textit{Catholicity in Philadelphia}, 123.

\textsuperscript{16} Romanesque at this early date most likely denoted the Palladian derived from
the designs of Wren and Gibbs.
little more than a different religious affiliation to set them apart from their Protestant neighbors. Some of the Irish notables of the American Revolution, such as Gen. Stephen Moylan, Thomas FitzSimons and Commodore John Barry, were members of these parishes and undoubtedly contributed to the success of the subscriptions necessary to build these early churches (figure 3).

**Urban Expansion and the Irish Poor**

If in this city... there is any such thing as realized, working Christianity, it may be seen in one of its poor, densely peopled Catholic parishes, where all is dreary, dismal desolation, excepting alone the sacred enclosure around the church, where a bright interior cheers the leisure hours; where pictures, music, and stately ceremonial exalt the poor about their lot; and where a friend and father can ever be found.18

After the establishment of St. Augustine's in 1796 there was a pause in parish expansion until 1831 with the founding of St. John the Baptist's in Manayunk. Until the influx of new Irish immigrants in the 1830s, the Catholic population of the city had remained relatively static. This new wave of Irish immigration necessitated the founding of parishes in and around the city during the 1830s and 40s. While Germans continued to be a major part of the Catholic presence in the city the Irish dominated with 13 new parishes where German Catholics established only 2. By 1850 a sizable Italian population had also developed in Philadelphia and an Italian national parish was established in South

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established in South Philadelphia in 1852. From the mid-century the proportion of immigrants to the total population would reach its highest just as the rate of urbanization peaked. That the Irish occupied an important place is clear; in 1850 there were 72,312 Irish-born in the county of Philadelphia, or 18% of its total population. By 1860 there were 95,458, or 17%. While the percentage of Irish-born residents of the city would drop to 4% by 1910, the Irish remained the single largest foreign-born group in the city and those of Irish descent dominated the Catholic Church there.\textsuperscript{19}

The distribution of new parishes was determined by several factors. The working poor who inhabited the low-income residential districts that began to fringe the periphery of the old city made up a majority of the communicants of these new parishes. The establishment of parishes was not only a matter of convenience but one of necessity; religious practice for many was not a matter of choice but of obligation. It was therefore imperative to establish churches within a reasonable walking distance of residential areas. Ten of the 15 churches built from 1831 to 1850 were constructed within areas where housing expansion is recorded for the period. The development of rail lines in and out of the city also made possible the establishment of 6 churches at major routes out of the city. Six were located at the periphery of the residential expansion between the Delaware and the Schuykill. Many of the immigrants found work at the docks in Southwark,

\textsuperscript{19}James Parton in an 1868 edition of the Atlantic Monthly cited by Chinnici, 58.
Schuylkill, and Port Richmond. The parishes of St. Philip, St. Patrick & St. Xavier, and St. Anne, were established in these areas to serve their needs. The potato famine of 1846-47 caused another wave of Irish poor to immigrate. These were absorbed by the peripheral slums of the city, the proliferating manufacturing areas, and outlying railroad building sites where parishes had already been or soon would be established.20

The architecture of these pioneer parishes is a testament to the relative poverty of the communities they served. The simple frame and masonry churches, built with the limited donations of a poor laity, nonetheless marked an area’s identity and often presaged later residential construction. As members of the parish ascended the economic ladder the kind of richly detailed masonry churches Durang would later become known for replaced these humble structures. The process of architectural design for these early churches is poorly understood, but it is clear that some parishes sought the expertise of architects. Surprisingly Napoleon Le Brun, better known for his designs for the Roman Catholic Cathedral and other prominent public buildings in Philadelphia, designed a humble church in Port Richmond.21 Durang is known to have designed the largest frame church of its time for the parish of St. Columba. Contemporary accounts in parish


21 St. Anne’s first parish church. Despite its modest pretensions the church was noted in local papers as among the finest minor edifices of the city.
histories suggest that most of the early frame structures were built in a spare Gothic style, some with simple colored-glass windows. There is, however, every indication that these were generally perceived from the start as temporary, built to serve the immediate needs of the community while funds could be raised for the building of more permanent structures (figure 4).

Baroque Catholicism

By the beginning of this second period of parish expansion a sea change in Catholicism had taken place. A shift toward European practice and an increasing deference to Rome in the management of church affairs had become the norm. By the 1830s the resurgence of a strictly Latin liturgy took precedence over the use of vernacular languages in any rites; English and other languages were thus used only for the purposes of preaching. The reasons for these shifts from the patterns that had emerged during the period of Enlightenment Catholicism are partly explained by the increasing episcopal fear of disunion of the American Church from Rome, and the very delicate challenge of establishing episcopal, and thus Papal, authority in the context of American Republicanism. The lack of American seminaries and the resultant need to import priests from Europe would also have a profound effect on the nature of Catholic practice in America. Europeans themselves were experiencing a revival of Counter-Reformation

22 Almost invariably, the frame churches are described in parish histories as being constructed with the anticipated goal of establishing more permanent buildings. Once the erection of more permanent structures was under way, many of these early frame
Catholicism in response to renewed anti-Catholic rhetoric on the continent; priests trained in this context would help shape the emergence of a new kind of Catholic worship in the United States. This new piety was based on “a traditional European model of Roman Catholicism grounded in a monarchical view of authority, moral rigorism, elaborate devotionalism, and an exaggerated loyalty to the Papacy.”

Where the piety of Enlightenment Catholicism emphasized a personal and interior spirituality the so-called baroque Catholicism of this Counter-Reformation revival dwelled on a pessimistic view of the person that engendered an outward system of worship. The mediating role of priests and sacraments, and the outward expression of piety through devotions and confessions thus became necessities. Altars dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary, and the placement of the stations of the Cross were the most visible forms of this devotionalism. The popular appeal was due in great part to the efforts of leaders such as Bishop John Neumann of Philadelphia who passionately advocated such devotions and would initiate practices such as the Forty Hours devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

The material changes that this shift in piety would eventually bring about is illustrated by the descriptions of American churches by immigrant priests during the first structures were either reused as school buildings, or sold to poorer congregations of various denominations and moved off-site.

\[23\] Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 120.

\[24\] Ibid., 122.
few decades of the 19th century. Many lamented the lack of ornament or decoration in American churches as they compared them to richly ornamented continental churches. In 1821 Father Stephen Badin created a vivid laundry-list of the requisite trappings of this baroque piety in his mournful description of a church in Kentucky which lacked, "chalices, ciboriums, crucifixes, vestments, and church ornaments, altar pictures-in fact, everything relating to divine service." One European Jesuit described American churches as "unpretending structures, without ornament... with galleries all around the inside in order to have more room and the organ, if they possess one, over the main entrance, and they have only one altar. Behind or alongside the altar, there is a small sacristy, in which confessions are heard, and it is provided with a fireplace." While the immigrant priests of this early period saw the plain style religion as a deficient piety to be corrected, it actually represented the ethos of Enlightenment Catholicism. That both systems existed simultaneously for some time is clear. By mid-century however a baroque Counter-Reformation Catholicism with its attendant emphasis on an exaggerated devotionalism would dominate American Catholic practice.²⁵

American Nativism in Philadelphia

Increased immigration to the city of Philadelphia during the decades of the 1830s and 1840s coincided and contributed to American nativist activism. The anti-Catholic rhetoric of the American nativists, fueled by a desire to cope with the increasing

²⁵ Ibid., 208.
"complexity of political and economic reality in Jacksonian society," was directed in Philadelphia primarily at the Irish. The conflict was based on religious and cultural divisions embodied by an increasingly hierarchical Roman Catholic church, as well as the economic competition that separated the immigrant Catholic Irish of Philadelphia from their Protestant native-born neighbors. Ultimately, the tide of immigrants into Philadelphia came to represent a threat to the old economic order. In an atmosphere that lent itself to hysteria, latent anti-Catholic sentiment revived, suspicions of Papal designs to usurp American sovereignty circulated in Nativist literature, and paranoia surfaced in violence.

In early May of 1844 several thousand angry Protestant nativists descended on an Irish Catholic neighborhood in Kensington, an industrial suburb at the northeast edge of the city. There they battled with the local residents for two days. The first of two riots

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27 The rise of nativism coincided with the rise in episcopal and papal authority. Modern historiography has emphasized economic and religious conflict, but the reality seems more subtle. Just as the Holy Alliance crushed anticlerical sentiment in Republican France, nativists justified their fears of monarchy in a resurgent Catholic hierarchicalism and sought to suppress not just economic competition but political threats to individual rights.

28 Feldberg in his *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844* attempts to map out the class, occupational, cultural, and political differences that led to the riots. His work presents a more nuanced understanding of the conflict than what has traditionally been understood as a conflict of religious world-views. While the controversy over the use of the Vulgate
to take place during that year, it left 20 people dead, more than one hundred injured, and
dozens of homes ransacked or burned. The first day of rioting consisted mainly of street
skirmishes and the selective destruction of Irish homes. On the second day the
destruction would be fraught with a more vicious symbolism; by nightfall both St.
Michael’s and St. Augustine’s churches were burned.29

Ignoring what many had interpreted as a prophetic sign, the sobering survival of
the motto “The Lord Seeth” emblazoned over the blackened remains of St. Augustine’s
altar wall, Native American supporters celebrated the “victory” of such destruction by
planning for further demonstrations to take place on July 4th. About 4500
demonstrators rallied at Chestnut Street on July 4th and marched toward Fairmont with
banners displaying allegories that depicted the Catholic church as a serpent menacingly
twisted around the United States flag. Guards stationed themselves at Philadelphia’s
Catholic churches in anticipation of nativist attacks but conflict would not emerge until
the next day. Toward midnight on July 5th nativists stormed St. Philip’s church accusing
the guards of stockpiling arms. Eventually, order was restored by General Cadwalader
who prevailed upon the demonstrators and defenders of the church to relinquish their
battle, but only after two days of protracted maneuvering and thwarted arson attempts

bible in the public schools catalyzed the conflict, the insecurities wrought by a changing
economic and social order were at its root.

29 That the Irish were the specific targets of the nativists’ anti-Catholic ire was
made poignantly clear by the fact that the newly established St. Peter the Apostle

17
on the church was a tenuous peace maintained. A military presence of about 5000
troops was retained in the city through the end of the month, and while there were no
further scenes of violence, fourteen people were dead and fifty wounded in this second
period of conflict. Ultimately, the events of 1844 repudiated the credibility of the
nativists; they were, for years to come, disparaged as “church-burners.”

The Philadelphia Cathedral

It is perhaps no coincidence that Philadelphia’s third bishop, the Irish-born
Francis Patrick Kenrick, expressed his intentions to build a Cathedral for the diocese of
Philadelphia only two years after the nativist frenzy swept over the city. In a pastoral
letter dated June 29, 1846 the Bishop announced plans to erect a Cathedral on Logan
Square in order to provide “Professors and Students the opportunity of practising the
sacred ceremonies, and to give to the episcopal functions the becoming solemnity.”
The Cathedral was to be dedicated in the names of Saints Peter and Paul, an appropriate
reference to the “rock” of the church and the “apostle of the Gentiles.” In the context of
the vehement anti-Catholic sentiment embodied by the attack and destruction of Catholic
churches, the construction of a Cathedral in the city carried great symbolic significance.

Plans for a cathedral apparently predate the riots; as early as 1841 a local paper described

Church, a German Catholic church, was spared by the mob as they rushed from the
smoldering ruins of St. Michael’s church to torch the church of St. Augustine.


31 Bishop Kenrick, June 29, 1846.
plans for a two-hundred-thousand-dollar Gothic cathedral evocative of the “the York-Minster in England.” Given the intervening nativist unrest it is no surprise that Bishop Kenrick waited until 1846 to announce official plans.

No records of a design competition or a discussion of the choice of style appear to have survived. The commission was awarded to Napoleon Le Brun, a French Catholic Philadelphian who had apprenticed with Thomas Ustick Walter. Le Brun designed some of the newly established parish churches of the 1840s, and the plans for rebuilding St. Augustine’s Church. Le Brun’s churches of this period were often severe essays in the Greek and Italian Revival styles. The flat pilasters and pediments, and spare free-span interiors which characterize Le Brun’s early churches stand in marked contrast to the brooding richness of the completed Cathedral. Typically basilican in plan with narthex, nave, and railed sanctuary, these early churches nonetheless embody an abstract rationality more reminiscent of Walter’s austere Greek Revival than the romantic mysteries of a continental church interior.

In order to oversee the design process Bishop Kenrick formed a committee on architecture by appointing Fathers Mariano Maller and John B. Tomatore who had both

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33 Le Brun’s Catholic commissions include St. Philip Neri Church, 1840-41, St. Patrick’s Church, 1841, St. Peter the Apostle Church, 1844, St. Anne’s Church, 1845, St. Augustine’s Church, 1847-48, and possibly St. Michael’s Church c. 1845.
studied architecture before ordination.\textsuperscript{34} The design concept for the Cathedral allegedly originated with Maller and Tornatore who turned to Le Brun to draw up the plans.\textsuperscript{35} While local church historians traditionally attribute authorship for the cathedral to the Fathers, it is more likely that the plans represented a collaborative effort based upon suggestions by the bishop. It is unclear how common this collaborative process was for the designs of later churches, but given the relative importance of the Cathedral, the formation of a building committee of some architectural sophistication would ensure a level of episcopal control over the pre-eminent symbol of Catholics in the city.\textsuperscript{36}

The design for the Cathedral would prove paradigmatic for later Catholic churches in the city, crystallizing a type that, in many aspects, had already found expression in the earlier work of Le Brun. According to a brief prepared by Le Brun, the Cathedral would be:

- parallelogrammic in its external form, and cruciform internally. It is 130 feet wide at the front, and 216 long. The front will be simple, yet majestic in appearance. In the centre is a projecting screen of four Doric coupled columns, projecting two-thirds of their diameter, and crowned by a pediment with the name JEHOVAH in the centre, surrounded by a glory, occupying the interior of the tympanum. At the

\textsuperscript{34} Where they studied is not known, but it appears that they were familiar with the Palladian revival taking place in Europe at the time. To whom authorship can be assigned is also unclear. Typically self-laudatory in tone, Church histories give most credit to the Fathers Maller and Tornatore implying that Le Brun worked merely as a draughtsman.


\textsuperscript{36} The Gesu Church at 18th & Stiles Streets, described by some as Durang’s Philadelphia masterpiece, is apparently the product of such collaboration.
The elaborate statuary program and ambitious campanile notwithstanding, the basic elements of a typical Catholic church are present: monumental street facade, basilican plan with nave, side aisles, transept, and tripartite sanctuary (figure 5).

As work progressed, the Diocesan Building Committee, apparently dissatisfied with Le Brun, dismissed him as architect in 1851 and appointed John Notman to the project. The campaign was continually plagued by a lack of funds; periodically the Catholic Register published letters from the Bishop reminding Philadelphia parishioners of their responsibility to contribute to its completion. To add further delay to the enterprise, Notman left in 1857 and John T. Mahony and John E. Carver carried on the
project until 1861 when Le Brun returned to complete the brownstone building. The management of the project by other architects would complicate the realization of the design as described in Le Brun’s 1846 brief. While basic elements of the interior must have been fixed during the first years of construction Notman apparently considerably reworked the facade. Where Le Brun had intended a screen of Doric columns, Notman used Corinthian. Notman eliminated Le Brun’s elaborate statuary program and campanile, planning instead to erect round corner towers. Ultimately, Notman’s scheme was never carried to completion and the rounded front corners with coupled Corinthian columns remain towerless. On November 20, 1864, eighteen years after the dedication of its cornerstone, the Cathedral was consecrated (figure 6).

The construction of the Cathedral was the most visible and costly building campaign that the Diocese had undertaken and unprecedented in richness and scale. Its completion represented the establishment of an ideal by which consequent church projects would be measured. In contrast to the Gothic and Lombard Romanesque revival churches that Protestant congregations built during the 1840s and 1850s, the Diocesan

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38 The chronology is unclear. Cohen, in an entry for Carver in Drawing Toward Building, states that Carver supervised work on the Cathedral during Le Brun’s second association with the project. Carver died in 1859 and Le Brun is believed to have returned to finish the Cathedral in 1861. Either Carver worked in partnership with Mahony on the Cathedral or Le Brun’s return was earlier than believed. In either case, Carver’s involvement corresponds with Durang’s employment in his office. Durang may have in fact worked on the Cathedral at this time as statements in his obituaries describe the execution of his plans for the Cathedral. It appears that these initial contacts with Diocesan officials lead to the development of Durang’s ecclesiastical practice.
Building Committee ultimately chose the “pure Roman style” for the cathedral thus reinforcing its authority for Catholics in the city. The Cathedral was not the first and only neo-Palladian church to be built in the city, but observers could not have mistaken the building’s stylistic obeisance to the authority and pre-eminence of Rome. Perhaps more significant was the authority of the plan which embodied a norm from which later churches would inevitably draw. The Latin cruciform plan with a “parallelogrammic” exterior aspect, the expression of a narthex, and the specific inclusion of side altars at either side of the sanctuary would be repeated in even the most humble churches. The axial tension of the monumental street facade and interior sanctuary, necessitated by the elaborate ritual processions required by the baroque Catholic revival, would also find expression in more humble Catholic churches. Finally, Durang, and later Catholic church architects, would utilize top lighting at the apse to emphasize the Eucharistic miracle.

The Mantle is Passed: Edwin Forrest Durang

After the completion of the Cathedral and the end of the Civil War Napoleon Le Brun disappeared from the architectural scene in Philadelphia. The breach of faith expressed in Le Brun by his early dismissal from the Cathedral may have eliminated any

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40 Le Brun’s St. Augustine’s might have been the first expression of the Italianate for Roman Catholics. Joseph Koeker’s St. Vincent De Paul’s Roman Catholic Church of 1849-51 is a restrained example of the Italianate with a Greek cross plan. Joseph Hoxie’s West Arch Street Presbyterian Church of 1855 has a rich Italianate interior and his Italianate Fourth Baptist Church of 1853-55 (now demolished) was also notable.
future prospects for significant work in the Diocese. After Le Brun departed Philadelphia, Durang emerged as an independent architect of Catholic churches in the city. Durang’s early life and the details of his association with Philadelphia Diocesan architecture are not fully understood, but it appears that Durang’s partnership with the architect John E. Carver during his supervision of construction of the Cathedral established a connection with Diocesan officials. This contact with Church officials combined with the apparent vacuum left by Carver’s death in 1859 and Le Brun’s departure after the completion of the Cathedral would be fortuitous for Durang.

Durang came from a prominent Franco-German Catholic family with a long and well-known Philadelphia history. Edwin Forrest was the great-grandson of Jacob Durang who had served as surgeon in the De Waldner Regiment of the French Army during the reign of Louis XV. Upon his discharge in 1767 Jacob married Catherine Arter of Vizenbourg in Alsace-on-the-Rhine and sailed on the ship “Sally” from Rotterdam to England and ultimately on to Philadelphia. Like many other German speaking immigrants, Jacob and Catherine settled in Lancaster where Catherine Durang had a sister and brother-in-law. It was in Lancaster that Edwin Forrest’s grandfather John was born in 1768. Jacob Durang bought property in York near Lancaster but apparently soon

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41 Le Brun would reappear in 1870 in New York where the firm of Le Brun and Sons established a reputation for civic buildings. There Le Brun would later take up a leadership role in that city’s chapter of the American Institute of Architects.
settled in Philadelphia; a contribution of 25 pounds by Jacob Durang for “building additional Pews and Galleries and for improving and ornamenting” is listed in the Minute Book of 1782 of St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church. From 1787 - 1791 Jacob Durang rented a pew in the north gallery of the church at 30 shillings per year.43

Edwin Forrest’s grandfather John has been described by theatre historians as the first American-born stage performer. The marriage registers of Philadelphia’s St. Joseph’s Church record his marriage to fellow thespian Mary McEwen on January 25, 1787. In 1792, a year after the birth of Edwin Forrest’s father Charles, John Durang formed a company of actors with Charles Bussalot, and through the first decade of the 19th century toured Pennsylvania, Maryland, and parts of Virginia, gradually assembling the first troupe of American stage performers. John Durang died on March 29, 1822 and is buried in Holy Trinity Church cemetery.44

During the War of 1812 Edwin Forrest’s father Charles and his uncle Ferdinand enlisted to participate in the defense of Ft. McHenry, Baltimore, and marched in the company of Captain Thomas Walker from York. During the early winter of 1814, while the words of Francis Scott Key’s poem about the bombardment of Ft. McHenry were in the air, Charles and Ferdinand allegedly led the first public performance in Baltimore of

42 The following account is derived largely from an unpublished *Durang Family History* written by Edwin Forrest’s grand-daughter, Edwina Hare. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania retains a copy of this history.

43 Cited by Edwina Hare in the unpublished *Durang Family History*, n.p.
what would become the national anthem. On August 16th, 1816 Charles married Edwin Forrest’s mother, Mary White, actress and daughter of an Irishman, at Falling Spring Church in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Through the 1840s Charles carried on his father’s legacy by working as an actor, director, and prompter at such Philadelphia landmarks as the Chestnut Street Theater and the American Theater. Charles Durang is absent from the Philadelphia directories for the greater part of the 1820s and 1830s but appears during the late 1840s as a dancing master at 4 different addresses. 45 He retired from the stage in 1853. Charles died on February 17, 1870 and is buried at Holy Trinity Church cemetery. Mary Durang died on September 10, 1880 and, while funeral services were held at St. Jude’s Roman Catholic Church, is buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery. 46

Durang’s own beginnings elude the historian. Edwin Forrest was one of ten children, two of whom died in childhood. Edwina Hare gives April 1, 1829 as Edwin Forrest’s birthdate but her source is not indicated. This date conflicts with the date of 1825 inferred from Durang’s obituaries, as well as with the date of 1839 that Durang himself is known to have used. The peripatetic lifestyle of his parents may explain the difficulty of determining his date, and even place, of birth. While birth years of 1825 and 1829 do not correspond neatly with Edwina Hare’s birth chronology of Edwin Forrest’s

44 Ibid., n.p.

45 Both Mary and Charles Durang were later locally celebrated for their popular writing; Mary published several children’s books and Charles maintained a much acclaimed newspaper serial on Philadelphia’s early theater demimonde.

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siblings, either is more likely than 1839. During 1846 and 1847 Durang is listed in the Philadelphia directories, at the same address as his father, as an artist. 1839, a date Durang used in promotional literature late in his career, would make Durang a seven-year-old artist in 1846; 1825 or 1829 are thus more likely, making the young artist a more plausible 21 or 17 in 1846.47

Durang does not appear in the Philadelphia directories again until 1855 where he is listed as an architect. His activities in the years between his listing as an artist in 1847 and his listing as an architect in 1855 are difficult to determine. A watercolor rendering of a proposed public or burial monument in the Egypto-Grecian style from about 1850 is inscribed, “Edwin Durang’s first piece of work. It got him a job. He designed this before he took up architecture.”48 It is unknown if his designs for the monument were ever executed but it is presumably this drawing that lead to his work in Carver’s office. Durang was a member of the Franklin Institute and it is possible that he received some training in architectural drafting there before entering Carver’s office sometime between 1848 and 1855.49 Nothing else is known of his early training. Durang appears at two

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46 Hare, Durang Family History, n.p.

47 The dedication pamphlet for Our Mother of Sorrows church gives a birthdate of 1839 for Durang. The resemblance of the biographical details of Durang’s life published in this pamphlet with the statements given by the press for Durang’s obituary seems to suggest that a prepared statement was supplied by Durang’s firm at his death.

48 Durang papers/drawings, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
different addresses between 1855 and 1857. He apparently established his own practice after the apprenticeship with Carver, but returned in 1858 to share the 51 North 6th Street address with Carver. After Carver’s death in 1859 Durang remained at the North 6th Street address until 1882 after which his firm was located at 1200 Chestnut Street in the Beneficial Savings Fund Society Building, a project his firm had designed (figure 7). Durang made his son a partner in the firm in 1909. He died in 1911 and is buried at St. Denis’ Church in Ardmore.  

While there are no known business papers or drawings from the period of Durang’s church commissions, three surviving documents provide the foundation for a basic, if incomplete, catalogue and chronology of Edwin Forrest Durang’s architectural activity. Durang published a portfolio of his architectural work toward the end of the 19th century, and another with his son about 1910, approximately a year before his death. That the portfolios were conceived and published is evidence of the changing nature of architectural patronage in the Philadelphia Diocese. From the late 1860s through the late 1880s Durang dominated important diocesan commissions, but by the 1890s other

49 Durang’s development of a largely ecclesiastical practice may be explained in part by Carver’s professional career. Cohen in Drawing Toward Building describes Carver’s adaptation of the plans sent from England by G. G. Place for the Episcopal Church of St. James the Less (1846-49). St. James the Less is believed to be the first example of Ecclesiological design to be executed in America signaling the arrival of the archaeologically derived English parish church model.

architects had emerged, most notably Durang's former apprentice Frank Rushmore Watson, to vie for parish building commissions. It is likely that the portfolios were produced to win potential clients in an increasingly competitive environment by demonstrating the breadth of building types and styles obtainable through the firm. The earlier portfolio emphasized church designs but the later portfolio presented a more complete picture of Durang's practice including a list of schools, rectories, convents, colleges, theatres, and residences. This later portfolio, apparently published soon after Durang made his son a partner, would create a kind of architectural legacy that his son could claim in forging his own architectural practice as transition was made from father to son. \(^{51}\) While churches were clearly the firm's most visible commissions in the city, the portfolios demonstrate an active and varied practice that met the increasingly complex architectural needs of Catholics in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

A third document, an office daybook of 1859-1862, provides a useful backdrop to the later body of material and demonstrates that Durang's role as the prominent diocesan architect might not have appeared inevitable. The daybook documents an overwhelming stream of projects, mostly storefronts and houses, delineating a picture of an extremely busy, if minor, architectural practice. Commissions also include designs for the Moravian

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\(^{51}\) F. Ferdinand continued to design for the parishes his father had so devotedly worked for but soon turned to New York to locate his practice. F. Ferdinand Durang is best known for his complex of Roman Catholic buildings at Princeton.
Congregational Church of Nazareth, Pennsylvania and the parsonage for St. Patrick’s parish in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{52}

The chronology of Durang’s Philadelphia churches presented here is based upon the two extant portfolios, a list of projects collated by Tatman & Moss, and the histories of Catholics in Philadelphia by Kirlin, and Mahoney.\textsuperscript{53} While a reasonable picture of Durang’s architectural production can be apprehended after 1876, a detailed record of the nature and volume of his early practice, namely between 1855 and 1858, and again between 1862 and 1876 does not survive. The portfolios however present important city commissions and, examined in concert with parish histories, have been used to construct a basic chronology. In Durang’s case, the records of professional architectural organizations yield nothing; perhaps due to the Protestant exclusivity prevalent in such organizations, Durang was never a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the AIA or the T-Square club. Barring any discovery relating to Durang’s early practice, the details of his early association with the Diocese of Philadelphia, or the nature of his office organization, apprentices, and staff will never be fully understood.

\textsuperscript{52} Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Durang papers/drawings.

Philadelphia Church Architect

When Solomon had dedicated the Temple, he gave a banquet to all the artisans, with the exception of the blacksmith, who, according to the legend, was left uninvited, because his rough and smutty brow and hands made him unmeet for the king's table. But the smith presented himself before Solomon, and proved that without the smith's craft and labor, no tool would have been fitted for the hands of the other working men, whereupon the king placed him at his right hand, in the banqueting hall.
The building lies first in the mind of the architect, and we should deem our sketch incomplete, unless we gave his meed of praise to the architect of Our Lady of Mercy's Church, Mr. Edwin F. Durang.
The story of this true artist's life is told by the series of magnificent edifices which he has designed, and carried to finished perfection. With a modesty, which is equaled only by his skill, Mr. Durang declined to enter into any particulars of his life, beyond the facts that he is, by birth, a native of New York, in which city he was born, April 17, 1839. He studied architecture under J.E. Carver, in his office, 51 North Sixth St., Philadelphia.
... Mr. Durang's architectural career has been a glorious one. But we forget his triumphs in his noble art, in our admiration for the sterling traits of character in the man. In his dealing with the Bishops and Priests, he has been the soul of honor, courtesy and generosity. With him, the building of a church is truly a religious act. He does not rest satisfied with doing his duty as an architect. He supplements it with a devoted attention to every detail of mechanical building. He gives all the fruits of his great experience, as a builder, to promote the success of the undertaking.

Published as part of the dedication pamphlet for a church built at Broad & Susquehanna in Philadelphia, this laudatory description of Durang appeared toward the end of his career on November 19, 1899. The description reveals more than simple hyperbole typical of such celebratory biographical sketches. The conceit of the benevolent king expressing praise to an unappreciated and scorned blacksmith allegorically underscores the primary role of the priest in the process of building a parish church. While simultaneously alluding to Durang as "unmeet" and acknowledging "this true artist's" skills, Durang's subservient position in relation to the parish priest is reinforced.

54 Dedication pamphlet for Our Lady of Mercy Church, November 19, 1899, n.p.
The biographical information given with "modesty" by Durang was typical of the information his firm provided to the press and makes no mention of his family's Philadelphia history. Durang's obituaries too appear to have used the same prepared statement asserting that he was a native, by birth, of New York City, and that he trained under the "architect of some prominence," John E. Carver. Durang may in fact have been, "by birth, a native New Yorker," but the statement seems to have been designed to disassociate Durang from the perceived ignominies of a theatrical family. The inconsistencies of this birthdate with more likely earlier dates suggested by his obituaries and Edwina Hare's history, may simply reflect the desire to portray a still youthful image in an environment of competition with younger Catholic architects. Durang, still active in his profession in 1899, was, in all likelihood, at least 70!

The scattered surviving contemporary descriptions of Durang present an architect "greatly respected by the community," "popular," and enjoying "every facility for draughting, making computations, etc., and spares neither time nor pains to fulfill the expectations of patrons." His attention to detail and insistence on excellent finish is as often mentioned as his gracious and courteous manner. It is perhaps this deprecating manner that endeared Durang to the Diocesan hierarchy where the image of the "brick and mortar priest" or "church builder" became an increasingly important aspect of maintaining priestly prestige.56

55 The Philadelphia Record, June 13. 1911, 1.
The First Commissions

By the time Durang began to design churches for the Diocese of Philadelphia the popular devotions that characterized the Counter Reformation revival were codified and disseminated in America through a series of Plenary Councils which convened in Baltimore during the second half of the 19th century. Popular devotions that gained approbation in the Plenary Councils included practices focused on Jesus (the Sacred Heart, Five Wounds, Litany of the Holy Name, stations of the Cross), Mary (rosary, May devotions, miraculous medals), the Saints (celebration of feast days, novenas, various litanies), and the mysteries of the faith (Blessed Sacrament, Christmas crib). The first of these councils took place in May of 1852 and was intended to establish a level of uniformity in diocesan administration and to bring American practice into accordance with Vatican decrees. The most important directive of this first council was the adoption of the Forty Hours Devotion of the Blessed Sacrament. In 1853 Bishop Neumann of Philadelphia presided over the ceremony at St. Philip Neri’s Church; under Bishop Neumann’s auspices it would become a common occurrence in Philadelphia. Bishop Neumann soon after was called to the Vatican to meet with other Bishops on the occasion of the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. This papal decree, a solemn proclamation of the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of faith, had actually been motivated in part by an Episcopal petition to proclaim it as an article of faith; devotions

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to Mary had become so great that by 1846 the feast of the Immaculate Conception was declared the patronal feast of the church in America.57

Popular devotional practices would clearly have an influence on the way in which churches were conceived and built. While the primacy of the Eucharistic Miracle is reflected in any typical plan by the axial location of the main altar, the regular inclusion of lateral altars within the railed sanctuary, most commonly dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to Mary, demonstrate the level of importance that ancillary devotions had attained. The presence of the fourteen stations of the Cross in places of Catholic worship are included in 18th century accounts but it seems that the later requisite inclusion of the fourteen stations in any new church building is part of this mid-19th century emphasis on devotionalism. Devotions to the stations, typically placed along the lateral walls of the interior of the church, commonly took place during Lent and were characterized by lay processionals from station to station.

It appears that Durang’s first commission for the Philadelphia diocese came soon after the dedication of the Cathedral. The plans for the second church of the parish of St. Anne in Port Richmond were drawn up sometime between 1864 and 1866. Father Thomas Kieran, born and ordained in Ireland, came to the parish in 1864 with ambitions to build a larger and more elaborate church than the one commissioned by his predecessor. The earlier church, designed by Le Brun in a characteristically abstract Gothic, would
later be converted into a school and survived as late as 1945 next to the church designed by Durang. Sadly, all but the sanctuary and sidewalls of Durang’s church burned in 1947.58

Durang’s church for St. Anne’s parish was one of three Catholic churches he built between 1866 and 1876. Durang’s monumental design for St. Anne’s church derived closely from the details of the Cathedral, but the plan, although unprecedented in scale for a parish church, was identical to the center tower/basilican plan churches built by Le Brun in the 1840s. The church was thus conceived as a simple rectangle without a transept. Three arched rosette-topped portals that lead onto a narthex marked the brownstone entry, eighty feet wide at the base. The Catholic Register described the church as designed in the “Roman Corinthian order... but treated rather in the modern French school, so far as relates to the massive bases, rustication, bold but carefully designed easy lines, and the well selected although few enrichments in detail; all of which in St. Anne’s ranks well with those of the most celebrated church buildings in the country. There are six full Corinthian columns three feet eight inches in diameter, with full carved capitals. The central portion of the front sits in advance of the main line of the building.”59 Curved

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57 Kirlin, Catholicity in Philadelphia, offers a brief discussion of the decrees of the Plenary Councils during Bishop Neumann’s episcopate, 352-360.

58 Parish history St. Anne Parish Sesquicentennial, 1845-1995, 33-38. Parish histories are often rich sources of information on the development and changes of parish buildings.
front corners were reminiscent of the Cathedral and were terminated at the sides by Corinthian pilasters. The rhythmic play of pilaster, column, and shadow-recess created a staccato of ornament at the facade relieved only by the spare lateral walls (figure 8).

The basement story, used as a worship space while construction of the upper church commenced, was 13 feet high. The upper church, 48 feet high when completed, was constructed as a free-span space with a flat ceiling. Plaster Corinthian pilasters articulated the walls and entablatures, which formed the springing point for the ribs of the coved ceiling. Attenuated round-arched stained-glass windows with trefoil rosettes pierced the walls between the pilasters. At the base of the pilasters were placed plaster reliefs of the fourteen Stations of the Cross. The sanctuary contained three altars; shrines of the Sacred Heart and Mary flanked the main altar. Le Brun’s earlier church also presented three altars at the sanctuary but their placement was not reflected in the articulation of the plan. Durang utilized this devotional practice to generate a screen of columns and pilasters which divided the sanctuary into three, framing the altars, and situating the placement of the cove edge. An organ loft was located at the entry side, and on either side of the nave galleries, extended 30 feet into the space. At full capacity the church could accommodate an astonishing 3000 parishioners (figure 9).

While St Anne’s church was under construction Durang was called upon by Father Francis A. Sharkey, priest of the poorer parish of Our Mother of Sorrows in West

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59 *The Catholic Register*, December 26, 1869, cited in the parish history *St. Anne’s One Hundred Years: 1845-1945*, 27.

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Philadelphia, to draw up plans for a new church. The church, still standing, would replace an earlier makeshift frame church that was originally dedicated to St. Gregory and which had become too small for the several hundred, mostly Irish parishioners. Plans for the renaming of the parish and the building of a large permanent structure were apparently undertaken in anticipation of increased settlement in what was then a remote area. The spare outlines of this rather austere building were probably dictated by a more limited budget than that of St. Anne’s. Father Sharkey, according to the parish history, suggested a simple gabled basilican church with front towers. Built in a humble random sandstone ashlar with some granite elements, the church was composed as a gabled basilica with forward projecting side towers. The triple round-arched doorways, surmounted by a rose window, open onto a narthex. Access to the organ gallery is made through the towers. The interior, finished in smooth plaster and originally frescoed, was lit with simple, colored-glass windows and divided into nave and aisles by rows of slender Romanesque columns. The aisle ceilings are lower than the nave and articulated by cross groining, each of which terminate at altars at the sanctuary end. There is no transept and a toplit apse terminates the barrel-vaulted nave. Side altars of the Sacred Heart and Mary terminated the aisles, and Stations of the Cross adorned the outer walls between windows. The nave vault was painted with Eucharistic motifs (figures 10 & 11).60

60 Parish history Souvenir: Church of Our Mother of Sorrows, Philadelphia: 1902, and a photograph in the collection of the parish provide the basis for this
While both churches of St. Anne’s and Our Mother of Sorrow’s parishes were in the midst of construction Durang worked on the plans for a third Catholic church. As scattered blocks of rowhouses were being built to house the predominantly Irish workers employed in the mills and factories along Washington, Gray’s Ferry, and Passyunk Avenues, St. Patrick’s parish was divided in order to provide for the growing number of Catholics settling in South Philadelphia. Early in 1868 a newly formed parish, named after St. Charles Borromeo, acquired a lot at the corner of 20th and Christian Streets and commenced plans to build a church. Designs for the church must have been prepared in a short time as the cornerstone for the new church was laid on July 19, 1868. Of all three churches of this early period, St. Charles Borromeo’s Church would take the longest to complete requiring almost 8 years before its dedication in 1876. The phased construction of the church, just like that of St. Anne’s and Our Mother of Sorrows churches, would necessitate the building of a basement or “lower” church while the upper church was being completed. Raised thus upon a lower church, St. Charles Borromeo shares elements of both St. Anne’s and Our Mother of Sorrows. Like that of our Mother of Sorrows Church, the facade of St. Charles Borromeo was conceived as a gable flanked by two towers. The tripartite arched entry portals, again surmounted by a rose window and marked by delicate Ionic columns, were placed in a larger arch, which traces the space between the two towers. Reference to the Cathedral is again found in the use of rounded discussion.
corners and fluted pilasters but the absence of freestanding columns makes for a ponderous study of convex and concave surfaces. It is unclear if the two towers were intended to be symmetrical (their bases are identical); asymmetrically disposed, they offer a whimsical, if awkward, foil to the symmetry of the overall composition. The interior of St. Charles Borromeo’s Church closely follows that of St. Anne’s and consists of a free-span space articulated by pilasters, colored glass windows and a flat coved ceiling. Like the sanctuary of St. Anne’s, St. Charles Borromeo’s triple altars, treated much like a stage proscenium and separated from the nave by a communion rail, generated three arched openings in which are placed the central reredos and flanking side altars. Like that of St. Anne’s, plaster surfaces of the interior were eventually elaborately painted. An organ loft at the entry and side galleries complete the design (figures 12 & 13).

Durang’s work during this early period was not confined to Catholic commissions. The portfolio of 1910 lists St. Johannais Lutheran Church at 15th and Ogden Streets, now occupied by a Baptist congregation, and the now demolished St. Michael’s Zion Lutheran Church built on Franklin Square. These rather plain churches with central towers, built in 1867 and 1870 respectively, were designed in a generic, vaguely Gothic style and were probably minor commissions. A third however, the Oxford Presbyterian Church at Oxford and Broad Streets, now demolished, represented a startlingly sophisticated, highly resolved essay on the Lombard Romanesque, and may
specifically derive from John Notman’s St. Clement’s Episcopal Church built a decade earlier (figure 14). Drawings for the church were recently discovered at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia in the 1867 publication “Charter and Bylaws of The Oxford Presbyterian Church.” Memoranda included with the drawings indicate that the estimated cost of the building, erected in Connecticut brownstone, was $100,000 with a construction time of eighteen months. The Church marked the corner of Broad and Oxford by a prominent bell tower with a steeple. Like the Catholic churches Durang had designed, three portals were placed at the street facade. The presence of a steeply pitched tympanum above the corner tower door marked it as the primary entrance. All three portals opened onto a narthex from which access to the organ loft was provided. The plan reveals a rectangular hall with three rows of pews thus preventing a central approach toward the pulpit (figure 15). A single apse provided for the pulpit terminates the nave at the east end. The lack of a central aisle not only reflects the absence of the liturgical and ritual processionals so typical of Catholic ceremony but the centered placement of the pulpit emphasize the Protestant primacy of the sermon. Two interior elevations reveal a barrel-vaulted interior articulated by repeating round arch motifs. While the simple arrangement of the plan is similar to Durang’s Catholic church plans the asymmetry of the exterior elevations evokes a picturesque informality completely lacking in the more formal Catholic churches.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{61} Charter and By-Laws of the Oxford Presbyterian Church, of the City of Phildealphia, Philadelphia: H.G. Leisenring’s Printing House, 1867, Presbyterian

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The overall impression of a highly resolved design also marks a contrast with the Catholic churches. Departures from original designs caused by the often unpredictable and prolonged nature of financing the construction of Catholic churches appears to explain this contrast. Designs for St. Anne’s Church, for example, allegedly included a two hundred-foot tower that was never completed despite the fact that the congregation ultimately spent the staggering sum of $200,000 to complete the church by 1870!62

A Gothic Interlude

Between 1872 and 1881, the Bishop of Philadelphia blessed the cornerstones for six new churches designed by Durang. With the exception of the Gesu Church of St. Joseph’s College in North Philadelphia, these churches were loose interpretations of a Gothic style than tended more towards the continental than its English manifestation. All were primarily Irish parishes. The first of these projects was the new church for Sacred Heart parish, which was founded in 1871 in southeast Philadelphia. The cornerstone for the church was blessed on May 19, 1872 and the completed church (without its spire) was dedicated five years later on September 30, 1877. Sacred Heart Church was the first fully articulated Gothic church Durang designed in the city. The asymmetrical informality of the elevation is similar perhaps to that of Oxford Presbyterian and its diminutive scale may reveal the influence of the Protestant English parish church model (figure 16). A side tower and spire with flying buttresses at each corner (completed

Historical Society, Philadelphia.

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seven years after its dedication, and subsequently dismantled due to structural instability) marked the north east corner of the church. A smaller polygonal tower was placed at the opposite side of the central gable and served as the priest’s passage from the rectory to the church. While the asymmetrical elevation presents an informal composition to the street, the interior reveals a symmetrically disposed cruciform plan with aisles and transept. Three sanctuary altars correspond to nave and aisles. The Stations of the Cross were placed in typical fashion between the windows along the outer walls of the aisles. The roof of the nave is an arched vault composed of exposed hammer-beams. The body of the church is lit by a series of clerestory windows above the arched openings of the aisle galleries. The interior of Sacred Heart Church, like all of Durang’s churches, is finished in plaster and when completed was decorated in rich colors and gold leaf (figure 17).63

In 1874 Durang commenced another modest Gothic style church for a parish in Frankford. Durang’s design for St. Joachim’s was the second church for the parish, which was established in 1845, and conformed to the rigid formula of the symmetrical tripartite facade with a forward projecting center tower. Durang here appeared to have simply applied continental Gothic portals to the stark massing of a central tower basilica (figure 18). A steep pediment marked each portal with quatrefoils in the apex, and diminishing recursive jambs with banded granite columns. As in the church of Sacred

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62 St. Anne Parish Sesquicentennial, 16.
Heart, the interior of the church was lit by a row of clerestory windows above the aisle galleries, two monumental stained glass panels placed in the apse behind the main altar illuminated the sanctuary (figure 19).

On October 18, 1874, five months after the blessing of the cornerstone of St. Joachim’s church, the cornerstone of St. Agatha’s at 38th and Spring Garden Streets in West Philadelphia was blessed. St. Agatha’s Church, now “adaptively reused” as condominiums with the cruelly ironic appellation “The Cloisters,” was the first of Durang’s two most lavish Gothic churches in the city. The parish had been established in the northwest in response to the growing number of Catholics who had settled in that part of the city. The first church building of St. Agatha’s parish was purchased from the congregation of St. Andrew’s Protestant Episcopal Church and rededicated under St. Agatha’s patronage in 1865. This first structure soon became too small for the growing congregation so a lot was purchased at 38th and Spring Garden Streets in order to begin construction of a new church. It took four years to complete the church and while not nearly as expensive as St. Anne’s church in Port Richmond, the richness of materials would bring its cost to $120,000 without its steeple.64

The designs for the church were based on that recurrent formula, the central tower/three portal/basilican plan with narthex, organ loft, and sanctuary altars

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63 Parish history The Diamond Jubilee Book Historical Sketch of the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Philadelphia: 1946.
corresponding to the nave and side aisles. The resolved articulation of massing and highly unified treatment of details mark this church as among Durang’s finest (figure 20). The facade was conceived as a giant gable with three portals, the central portal brought forward from a looming central tower and crowned with a crossetted gable with a multi-lobed roundel carved at the apex. A tall stained-glass panel topped by a rose window was placed in the tower and lit the organ loft. The facade was further embellished with a miniature blind arcade set above the ceiling cornice, and, like the Furness-inspired strapped columns of the recursive door jambs, was executed in multi-colored granite. Entry to the lower church was separated from the main entrance by adding lateral gables which further enhanced the monumental presence of the facade. Side aisle windows and three stained-glass panels set into the sanctuary apse lighted the interior. The restrained articulation of the vaulted nave and arcades of St. Agatha’s relied on painted plaster, delicately carved column capitals, and the diffuse colors of transmitted light for richness. Durang’s designs called for masonry columns and sanctuary revetments, plaster vaults and groins, and three delicately articulated Gothic altarpieces executed in white marble (figure 21). 65

Before describing Durang’s last important Gothic design from this period it is necessary to consider the more humble Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church

which was built near St. Anne's in Port Richmond. The parish was founded in 1872 under the patronage of St. Cecilia. Its first church, a frame chapel, was dedicated on Christmas Day of that year. Located in the industrial northeast, the parish was made up of mainly working-class Irish congregants. As membership increased, the parish desired a larger, more permanent structure. On September 22, 1876 the cornerstone for a new church was blessed and by October of 1880 the church was dedicated under the name of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Visitation B.V.M., as it is known in the parish registry, signaled the arrival of a type of church design that Durang would use again for parishes of limited finances. The exterior is really little more than the abstractmassing of a gabled basilican hall crossed by a gabled transept with two square frontal towers (figure 22). The Gothic masonry details were kept at a minimum, presumably to reduce cost, and were reserved primarily for the triple portals of the facade and the stained-glass window surrounds. In the central gable a tall stained-glass panel is surmounted by a rose window. The apex of the gable contains an aedicule with a statue of the Virgin. The interior, resembling that of St. Agatha’s but on a smaller scale, was divided into nave and side aisles with correspondingaltars. The sanctuary was fitted with a communion rail and separated from the body of the church by a transept. While Durang used stone and granite to emphasize the aisle supports and the surfaces behind the altar in St. Agatha’s, he used plaster and painted wood to resemble more expensive materials in Visitation

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BVM. The abstract distillation of form would later lend itself well to the changing stylistic inflections necessary for the construction of different parish churches. Plaster and lath replaced stone; without the expensive embellishment of the mason, the articulation of the interior increasingly depended on the skill of the plasterer and decorator for convincing effects that would not bankrupt the faithful (figure 23).66

Durang’s flirtations with the flamboyant Gothic would culminate in his designs for St. James’ parish church at 38th and Chestnut Streets. The church was dedicated on the third Sunday of October, 1887 after 6 years of construction. Revealing the prevalent taste for the Gothic, the local Catholic press praised it as the most beautiful Catholic edifice in the city, “the artistic beauties of the place, were shown to best advantage as the sun’s bright rays reflected the varied colors of the upper windows on walls, pillars, pews and floor, making a picture of loveliness impossible of full and accurate description, and lending to the temple...a look of solemnity that could not but inspire the beholder with awe.”67

The limestone church, still standing and serving the University of Pennsylvania’s Roman Catholics, was conceived in the French Gothic, with Furnessian flourishes, and expressed the typical monumental facade, narthex, nave and side aisle plan with

corresponding altars. The main gable is adorned with a great rose window and topped by an aedicule with a statue of St. James. Upon completion, the facade presented a strange pairing of mismatched towers; the east tower base supported a circular gable tower in contrast to the square west tower (figure 24). Durang departed from the simplicity of earlier schemes by including a full apse with colored glass panels at the nave termination. The crossing of nave and transept was marked with four massive inset arches which were painted with images of angels and the apostles. These arches are anticipated at the facade by a single, rather than triple, pedimented entry portal which shares the same general proportions of the arches, surrounded by successive orders of pink and grey columns. Where earlier churches lacked a spatial richness due to the simplicity of the open hall plan, Durang here achieves a complex spatial layering not to be repeated in later commissions (figure 25).

**Brick and Mortar Priest**

Of all the churches Durang built in Philadelphia, his design for the Gesu Church appears to be the most closely associated with its parish priest. Burchard Villiger was born in Switzerland in 1819 to Catholic parents. In 1838 he joined the Society of Jesus but was soon forced to leave Switzerland when the Jesuits were banished from that country. By 1848 he had made his way to the United States and was ordained at Georgetown in 1850. By the time Father Villiger had been called to Philadelphia in 1868

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to oversee the establishment of a Catholic college, he had distinguished himself as an educator and administrator by helping to found old St. Joseph's College at Willing’s Alley in Philadelphia and Santa Clara College in California. While the establishment of a well-equipped educational institution was Father Villiger’s primary aim at 18th and Stiles Streets in North Philadelphia, the founding of a local parish there also required the establishment of a church. Villiger’s first project was to build a modest church and rectory. Within five months a church was dedicated in the name of the Holy Family, and Father Villiger proceeded with plans for the college. Villiger enlisted the services of Durang for the design of the campus and by 1879 a vast complex named St. Joseph’s College was complete. While the college was being constructed the surrounding burgeoning residential area would bring the congregation of Holy Family Church to more than 2000. Acknowledging the need for a new church, and recognizing the prestige a major church building could lend to the newly established school, Father Villiger directed the ground breaking for a new church on March 10, 1879 at the south west corner of the compound. When complete, the imposing new church would anchor the school complex, which occupied an entire city block.68

According to the parish histories, it was Father Villiger’s aim to pay homage to his religious order by building a version of II Gesu, the mother church of the Jesuits built

by Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola at Rome between 1568 and 1584. Vignola’s design consists of a free-span coffered barrel vault carried on great lateral piers which in turn form six side chapels. A dome rests on four piers at the crossing of nave and transept, and shrines to St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier, founders of the Jesuit order, are placed at either end. An apse where the main altar is placed terminates the nave. The transept in Vignola’s plan is as wide as the nave; the transverse axis created by the lateral shrines thus rivals in plan that of the nave and main altar (figure 26).69

Durang’s design for Villiger’s church follows the general plans of Vignola’s but with significant modifications (figure 27). Durang’s Gesu is in fact larger than Vignola’s, measuring 122 feet wide at the facade and 252.5 feet deep. The width of the nave of Durang’s Gesu is 75 feet and the interior vault height is 100 feet! Vignola’s church possesses no vestibule or narthex while Durang’s includes a compressed narthex connecting to a baptistry in the base of the east tower, and to stairs leading to the two-tiered organ/choir loft in the west tower (figure 27). Like Vignola, Durang placed side chapels between the massive piers, but also inserted confessionals constructed of wood. Durang reduced the breadth of the transept while maintaining the lateral shrines to St. Ignatius and St. Francis. The reduced transept combined with the elimination of a dome at the crossing works to direct all sight lines to the sanctuary wall which contains the main altar with flanking altars. Side altars of the sanctuary in Vignola’s church are placed

on axis with the lateral chapels and are not visible from the nave. Durang divided the nave itself into three bays on the sanctuary side and contained the main and side altars within the width of the nave. While this has the benefit of making the sanctuary altars visible from all vantage points within the main body of the church, the compositional logic implied by the load bearing structural elements is compromised; the insertion of a tripartite altar composition has no relationship to the actual structure (figure 28).

The lateral piers, articulated in the Corinthian order with full entablature, support an upper gallery from which the coffered ceiling springs, and through which light streams from amber-colored windows. Villiger had the church interior finished in pure white plaster which he had hoped the parishioners would tire of in favor of an intended polychrome marble revetment scheme, but funds were never raised and the plaster remained unpainted until the 20th century. The present paint scheme dates from the early 20th century; the church, when lit only by the amber panes of the upper gallery windows, is a somber, cavernous space.\textsuperscript{70}

Resemblance to Vignola’s Gesu is abandoned in the articulation of the exterior (figure 29). The horizontal entablatures of three superimposed orders sweep across the facade and wrap their way around the building. The facade consists of a central section with three portals flanked by slightly forward projecting towers which are also marked by front portals. A screen of banded paired Doric columns flank the centermost door.

\textsuperscript{70} Parish History \textit{Golden Jubilee 1888-1938 Church of the Gesu}, n.p.
The ground floor order is surmounted by a second story screen in a delicate Ionic order which frames pedimented windows above the three central portals. Blind niches are placed above the tower entries. Above the entablature of the second story order spring belfries and a central gable with an arched window. The center gable originally supported a statuary aedicule and each square tower was originally planned to rise two hundred feet. Villiger had intended also to construct the Gesu in granite, but with limited finances the church was instead built of moulded brick, and some granite and cast iron elements. The bristling contrast between brick and granite leave the visitor unprepared for the ponderous gravity of the interior.71

The church, dedicated as The Gesu on December 2, 1888, nine years after the laying of its cornerstone, was then the largest interior open-span space in North America. In Philadelphia it rivaled only the Cathedral in scale. In order to underscore the heroics of an energetic and ambitious pastor, Durang is described as having approached the project with great trepidation, convinced that the construction of such a large free-span space could present great engineering obstacles. Unfortunately nothing survives of the initial sketches for the building and no mention in the parish histories is made of possible sources for the design of the exterior elevations. The Gesu nonetheless remains one of Durang’s most sophisticated and ambitious churches; it is a singular example of a late

71 Ibid., n.p.
19th century classicism that must have appeared starkly out of place in an architectural culture dominated by the kind of Victorian Gothic exemplified in the work of Furness.72

National Parishes

During the last decades of the 19th century Philadelphia, like many other industrialized cities in America, continued to attract immigrants in search of work. Many of the newly arrived immigrants were English speaking Catholics, still primarily Irish, but increasing numbers of southern and eastern Europeans settled in Philadelphia in hopes of greater financial opportunities in a politically stable environment. The presence of Italians in the city at mid-century is marked by the founding of Mary Magdalene de Pazzi parish in 1852. The parish represented the first Italian national parish to be established in North America and remains a landmark in predominantly Italian South Philadelphia.73

With the growth of the city, new parishes were traditionally established with territorial boundaries determined by existing or anticipated need. Church affiliation was not necessarily one of choice and it was expected that parishioners attend the church of the parish in which their homes were located. This was not true however of non-English speaking Catholics. Many of the non-English speaking Catholics were dispersed among

72 Ibid., n.p.

73 Juliani, Building Little Italy: Philadelphia's Italians Before Mass Migration, 156-70.
English speakers, and thus never established a territorial critical mass; it was thus necessary to establish what have become known as “national” parishes. The German speaking Catholics were the first to establish a church based on specific linguistic and cultural needs with the founding of Holy Trinity in the 18th century. As diverse ethnic groups increasingly came into Philadelphia after the middle of the 19th century it became common for the Philadelphia Archdiocese to establish these parishes based upon such specific needs. Territorial boundaries did not apply to these churches which were often located within the limits of English speaking parishes.74

Of the fifty-five new parishes established between 1850 and 1900 twelve were so-called national parishes serving specific language and cultural needs. Most were German, but other groups were represented; in 1882, 1891, and 1892 St. Laurentius,’ St. Stanislaus,’ and St. John Cantius’ parishes were founded to serve a growing Polish community. In 1893, St. Casimir’s parish was the first Lithuanian parish established, and in 1895 Holy Spirit was established to serve a small minority of Greek Catholics in the city.75

The chronology for Philadelphia parishes to 1900 reveals that Durang designed only three of the twelve newly established national parishes. The growing number of architects specializing in ecclesiastical services in the city probably represented increased competition. By the 1880s Frank Rushmore Watson, Durang’s most notable apprentice,  

74 Kirlin, Catholicity in Philadelphia, offers detailed discussions of the establishment of parishes, their territorial boundaries and congregants.
had established his own practice. Other apprentices from Durang’s office such as Emile Perrot, John Deery, and Rowland Boyle were established as independent architects by the 1890s. Henry Dagit had also appeared on the scene as a formidable presence and would later rival the Durang firm in sheer output. It appears too that there began to emerge a kind of hierarchy of Catholic church commissions. As the Irish and Germans of a previous generation or two ascended the ranks towards middle-class respectability they commissioned increasingly expensive and fashionable churches while the newly arrived immigrants marked their place in the city with more modest structures. Durang appears to have designed many of these fashionable parish churches while the more humble commissions, with the exception of the three described below, went to younger, less experienced architects.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi’s is the first of Durang’s three national parish churches. The parish originally purchased an old Methodist church and burial ground on Montrose Street in 1852 but by 1854 need for a more capacious church led to the building of a new church on the site which was dedicated on October 23rd of that year. The church appears in contemporary images as an austere Greek revival basilica with great Doric pilasters, a pediment, and three portals curiously topped by Gothic gables. By the time that the parish’s sixth pastor, Father Antonio Isoleri, arrived in 1870 from Italy, the parish had already outgrown the modest frame church, and by the early 1880s the condition of the church had so deteriorated that plans were soon drawn up to build a new

75 Clark, “A Pattern of Urban Growth. . .” 76-87.
church. The cornerstone for a church designed by Durang was blessed on October 14, 1883.76

A basement church was quickly constructed in order to accommodate the immediate needs of the parish while the upper church was completed. Durang divided the flat facade into three bays with the central bay marked by a pediment at the cornice (figure 30). An oversized pediment with coupled polished granite columns frames the single main entry to the upper church, flanked by doors leading to the lower. Elongated windows with segmental arch pediments and blind balustrades are placed above the side doors while the center is marked by an attenuated triple window with colored glass panels. The church is constructed of brick but its facade was clad in local blue marble and the original plans called for matching corner cupolas. The interior of the church is divided into barrel vaulted nave and side aisles which terminate at sanctuary altars and is lit by colored-glass windows at the lateral walls (figure 31). The arcades are executed in the Corinthian order. Plaster hermes, apparently removed during the late 1960s as part of Vatican II remodeling, rose from each column and supported a cornice from which the barrel vault sprung. The symbolism of this pseudo-Renaissance style was described in local papers as an appropriate expression of Italian identity. At the dedication ceremonies on June 28, 1891, in praising the church the bishop expressed his hope that


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the church would inspire, on this side of the Atlantic, the type of genius embodied by the arts of Italy!^77

The second of Durang’s national parish churches was designed for St. Laurentius parish which was established in 1882 to accommodate the influx of Poles who were fleeing the oppressive policies embodied by the Prussian May Law which prohibited the use of the Polish language in schools and churches. By 1885 a basement church had been constructed and blessed at Vienna & Memphis Streets and served the dual purpose of providing space for Sunday worship and classrooms for the children of the parish. St. Laurentius’ church follows the modest formula established by Visitation BVM in which the basic massing is simple and unadorned and where decorative masonry is reserved only for the entry portal and window surrounds. The facade is anchored by two towers which are modeled with elongated turreted corners, short spires, and stained-glass panels which light the organ/choir loft within. The interior follows the standard nave/side aisle plan with three altars and was executed in painted wood and plaster.

A third national parish church is listed in Durang’s second architectural album. The parish history for St. Bonaventura’s church reveals that it was established in 1889 to serve a German speaking congregation and that a basement church was completed in December of 1894. While Durang may have provided plans, his involvement in the project appears to have ended early in the church’s construction. Father Henry Stommel, apparently acting as his own contractor, completed various aspects of the building on an

^77 Ibid., n.p.
ad hoc basis over a period of twelve years. The church bears a stronger resemblance to the kinds of axial tower Gothic churches then prevalent in Germany than Durang’s Philadelphia work. This may simply reflect Father Stommel’s high level of involvement in the initial designs for the church. It seems more likely, however, that because Stommel exercised such a strong role in the actual administration of the building process, Durang’s design was transformed as it was constructed.78

The Last Commissions

Between 1889 and 1902 the cornerstones for Durang’s last nine city churches were blessed by the Bishop. Of these parishes only one, the parish of St. Francis Xavier, was established before the Civil War. Most of the new parishes for English speaking congregations were established in the city as population growth and increased attendance forced the Diocese to subdivide older parishes to meet new needs. The churches of this period appear in the guise of several styles. While the Romanesque confections of St. Francis Xavier Church and the now demolished Our Lady of Mercy Church were conceived with a nave/side-aisle plan, many of these later churches were rendered in a classical idiom and featured free-span interiors with pilasters, coved ceilings and elaborate sanctuaries. All of these churches were provided with a transept, narthex, organ/choir loft, and triple altar sanctuary. St. Anne’s church, Durang’s first Catholic commission in the city, appears to have provided the model for the sanctuary. The proscenium-like sanctuary with three altars divided by a screen of columns appears in more or less

elaborate form in St. Thomas Aquinas Church begun in 1889, in Nativity BVM begun in 1890, and in St. Monica's begun in 1901 (figures 32, 33, & 34). While the exterior articulation of these churches differ, the interiors are strikingly similar. Well-executed pilasters, between which tall round-topped colored windows are placed, mark the bays of the nave. The cove ceilings are finished with decorative borders which create the framework for painted embellishments. The fourteen Stations of the Cross are typically secured in panels of the base of the interior orders and appear to generate the number of bays. Invariably, an organ/choir loft is placed above the narthex on the entry side.

The dedication pamphlet of Our Lady of Mercy Church proudly celebrates the economic progress that many Catholics had achieved by 1899: "But ten short years ago. . . it should have been impossible for a congregation of such importance and such magnitude and such wealth to have been formed and nurtured and developed into what we of today know as the Parish of Our Lady of Mercy. . ." The construction of many churches during this period provides evidence that a percentage of the Catholics of the city had in fact arrived at a level of economic prosperity. Our Lady of Mercy Church was sited prominently at Broad & Susquehanna amid fashionable new upper-middle-class townhouses serving the spiritual needs of the children and grandchildren of the Irish poor who had come to the city in the 1840s and 1850s (figure 35). The overall composition of the church did not differ from more humble designs but its massing was bold, well

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79 Dedication pamphlet of Our Mother of Sorrows Church, November 19, 1899, n.p.
articulated and richly ornamented, and its interior was finished in expensive stone, marble and painted plaster, and outfitted with elaborate bronze lighting fixtures.

The church of St. Francis Xavier (figure 36), also designed in the fashionable Richardsonian Romanesque and built in an affluent neighborhood at Green & 23rd Streets, appears almost identical to Our Lady of Mercy Church in the interior arrangement (figures 37 & 38). Owing to its siting on a corner lot, Durang favored an asymmetrical composition with a lofty spire marking the corner. The richly ornamented church of the parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary built near St. Anne’s Church also testifies to the increasing affluence of Catholics in that area (figure 39). In massing and basic plan arrangement the church is similar to Le Brun’s St. Augustine’s or St. Peter the Apostle churches but it is clothed in Durang’s own pseudo-Renaissance vocabulary and, rather incongruously, includes a fine rose window placed over the main entrance.

The last of Durang’s Philadelphia commissions, the churches of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Monica, and St. Gabriel were located in less affluent neighborhoods, and while more modest in embellishment and scale, their highly resolved designs and superb level of interior finish corroborate the assertions that Durang, “devoted himself to his profession with a conscientious regard for the excellence and perfection of every detail, however minute.”80
Toward A Catholic Architecture

The first of Durang’s surviving architectural portfolios presents a title plate that resembles images used by Pugin in his apologia for the Gothic revival (figure 40). Durang’s delicately drawn image of a city dominated by the spires and cupolas of countless churches departs from the rhetoric of Pugin’s manifesto by presenting in equal number the classical dome and the Gothic spire. Clearly intended to illustrate a broad range of stylistic options it also reflects the fact that in America the Catholic Church had equally embraced the Gothic and the classical.  

While the sources for the designs of Protestant churches can often be traced to published designs and discourses on architecture, documentation for interpreting 19th century Catholic church architecture is less numerous. Following the mid-century fashion for architectural pattern books and seeking to meet a need among the growing number of Catholics in this country Charles Sholl published Working Designs for Ten Catholic Churches in New York in 1869. This, the only known Catholic church pattern book from the period, was apparently intended for parishes wishing to build well-proportioned modestly priced churches. The book includes an essay on the history of architecture and the selection of an appropriate style. Sholl opened his discussion by stating, “Ecclesiastical architecture admits of infinite variety and diversity of design, and the

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80 Illustrated Philadelphia, 1889, 155.

several types have been said to be the outward tangible expression of every phase of
Christian character from the earliest epochs to the present day. Initially Sholl
appeared to advocate the use of all styles but the essay ended by extolling the virtues of
the Gothic as the most genuine Christian expression. While Sholl’s essay clearly relies on
the architectural polemics of Pugin and Ruskin, his design offerings are hardly doctrinaire.
The first two designs represent the kind of carpenter Gothic popularized by Downing
and Upjohn a decade or more earlier. The plans are simple rectangles with provisions for
a single altar and sacristies at the sanctuary end. The third design presents a round arch
version of the carpenter Gothic church and specifies enormous rose windows at both
gable ends. Again, a single altar is provided in the plan flanked by sacristies. The
remaining seven patterns provide designs for increasingly expensive churches in styles
that include a bracketed brick Italianate design, three masonry Gothic designs of varying
archaeological correctness, an elaborate frame Gothic design with a louvered belfry, and a
brick Romanesque design with a towering campanile. The final and most expensive
design specifies a neo-Palladian basilican hall with a projecting screen of coupled
Corinthian columns and a center cupola marking the facade; so much for the primacy of
the Gothic (figure 41).

This apparent tension between the affirmation of the moral correctness of the
Gothic and the embrace of other stylistic modes for ecclesiastical architecture would find
expression in a series of articles that were published in the American Catholic Quarterly Review and the American Ecclesiastical Review between 1883 and 1904. Intended primarily for a priestly audience, the articles set out to describe the history of Christian architecture and to provide guidelines for the parish priest in formulating designs for new churches. Both journals were motivated by the desire to make sense of the increasingly eclectic character of church design during a period when the management of church construction had become an important duty for the parish priest.

The American Catholic Quarterly Review championed the Ruskinian emphasis on honesty in construction and design by describing the archaeologically correct Gothic as the most appropriate style for church architecture. Painted finishes, concealed structural systems, and the extravagant display of applied ornament “might be used for a shop, for a theatre, or for a music hall; but it ought not to be used for the worship of a Truth-loving God. Architectural lies in wood, in plaster, or in putty are not in the end cheap anywhere; but in churches they are as expensive as they are opposed to the spirit of religion.” The so-called modern Renaissance, or neo-Palladian, style was also derided by the journal as a “debased ornate style” inappropriate for churches. 83

The American Ecclesiastical Review expressed a more liberal outlook on architecture. In its February edition of 1899 an article commenced by observing that, “the building of churches proceeds with us at a rate absolutely unknown in any other part...
of the world. The natural growth of our Catholic population, and still more the steady influx of Catholic immigrants from various parts of Europe, bringing with them the faith and religious practices they had learned in their first homes, create a corresponding demand for new places of worship in most parts of this vast continent." Recognizing the diversity of the Catholic population and the consequent suitability of different styles, the series of articles outlined the development of architecture over time and suggested that any style can find legitimate expression in new buildings. The Greek was identified as the only style inappropriate for churches, "the choice, then, would be between the Basilican or early Christian style, the Romanesque, the Gothic, and the classical Renaissance." The exclusion of the Greek as an appropriate style corresponded with the idea that only the architecture historically associated with Christian worship was to be imitated.

The debate on style in the Roman Catholic church was not fraught with the same implications that had fueled the Gothic revival in England and America a half century earlier. A return to the visual richness and style of a medieval artistic and architectural tradition came to represent for Protestants the reestablishment of continuity with the origins of the faith. For Roman Catholics style appears to have been simply an option in a system that was strictly governed by a set of liturgical and devotional requirements that lend an almost monotonous regularity even to the varied designs of Durang's Philadelphia


churches. Deflating the hallowed primacy of the Gothic, *the American Ecclesiastical Review* counseled that “there is in reality no such thing as a style of architecture distinctly ecclesiastical. What goes by that name is simply ordinary secular architecture applied to ecclesiastical purposes. The Church never had a style of her own. When she needed a sacred edifice, she turned to the architects and builders at her command, and they in turn carried out her wishes according to the established rules and methods of the period.”

Those “rules and methods” are likened to grammar; far from arbitrary, the orchestration of a building is successful insofar as it conforms to an established set of laws. The emphasis here was given to a coherent expression of any style as long as it remained true to its own logic.

The relative paucity of pattern books and popular treatises on Catholic architecture may be explained in part by the fact that Catholics were not disposed to emphasize their differences, especially in the hostile environment of the second quarter of the 19th century. It appears too that the presence of Counter-Reformation treatises on church building may have rendered popular pattern books redundant. Charles Borromeo’s *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae* (Instructions for ecclesiastical building and ornament) compiled into two volumes in 1577 “was indeed the central work on Post-Tridentine Counter Reformation architecture, art, and church

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85 Ibid., Vol. 23, 1900, 47.

86 Ibid., Vol. 21, August, 1899, 156.
furnishings." These prescriptive texts, completed by Borromeo in order to codify the
treatment of ecclesiastical architecture after the Council of Trent, were familiar to the
clergy and were likely consulted during the period of Counter-Reformation revival. While
no specific reference to the treatise is documented for the designs of Durang’s churches it
appears that many of the elements that repeatedly occur in his churches, regardless of
style, are either derived from Borromeo’s Instructiones or from the tradition generated by
its directives. Durang’s monumental treatment of facades, his use of the basilican plan,
the inclusion of a narthex, the division and articulation of altars in the railed sanctuary,
and the regular inclusion of a rose window above the church entry are some elements that
derive from Borromeo’s codification. In the Post-Tridentine tradition the correct
expression and articulation of liturgically requisite elements, the sanctuary and its altars in
particular, are the touchstones by which to judge relative merits of a church building;
style is therefore a secondary, albeit important, concern.

The stylistic variety of Durang’s churches is betrayed in plan and arrangement of
parts by a regularity that suggests this kind of derivative generation of architectural
design. While no known primary records survive for the process of design development,
there are scattered references to church building committees. These committees appear to
have included parish priests and members of the parish, as well as representatives of the
Bishop. An episcopal representative on the building committee not only ensured that

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87 Evelyn Carole Voelker, Charles Borromeo’s Instructiones Fabricae et
Supellectilis Ecclesasticæ, 1577. A Translation with Commentary & Analysis, Ph.D.
Durang would be apprised of the specific liturgical requirements of a given church but that parishioners and parish priests engaged in building projects would be made to conform to a set of Diocesan architectural norms.  

The recurring taste for a classical vocabulary in church architecture in post-Civil War Philadelphia may have cultural and ethnic determinants. The Catholic Church in Philadelphia during the second half of the 19th century was dominated by a clergy and laity with close ties to Ireland. The Irish appear to have favored a classical or continental Gothic idiom for church design thus ensuring clear autonomy from the kind of English Gothic imagery employed by Protestant congregations. While the question of style as a rhetorical devise might have become moot in the context of a late 19th century eclecticism, the taste for a classical idiom in church architecture persisted. Where Renwick’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York secured the preeminence of the Gothic there, Philadelphia’s Cathedral appears to have had a similar effect in securing a place for a pseudo-Renaissance classicism in Philadelphia.


88 Diocesan churches were legally the property of the Bishop, and while church property was registered in the name of the parish priest, he acted as an agent of the Bishop. The question of Diocesan involvement in church design is not fully understood but it would appear that a fairly high level of uniformity was desirable in order to accommodate the various processional and liturgical rites ordered by the bishop. These could take place at any church in the city and often included several at once. Groundbreaking, cornerstone blessing, dedication, and consecration were all required to be performed by a bishop and were generally performed by the bishop of Philadelphia.
Durang’s repeated use of the classically articulated free span basilica might have had as much to do with his exposure to existing buildings as the demand for classically inspired designs. In addition to the original design of new churches, Durang’s practice also included renovations. The most prominent of these projects was the renovation of Le Brun’s 1840s St. Peter the Apostle Church on 5th and Girard Streets. Renovations included a complete encasing of the Italianate building in Port Deposit granite, a reworking of the clock tower and entry sequence, and the refurbishing of the interior plasterwork. Renovations were so extensive that Durang apparently felt justified in including St. Peter’s church as an original design in his second architectural portfolio. Many of Durang’s interiors resemble St. Peter’s church; Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church appears to have been modeled specifically after the design for St. Peter’s.89

Ultimately, more important than the expression of mere style, Durang’s Philadelphia churches provided parishes with the armature for the material expression of a devotional piety that inspired reverence for the divine. Churches were ultimately outfitted with narrative leaded glass panels from stained-glass suppliers such as the Mayer Company of Munich, with the frescoes of decorators such as Scattaglia who painted plain white plaster interiors with eucharistic motifs and images of the apostles, and with companies who specialized in the manufacture of marble altars. By the late 19th century other specialty companies supplied congregations with church furniture and

89 Other important renovations include St. Michael’s church and the interior remodeling of a Presbyterian church for the parish of St. Peter Claver, the first African-
fixtures, stations of the Cross, images of the crucifix, statuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Mary, and the ritual objects necessary for outfitting the altar and performance of liturgical rites. John Adams presaged this triumph of a baroque devotionalism over the spirit of Enlightenment Catholicism when he described St. Mary’s Church while visiting Philadelphia during the first continental congress:

Went in the afternoon to the Romish chapel. . . The scenery and music are so calculated to take in mankind that I wonder the Reformation ever succeeded. The paintings, the bells, the candles, the gold and silver, our Saviour on the Cross over the altar, at full length, and all his wounds bleeding. The chanting is exquisitely soft and sweet.90

Most of Durang’s Philadelphia churches are still active places of worship and continue to inspire the kind of reverence that seemed so strange and yet so compelling to Adams.

American Catholic congregation in North America.

Figure 1. Edwin Forrest Durang by Lorenzo Scattaglia, c. 1874. Courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 2. Philadelphia's urban fabric c. 1900. Roman Catholic churches for parishes founded between 1850 and 1900 are indicated by number. See Appendix A for a complete list of parishes organized numerically in order of foundation dates. Map from Clark (1988).
Figure 3. Philadelphia's urban fabric c. 1800. The first four Roman Catholic churches are indicated by number. See Appendix A for a complete list of parishes organized numerically in order of foundation dates. Map from Clark (1988).
Figure 4. Philadelphia's urban fabric c. 1850. Roman Catholic churches for parishes founded between 1800 and 1850 are indicated by number. See Appendix A for a complete list of parishes organized numerically in order of foundation dates. Map from Clark (1988).
Figure 5. Plan of the Philadelphia Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul. Drawn by Le Brun circa 1860 and back dated to 1846. This plan reflects the facade changes that John Notman made to Le Brun's original design. Courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 6. Philadelphia Cathedral, c. 1900. From Finkel, *Nineteenth Century Photography in Philadelphia.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Figure 8. St. Anne's Church, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 9. St. Anne's Church, interior, c. 1910. Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 10. Our Mother of Sorrows Church c. 1895. *E.F. Durang's Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 11. Our Mother of Sorrows Church, interior, c. 1900. Courtesy of the parish of Our Mother of Sorrows.
Figure 13. St. Charles Borromeo Church, interior, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of E.F. Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 15. Presentation plan of Oxford Presbyterian Church, 1867. Courtesy of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.
Figure 16. Sacred Heart Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang's Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 17. Sacred Heart Church, interior, c. 1910. Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 18. St. Joachim’s Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang’s Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 20. St. Agatha's Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang's Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 21. St. Agatha’s Church, interior, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 22. Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1915. Ballinger Collection, courtesy of the Athenacum of Philadelphia.
Figure 23. Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, interior. c. 1905. Courtesy of the parish of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Figure 24. St. James' Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang's Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 25. St. James’ Church, interior, c.1895. *E.F. Durang’s Architectural Album.* courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 26. Plan of II Gcsu, Rome. Source unknown.
Figure 28. Church of the Gesu, interior, c. 1929. Ballinger Collection, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 29. Church of the Gesu, fall 1998. Photograph by the author.
Figure 30. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Church, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 31. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Church, interior, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 32. St. Thomas Aquinas Church, interior, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 33. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, interior, c. 1910, Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 34. St. Monica's Church, interior, c. 1910. Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 35. Our Lady of Mercy Church, c. 1910. *Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 36. St. Francis Xavier’s Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang’s Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 37. Our Lady of Mercy Church, interior, c. 1910. Architectural Album of Edwin Forrest Durang & Son, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 38. St. Francis Xavier's Church, interior, c. 1895. *E. F. Durang's Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.
Figure 39. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, c. 1895. *E.F. Durang’s Architectural Album*, courtesy of the Athenacum of Philadelphia.
Figure 40. Frontispiece from E.F. Durang's Architectural Album, c. 1895. Courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
Figure 41. Street facade for design #10 from Charles Sholl’s *Working Designs for Ten Catholic Churches*, 1869.
APPENDIX A

Philadelphia Roman Catholic Parishes to 1900
Durang’s involvement in design or renovation of parish churches indicated by bold type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>4th &amp; Willings Alley</td>
<td>1732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>4th below Walnut Street</td>
<td>1763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Holy Trinity</td>
<td>5th &amp; Spruce Streets</td>
<td>1788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>St. Augustine</td>
<td>4th &amp; Vine Streets</td>
<td>1796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>St. John the Evangelist</td>
<td>13th below Market Street</td>
<td>1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>St. John the Baptist</td>
<td>Manayunk</td>
<td>1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>St. Michael</td>
<td>2nd &amp; Jefferson Streets</td>
<td>1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>St. Patrick</td>
<td>19th &amp; Spruce Streets</td>
<td>1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>St. Francis Xavier</td>
<td>25th &amp; Biddle Streets</td>
<td>1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>St. Philip Neri</td>
<td>2nd &amp; Queen Streets</td>
<td>1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>St. Peter</td>
<td>5th Street &amp; Girard Avenue</td>
<td>1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>808 S. Hutchinson Street</td>
<td>1843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>St. Stephen</td>
<td>Nicetown Lane (now Broad &amp; Butler Streets)</td>
<td>1843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>St. Ann</td>
<td>Memphis Street &amp; Lehigh Avenue</td>
<td>1845</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>St. Joachim</td>
<td>Penn Street, Frankford</td>
<td>1845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>12th &amp; Spring Garden Streets</td>
<td>1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>Oak Street, Manayunk</td>
<td>1849</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>St. Vincent</td>
<td>Price Street, Germantown</td>
<td>1849</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>St. Dominic</td>
<td>Frankford Road, Holmesburg</td>
<td>1849</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>38th &amp; Chestnut Streets</td>
<td>1850</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>St. Malachy</td>
<td>11th &amp; Master Streets</td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>St. Mary Magdalen</td>
<td>Montrose Street</td>
<td>1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Our Mother of Sorrows</td>
<td>46th Street &amp; Lancaster Avenue</td>
<td>1852</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>St. Teresa</td>
<td>Broad &amp; Catherine Streets</td>
<td>1853</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>St. Alphonsus</td>
<td>1400 S. 4th Street</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>St. Brigid</td>
<td>Stanton Street &amp; Midvale Avenue</td>
<td>1853</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Our Mother of Consolation</td>
<td>Chestnut Hill Avenue</td>
<td>1855</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Annunciation</td>
<td>10th &amp; Dickinson Streets</td>
<td>1860</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>46th &amp; Thompson Streets</td>
<td>1860</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>St. Clement</td>
<td>71st Street &amp; Woodland Avenue</td>
<td>1864</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>St. Edward</td>
<td>7th &amp; York Streets</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>St. Agatha</td>
<td>38th &amp; Spring Garden Streets</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>St. Boniface</td>
<td>Mascher &amp; Diamond Streets</td>
<td>1866</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>St. Veronica</td>
<td>533 W. Tioga Street</td>
<td>1868</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>St. Charles Borromeo 20th &amp; Christian Streets</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Gesu 17th &amp; Stiles Streets</td>
<td>1868</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Immaculate Conception Front &amp; Allen Streets</td>
<td>1870</td>
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<td>Maternity 9200 Bustleton Pike</td>
<td>1870</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Sacred Heart 3rd &amp; Reed Streets</td>
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<td>St. Elizabeth 23rd &amp; Berks Streets</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<td>St. Cecilia (Visitation BVM) B Street &amp; Lehigh Avenue</td>
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<td>St. Laurentius 1648 E. Berks Street</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Nativity BVM Belgrade Street &amp; Allegheny Avenue</td>
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<td>Holy Family Unruh &amp; Keystone Streets</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>St. Leo 234 E. Hermitage Street &amp; Manayunk</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Our Lady of Help Christians Gaul Street &amp; Allegheny Avenue</td>
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<td>St. Thomas 17th &amp; Morris Streets</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>St. Peter Claver 12th &amp; Lombard Streets</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Rosary 345 N. 63rd Street</td>
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<td>St. Anthony of Padua 23rd &amp; Fitzwater Streets</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>Epiphany 13th &amp; Jackson Streets</td>
<td>1889</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>St. Bonaventure 2831 N. Hutchison Street</td>
<td>1889</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Our Lady of Mercy Broad Street &amp; Susquehanna Avenue</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>St. Francis de Sales 46th &amp; Springfield Avenue</td>
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<td>Holy Cross 154 E. Mt. Airy Avenue</td>
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<td>St. Ludwng 1400 N. 28th Street</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>St. Stanislaus 2nd &amp; Fitzwater Streets</td>
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<td>St. Ignatius 43rd Street &amp; Haverford Avenue</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>St. Casimir 3rd &amp; Wharton Streets</td>
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<td>St. John Cantius 4400 Almond Street</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Lourdes 63rd Street &amp; Lancaster Avenue</td>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>St. Aloysius 26th &amp; Tasker Streets</td>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>St. Monica 17th &amp; Ritner Streets</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>St. Columba 24th &amp; Lehigh Avenue</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>St. Gregory 52nd Street &amp; Lancaster Avenue</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>St. Gabriel 28th &amp; Dickinson Streets</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Our Lady of Mt. Carmel 2300 S. 3rd Street</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>Our Lady of Victory 54th &amp; Vine Streets</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Ascension F. &amp; Westmoreland Streets</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>St. Francis of Assissi Greene &amp; Logan Streets</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Incarnation 5th Street &amp; Lindley Avenue</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Holy Angels 70th Avenue &amp; Old York Road</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Cathedral of Sts. Peter &amp; Paul 18th &amp; Summer Streets</td>
<td>1846-1864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Philadelphia Church Commissions of Edwin Forrest Durang
Churches appear the year in which cornerstones were laid. Italicized names indicate non-Roman Catholic churches. Church names in bold indicate original designs.

1866  **St. Ann's Church**, Parish founded July 4, 1845.
      Memphis & Lehigh Avenues, Port Richmond
      Cornerstone laid July 29, 1866
      Dedicated January 1, 1870

1867  **St. Augustine's Church**, Parish founded 1796.
      Renovations: Addition of spire.
      
      **Oxford Presbyterian Church & Chapel**
      Dedicated December, 1869
      Broad & Oxford Sts., demolished

      **St. Johannais Lutheran Church**
      15th & Ogden Sts
      Now occupied by a Baptist congregation

1868  **Our Mother of Sorrows Church**, Parish founded 1852.
      4800-4814 Lancaster Avenue
      Cornerstone laid November 1, 1867
      Dedicated September 28, 1873
      Towers and spires erected in 1892

1868  **St. Charles Borromeo Church**, Parish founded 1868.
      20th & Christian Sts.
      Cornerstone laid July 19, 1868
      Dedicated May 7, 1876

1870  **St. Michael's Zion Lutheran Church**
      Franklin below Vine Street at Franklin Square
      demolished
1872 **Sacred Heart Church**, Parish founded December 25, 1871.
1406-1418 S. 3rd St.
Cornerstone laid May 19, 1872
Dedicated September 30, 1877

1874 **St. Joachim’s Church**, Parish founded 1845. (Original building burned)
Frankford, Philadelphia
Cornerstone laid June, 1874
Dedication October, 1880

**St. Agatha’s Church**, Parish founded 1865. (Desacralized and converted into apartments)
38th & Spring Garden
Cornerstone laid October 18, 1874
Dedicated October 20, 1878
A new altar added in 1901.

1876 **Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church**, Parish founded 1873.
Lehigh Avenue between Front & 2nd
Cornerstone laid September 22, 1876
Dedication first Sunday of October, 1880

1879 **Gesu Church**, Parish founded 1868.
18th & Stiles Sts. Cornerstone laid October 5, 1879
Dedicated December 2, 1888

**St. Michael’s Church**, Parish founded April, 1831.
2nd & Master’s Sts.
Renovations: 1879 through 1892, comprised a new facade and interior for the existing church.

1881 **St. James Church**, Parish founded 1850.
3728 Chestnut St.
Cornerstone laid October 16, 1881
Dedicated third Sunday of October, 1887

**Grace Baptist Church**
Mervine & Berks Sts
Completion only.

**Annunciation B.V.M.**, Parish founded 1860.
10th & Dickinson Sts.
1883 **St. Mary Magdalene di Pazzi Church**, Parish founded 1852.
Montrose & 8th Sts.
Cornerstone laid October 14, 1883
Dedicated June 28, 1891
Tower and cupola completed in 1901

1884? **Cumberland Disston Memorial Presbyterian**
Tacony
Dedicated April 1, 1886

1885 **St. Laurentius Church**, Parish founded 1882.
Vienna & Memphis Sts.
Basement dedicated December 20, 1885
Dedicated September 21, 1890

1887 **St. Bridget’s Church**, Parish founded 1853.
3667 Midvale.
Renovations: Addition of spire/cupola.

1888 **St. Paul’s Church**, Parish Established 1843
Ninth and Christian Sts.
Interior renovation consisted primarily of remodeling of the sanctuary and erection of new altars.
Work Begun 1888
Reopened May 7, 1893

1889 **St. Thomas Acquinas Church**, Parish founded 1885.
1616 S. 17th St.
Cornerstone laid November 17, 1889
Basement dedicated November 30, 1890
The basement was apparently moved to the present site from 18th & Morris and dedicated on October 16, 1904

1890 **Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church**, Parish founded 1882.
Belgrade & Wellington Sts.
Cornerstone laid September 21, 1890
Dedicated October 4, 1896

**Our Lady of Mercy Church**, Parish founded 1889. (Demolished)
2141 N. Broad St.
Cornerstone laid October 12, 1890
Basement dedicated January 18, 1891
Dedicated November 19, 1899
1891  **St. Peter Claver Church**, Parish founded 1886.
      502 S. 12th St., 12th & Lombard Sts.
      Renovations: interior remodeling of the Fourth Presbyterian at $3000.
      Renamed and dedicated January 3, 1892

1892  **St. Veronica’s Church**, Parish founded 1872.
      6th & Tioga Sts.
      Cornerstone laid Sunday, June 4, 1892
      Dedicated April 22, 1894

      9th & Cambridge Sts.
      Cornerstone laid September 2, 1894
      Basement complete in December, 1894
      Dedicated May 21, 1906

1895  **St. Francis Xavier**, Parish founded 1839
      2323-27 Green St.
      Cornerstone laid October 6, 1894
      Dedicated December 18, 1898
      Burned March 28, 1906
      Rebuilt after original plans and rededicated April 5, 1908

1898  **Our Lady of Good Counsel**, Parish founded 1898. Demolished
      816 Christian St. A school from St. Paul’s parish was purchased. The first floor
      was converted into a church and a three story structure was erected in front of the
      school provided an “ornamental” entrance to the vestibule.

1901  **St. Monica’s Church**, Parish founded January 1, 1895.
      17th & Ritner Sts.
      Cornerstone laid September 29, 1901
      Dedicated May 3, 1903
1902  **St. Gabriel's Church**, Parish founded 1895.
1432-1448 S. 29th St.
Cornerstone laid September 21, 1902
Dedicated October 2, 1904

**Date, denomination, and/or location unknown:**
*St. John’s Es. Church*
*St John’s (Roman Catholic?)*
*Church of the Messiah (Roman Catholic?)*

The above chronological ordering of Durang’s known churches was constructed using the following sources:

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Parish Histories
APPENDIX C

Known Church Commissions of Edwin Forrest Durang

1866 St. Ann’s Church, Memphis & Lehigh Avenues Port Richmond, Philadelphia

1867 St. Johannais Lutheran Church (now a Baptist church), 15th & Ogden Sts, Philadelphia
   Our Mother of Sorrows Church, church & school buildings, 4800-4814 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia

1868 St. Charles Borromeo Church, 20th & Christian Sts., Philadelphia

1870 St. Mary’s Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA
   St. Michael’s Zion Lutheran Church, Franklin below Vine Street at Franklin Square

1871 West Pittston Methodist Church, West Pittston, PA

1872 Sacred Heart Church, 1406-1418 S. 3rd St., Philadelphia

1873 St. Andrew’s Church, 135 S. Sycamore St., Newton, PA
   St. Agatha’s Church, 38th & Spring Garden, Philadelphia
   St. Peter’s Cathedral, Scranton, NJ, major remodeling and new facade to 1865/67 church.

1875 St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, S. Duke & Church Sts., Lancaster, PA
   Our Lady of Visitation Church, Lehigh Avenue between Front & 2nd (Re:AABN), Philadelphia
   St. Francis Church, Nanticoke, PA

1879 Gesu Church, 18th & Stiles Sts., Philadelphia
   St. Michael’s Church, 2nd & Master’s Sts., Renovations to church, school, and pastoral residence, 1879-1892

1881 St. James Church, 3728 Chestnut St., Philadelphia
   Our Lady of the Angels, Glen Riddle, PA
   Grace Baptist Church (completion only), Mervine & Berks Sts., Philadelphia

1882 St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph St., Lancaster, PA
   Nativity Church, Belgrade & Wellington Sts., Philadelphia

1883 St. Mary Magdalene di Pazzi Church, Montrose & 8th Sts., Philadelphia

1884 Cumberland Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church, Tacony, Philadelphia
   St. Francis Church, alterations & additions, Nanticoke, PA

1885 St. Laurentius Church, Vienna & Memphis Sts., Philadelphia

1886 St. Joseph’s Church, Ashland, PA
   St. Monica’s Church, Atlantic & California Aves., Atlantic City
   St. Peter’s Church Mission, Reading, PA


1889 St. Aloysius Church, Norristown, PA
   St. Charles Borromeo, alterations & additions, Kellyville, PA
   St. Thomas Aquinas Church & rectory, 1616 S. 17th St., Philadelphia
   St. Aloysius Church, Norristown, PA
   St. John’s Evangelical Church, Pittston, PA

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St. Joseph’s Church, Easton, PA
Catholic Church, Halifax, North Carolina
1890 Our Lady of Mercy Church, chapel, 2141 N. Broad St., Philadelphia
St. Laurentius Church, Berks & Memphis Sts., Philadelphia
St. Rose de Lima Church, Carbondale, PA
St. Mary’s Church, Phoenixville, PA
St. Nicholas of Tolentino Church, Tennessee & Pacific Aves., Atlantic City, NJ
St. Patrick’s Church, Pottsville, PA
1891 Roman Catholic chapel, Crum Lynn, PA
Roman Catholic chapel, Cheltenham, PA
Roman Catholic chapel, Norwood, PA
Sisters of Notre Dame, chapel, Walnut Hill, Cincinnati, OH
Visitation Church, convent chapel, Mobile, AL
St. Peter Claver Church (renovations to the Fourth Presbyterian Church), 502 S. 12th St., 12th & Lombard Sts., Philadelphia
1892 St. Veronica’s Church, 6th & Tioga Sts., Philadelphia
St. John’s Church, Lambertville, NJ
Immaculate Heart Convent Chapel of Villa Maria, West Chester, PA
Sacred Heart Chapel, Mobile, AL
Sisters of Mercy, chapel & additions to present home, Merion, PA
1893 St Francis Xavier, 2323-27 Green St., Philadelphia
St. Anthony’s Church, Lancaster, PA
Roman Catholic chapel, Wayne, PA
1894 St. Bonaventura Church, church & attached parochial residence, 9th & Cambridge Sts., Philadelphia
1895 All Saints Church, superstructure, NE corner Buckius & Thompson Sts., Bridesburg, PA
St. Columba’s Church, Lehigh Avenue & 23rd St., Philadelphia
St. Joseph’s Church (Polish), school, 10th & Liberty Sts., Camden, NJ
St Agatha’s Church, new chapel, 38th & Spring Garden, Philadelphia
St. Mary’s Church, alterations & additions, Eagleville, PA
St. Nicholas’ Church, Pacific & Tennessee Aves., Atlantic City, NJ
St. Peter’s Church, alterations & additions, 5th & Girard Ave., Philadelphia
St. Monica’s Church, alterations & additions, 17th & Ritner Sts.
1896 Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Bryn Mawr, PA
1897 St. Peter the Apostle Church, 5th & Girard Avenue, Philadelphia
St. John’s Church, alterations & additions, Hazelton, PA
1898 Our Lady of Good Counsel, 816 Christian St., Philadelphia
Church, Beach Haven, NJ
1899 St. Michael’s Church, alterations & additions, 2nd & Jefferson Sts., Philadelphia
1900 St. Francis Assisi Church, Logan & Green Sts., Philadelphia
St. Nicholas Church, 1409 Pacific Avenue, Atlantic City, NJ
1901 Sister’s of Mercy Church, Merion, PA
St. Mary Magdalen di Pazzi Church, tower & cupola, Melrose St., Philadelphia
1902 St. Gabriel’s Church, 1432-1448 S. 29th St., Philadelphia
1903 St. Thomas Aquinas Church, interior finising, 17th & Morris Sts., Philadelphia
1906 St. Francis Xavier Church, rebuilding after fire, 24th & Green Sts., Philadelphia
1908 St. Mary Magdalen Church, Millville, NJ

Date, denomination, and/or location unknown:
St. John’s Es. Church, Philadelphia

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St. John’s Church, Philadelphia
Church of the Messiah, Philadelphia
Baber Memorial Church, Pottsville, PA
Zion Church, Reading, PA
St. Mary’s Church, Beaver Meadow, PA
Methodist Episcopal Church, Pittston, PA
St. Joseph’s Church, Hazleton, PA
St. Mary’s Church (Polish), Reading, PA
St. Joseph’s Church, Reading, PA
St. Mary’s Church, Lebanon, PA
St. Patrick’s Church, McAdoo, PA
Church of the Annunciation, Shandon, PA
St. Michael’s Church, Chester, PA
Sacred Heart Church, Lamokin, PA
St. Cecelia’s Church, Coatesville, PA
Chapel of St. Francis, Trenton, N.J.
Polish Church, Pittston, PA
Church of the Immaculate Conception, Allentown, PA
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Allentown, PA
St. Edward’s Church, Shamokin, PA
St. John’s Church, Pottstown, PA
St. Francis de Sales Church, Lenni, PA
Sacred Heart Church, Chester, PA
St. Thomas of Villa Nova, Vill Nova, PA
St. Monica’s Church, Berwyn, PA
Holy Infancy Church, Bethlehem, PA
Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Media, PA
St. Mary’s Church, St. Clair, PA
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