

# INTRODUCTION

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THE PURCHASE of Louisiana by the United States, in 1803, was soon followed by an influx of ambitious and energetic Americans from the North and the East. These new possessors of the former French and Spanish colony found in New Orleans a rather sleepy provincial town which had grown little in its more than three quarters of a century of existence. Its potentialities as the great outlet of the Mississippi Valley were, however, apparent, and the arrival of the first steamboat, in January, 1812, assured it a commercial importance equal to that of any of the great Atlantic cities.

The ensuing phenomenal growth of New Orleans was interrupted briefly by the events of the War of 1812; Jackson's brilliant victory in 1815 served to emphasize the importance of the city, which entered a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity that was to last until the Civil War. It was therefore at a particularly significant epoch in her history that Benjamin Henry Boneval Latrobe, the architect, set sail for New Orleans from Baltimore in 1818. The journals which he kept during his voyage and his subsequent residence in the city furnish a most important picture of this interesting period. In addition, they contain many significant commentaries on the philosophical and moral questions of the day by one well qualified to speak, for Latrobe occupied an outstanding position in American life, being intimately associated professionally and socially with the leaders of the political, economic, and cultural affairs of the nation. As his descriptive writings reflect the changes taking place in the life of a city, so do his philosophical writings reflect the changes in thought from the revolutionary rationalism of the late eighteenth century to the revivalism of the nineteenth.

Latrobe, generally acknowledged as the founder of the professional practice of architecture in the United States, was an Englishman by birth. He was born in Yorkshire on May 1, 1766, the youngest son of the Reverend Benjamin Latrobe, a Moravian clergyman (said to have been born in what is now New York State), and Anna Margaret Antes, of Germantown, Pennsylvania. Regarding his name he once wrote: "My family name is Boneval, although I am called, as was my father and as are my brothers, by a titular name derived from a Marquisate in France held by my great grandfather in Languedoc, that of La Trobe."

His education was begun in his native England, but during the American Revolution he was sent to Germany by his American-born parents, and at the Moravian School at Barby, Saxony, and at the University of Leipzig, his training was completed. His interest in engineering seems to have been as great as his interest in architecture, and having studied for a time under the eminent hydraulic engineer Riedel, in Germany, he entered the office of John Smeaton, civil engineer, on his return to England in 1786. His architectural training was afterwards obtained in the office of Samuel Pepys Cockerell, great nephew of the diarist and father of the architect C. R. Cockerell.

Possessing extraordinary natural talents, Latrobe, after several years of training under Smeaton and Cockerell, began his own practice; he soon established a reputation in London. In 1791 he married Lydia Sellon, by whom he had two children, a son, Henry Sellon Boneval Latrobe, who became one of the outstanding architects of New Orleans, and a daughter, Lydia. Later Lydia was married to Nicholas I. Roosevelt, who brought the first steamboat down the Mississippi to New Orleans in 1811-12. The untimely death of his wife, in 1793, caused a great change in Latrobe's life, and after three years he decided to give up his practice in England and emigrate to the United States; he arrived at Norfolk on March 20, 1796.

His remarkable personality immediately won him influential friends in the land of his adoption, and he was soon engaged in architectural work in Norfolk and Richmond. In 1799 he moved to Philadelphia, where he had been commissioned to install the waterworks; during the same year he designed the Bank of Pennsylvania, one of his finest buildings. On May 1, 1800, he married Mary Elisabeth Hazlehurst, and on her insistence his two children came over from England, arriving in October, 1800. Three children were born of this second marriage, Julia, Benjamin, Jr., and John Hazlehurst Boneval.

In 1803, with his reputation firmly established, he was appointed by Thomas Jefferson as Surveyor of the Public Buildings of the United States and charged with the completion of the Capitol at Washington. It was while serving in this capacity that Latrobe had his first contacts with the newly purchased territory of Louisiana. On March 26, 1804, Congress authorized the construction of a lighthouse at the mouth of the Mississippi River, and Latrobe was directed by Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, to prepare plans for the structure. Utilizing the knowledge acquired from his association with John Smeaton, who had built the famed Eddystone and Spurnhead lighthouses, he designed a stone tower eighty feet high. At the base was to be the keeper's house of brick and the whole was an excellent and typical Latrobe

design. The tower was to be erected on a foundation of wooden piles and on an inverted brick dome, provided a site suitable for such a structure could be found.

Despite his efforts to consummate this project, Latrobe was thwarted by difficulties which he was never able to overcome. Frustration seems to have pursued him in all his Louisiana ventures—frustration, indeed, plagued his entire professional career. Because of the stipulation in the Congressional act authorizing the lighthouse that it should be built by contract, it was impossible to proceed as he had first proposed, having the stonework fabricated at Philadelphia and the foundation separately contracted for at New Orleans. The project was finally abandoned; it was not resumed until after the war of 1812, when his son Henry was commissioned to prepare a new design for the structure.

The first work of Latrobe to be actually executed in Louisiana was the customhouse at New Orleans, which he designed in 1807. In order that the building might be as much as possible adapted to the climate, he asked the opinion of Daniel Clark, territorial delegate to Congress, before letting the contract. His knowledge of soil conditions was no doubt obtained from his pupil Lewis de Mun, whom he had sent to survey the coast and select the site for the lighthouse, and who was then in New Orleans. The plans were transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury on April 28, 1807, and on the same day a contract was entered into with Robert Alexander, of Washington, for the erection of the building for \$19,000. Alexander, who had been contractor for Latrobe's Washington Navy Yard, after securing materials and having much of the stonework and millwork fabricated in the East, removed with his family to New Orleans, where he arrived on May 7, 1808; he completed the building the following year.

The customhouse was no doubt the first structure of the new Greek revival style in New Orleans. It was a small simple edifice; the exterior was of Philadelphia brick laid in Flemish bond and having stone trim—a combination of materials recalling buildings of that period in Virginia and quite foreign to anything that had been seen in New Orleans. The basement story was arcaded and vaulted, and above, in the center of the principal façade, was a recessed porch with two freestone columns. In the brick walls flanking the porch were arched windows. The main cornice was of wood, and the hipped roof was covered with wood shingles. Many of the refinements which Latrobe would have liked to include were necessarily omitted because of the small appropriation allowed. However, in transmitting the drawings to Gallatin, Latrobe wrote:

I . . . have no doubt, but that if the mode of construction exhibited in the drawings be carefully adopted and executed, that the building will be firm and permanent, notwithstanding the defective foundation on which it is to be erected . . . and the work will be most perfectly adapted for the business for which it is intended.

Despite these expectations, the building proved to be neither firm nor permanent, nor was it long adequate in size for the rapidly increasing commerce of the port. By 1813 the customhouse was in need of extensive repairs, and the estimated cost was so great that it was considered inexpedient to apply to Congress for an appropriation during the period of the war. By 1817 the building was in a ruinous state, and in 1819 a plan for a new structure on the same site was prepared by Benjamin Buisson, a New Orleans architect. The following year a contract for its erection was awarded to Major Joseph Jenkins, of Boston. The cause of the failure of Latrobe's building was due in part to the use of the soft local brick, with Philadelphia brick only as a facing—contrary to the specifications—but no doubt also in large measure to Latrobe's rejection of the use of logs in the foundation, as was then generally the practice in New Orleans. When preparing the plans, he discussed this problem at some length with Gallatin and finally stated, "my opinion is against the logging because I do not think its use equal to its expense, & because also I think it cannot be secured sufficiently from rot and decay."

Because of this structural failure the building probably exerted little direct influence on the architecture of New Orleans, which was still being done in the traditional manner of the French and the Spanish colonists. Arsène Lacarrière Latour and Hyacinthe Laclotte, architects from Paris, were the popular architects of the day, and their excellent buildings, such as the Le Monnier house, at Royal and St. Peter streets, were entirely suited to the tastes of the still predominantly French population of New Orleans. The city was not yet ready to break with its French tradition.

The newly arrived Americans, however, were eager for improvements, and felt especially the need of an adequate water supply. At the request of Governor Claiborne, Thomas Jefferson mentioned the subject to Latrobe while at Richmond during Burr's trial. Latrobe, who was there as a witness, had installed the waterworks in Philadelphia, in 1799, and was regarded as the proper person to undertake a similar project at New Orleans. By 1809 Latrobe was in communication with Governor Claiborne and seemed assured of the exclusive privilege of supplying the city with water. For this purpose he associated with Robert Alexander, who was then erecting the customhouse. Jointly they petitioned the Territorial Legislature for a franchise, expecting

to furnish water to two thousand houses at twenty dollars each per year. The strong feelings between the French and the American elements in Louisiana, however, caused the defeat of the proposition in 1809.

The following year Claiborne called upon Latrobe, while on a visit to Washington, and encouraged him to make another application. He also suggested that the opposition of the French element might be overcome by sending Latrobe's son Henry, who besides having a French name had had a French education under the Sulpicians at Baltimore and spoke the language fluently. Already an attempt had been made by others to secure the franchise, and on May 10, 1809, the City Council went so far as to adopt a resolution authorizing Louis Gleise, of New York, to establish a water-supply system for New Orleans. Although Latrobe referred to him as a "madman without character or ability to carry on the project," within three weeks he had obtained fifteen hundred subscriptions at ten dollars each. Nothing came of the Gleise project, and Latrobe resolved to follow Governor Claiborne's advice by sending his son Henry to New Orleans.

At this time he also made sketches for a monument for the grave of Claiborne's first wife, Eliza Lewis, and made arrangements for its execution. He then designed a monument for the Governor's second wife, Clarisse Duralde, which was made at Philadelphia and erected by Henry Latrobe on her grave in the St. Louis cemetery shortly after his arrival in New Orleans in 1811.

Henry's success before the City Council was almost miraculous, and on April 27, 1811, an ordinance was approved "to grant the Sieur Benjamin Henry Latrobe and his associates the exclusive privilege to supply the City of New Orleans and its faubourgs with water by means of one or several steam pumps." In these successful negotiations Robert Alexander had no part, and when he objected, Latrobe wrote:

Mr. Rob't Alexander  
New Orleans

Washington, July 27th, 1811

Sir.

My son Henry arrived here on the 22d instant from New Orleans, after a passage of 39 days. He delivered to me on his arrival a letter from you d. June 10th of which I returned you herewith a copy, because from the very great evidence of hate which appears on the face of it, I cannot believe that you took the time necessary to make one.

1. In this letter you accuse me of a premeditated design to injure you. You assert
2. That you had advanced to my son more money than you were indebted to me in gratitude or in fact. You accuse me
3. Of having treated you in a shameful manner.

4. And eventually you call upon me to do justice to your injured feelings
5. You twice informed me that Mr. Cassin is your attorney, and from the style in which he has acted as your attorney, it is easy to guess in what style you have given him his commission.

All this is very unjust and very unpleasant. Not content with doing me injustice yourself, you have involved me in a quarrel with your agent, whom you desire to settle accounts with me without furnishing him with any means whatever of so doing, either in accounts or money.

But had you been only commonly just to me in this business nothing of this sort could have occurred. Things are indeed in a situation in which I see no possibility of returning to our former footing, & we are too distant from each other to make it of any importance to our daily comfort whether we do so or not. But after having given you very sufficient proof of my sincere regard during bright years, I cannot sit down quietly under such charges as you made against me, without endeavoring to refute them. This I will not do by invective, but by a simple statement of facts.

The idea of supplying the city of N. Orleans with water was first suggested to me by a French Gentleman from thence to whom I was exhibiting my works in Philadelphia, and who then wished me to enter into a project for that purpose. But I dismissed the subject from my mind until it was renewed by a conversation with Mr. Jefferson, while you were in New Orleans building the Customhouse. On your return, we seriously entered into a partnership for accomplishing the work. The duties of each of us were determinate & equal. For my knowledge of the project, for my design, for my labor & responsibility in executing all the Works here, procuring workmen, sending them out, in fact, for everything, but the superintendence of the building, & the attention necessary to procure the Charter. You engaged to procure the Charter on terms drawn up by myself. For the business you undertook in directing the works, you were to receive a salary of 1000\$ pr. annum, increasing as they produced a better income. I do not complain of this distribution of services and compensation between us. If the original project can be realized, I should now close with you at once.

I need not repeat that you failed in your application. *There* certainly was an end of our partnership had I been inclined to close it. Gleise of New York applied immediately afterwards and obtained a grant from the Corporation. Of this you did not inform me. I heard it from various quarters and did not believe it. When Governor Claiborne arrived, I received the first clear account of the matter, and I should have given up the whole scheme as vain, had not another gentleman of the first respectability in N. Orleans entered more into detail with me as to the cause of your failure. He stated to me that altho you were considered as the first Builder in the city, & altho your character was unimpeachable, and you were highly respected by everybody, yet that there were circumstances which would forever operate against your success in any application you might make.

The first of these was, that as the Council consisted of 5 Frenchmen to one American, your

not speaking French fluently deprived you of the means of explanation & persuasion with the majority.

He stated that you had irretrievably offended the Corporation by applying to the Legislature for leave to dig up their streets &c &c, and he remarked that there is a jealousy between those bodies that is extreme.

He mentioned that there was a French intrigue, which would always defeat the application of an American. He also stated many other reasons not one of which implicated the respectability of your character for he knew you & respected you himself. All these reasons together made me resolve to send my Son Henry to N.O. Young as he was, I depended on his perfect knowledge of French, on the French manners which his education at a French college enabled him to assume when he chose, & as an additional trifle, I thought his French name would not be against him. I took care to instruct him fully in the plan, & sent him off with all the recommendations I could collect for him.

My instructions to Henry were that he should apply to you on his arrival, but 2 days before he set off, several Gentlemen from N. Orleans who were here, entered warmly into the scheme, and suggested a project, in which I was to take the whole upon myself for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the clear income. I state it to you, merely as a fact, that a condition prescribed was that *you should not* be concerned. This I resisted, & it was no part of the agreement, but on the contrary you were to conduct the works, & share every profit that could be thrown in your way.

Henry departed; but without his or my knowledge till long after, a *third* party arose in Washington, which through the treachery of one of the concerned, obtained possession of copies of all my papers, & who very nearly defeated me altogether in order to step into my place. The opposition of the Mayor and of Mr. Morgan arose from this quarter. The success of my Son after what I discovered was almost miraculous.

I will now put the question to you or any other calm reasoner, whether there existed any kind of a partnership between us in any one of the proceedings after you had failed before the legislature. If there was, & you will state it, depend upon it I will sacrifice every advantage I have gained to justice to you. It has cost me in my son's expenses & everything attending the application 1500\$. If you have any claim on the score of assistance or expenditure, or if as you say I have injured you (by which you mean, I presume, that had I not interfered, you could have obtained the privilege yourself) I am ready to make compensation, and I refer the matter to any man of character you please.

As to our account, by *your* account of Sept'r 30<sup>th</sup> 1809 brought up to this day you owe me still 105\$, by my statement you owe me 378\$. On money matters I shall not quarrel with you. Otherwise, I should speak of the manner in which you notice the note on which I & Mr. Cassin are endorsers in which case you left us both in the lurch.

I cannot close this letter without regretting that on a business, in which you were certainly not excluded by any act of *mine*, whatever may have passed between you & my Son—you

should write to me in terms so personally offensive. Look back over the whole of our acquaintance & ask yourself whether I have ever failed to prove my professions by my conduct. If severe language could settle the matter it is a very cheap weapon; for nothing is so easy as invective. You have however shut my mouth, as to any propositions that I might make, for you treat the offer of transacting the business of the company as an insult.

Yours &c &c

B. H. Latrobe.

A short time later Alexander died in New Orleans, and Henry returned there, bringing with him the monument for Claiborne's first wife and also the plans for the building intended to house the steam engine for the waterworks. On December 24, 1811, Latrobe wrote to the Council that

in a few days my son Henry will sail from New York, fully prepared to take the necessary measures to construct the building.—It is my intention to erect a building which shall be as ornamental to your city, as the nature of its object will admit, and of which my son will present you a view, which I respectfully offer to your acceptance. Being perfectly satisfied with the terms of my engagement, and highly honored by the manner which you have granted it, I have every inducement to preserve in New Orleans whatever honorable character I have acquired at Philadelphia or Washington.

The building, quite similar in character to the Center Square Pumphouse of the Philadelphia waterworks, was intended to be erected upon a site adjacent to the customhouse, but Congress refused to grant the city a clear title to the land. This caused a delay until a new site was selected near the market on Ursuline and Levee streets, where the building was completed in 1813. Following this initial delay an almost incredible chain of misfortunes ensued, including war, flood, and fire, finally culminating in the greatest personal tragedy to Latrobe, the death of his son Henry of yellow fever, on September 3, 1817. This tragic sequence of events is recounted in a letter of October 13, 1817.

To the Honorable the Mayor and the Councils of the  
City of New Orleans  
Gentlemen:

The death of my Son, Henry S. B. Latrobe, of which I have been apprized only ten days ago, has overwhelmed me with distress; and very much disqualified me from addressing you in the manner which the gravity and importance of my business, and the very honorable station which you fill, might render strictly proper. If therefore I solicit your indulgence in dispensing even with the form of a memorial to you, and in permitting that sorrow, which



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overwhelms so many of you, and in which I so deeply share, to procure for me a compassionate, and a favorable hearing, I hope my solicitation will not be in vain.

The object of this letter is to request that you will be pleased to permit me to complete my contract for the supply of your City with water. I have appointed John Rodgers Esq. to act on my part, and to bind me fully to such conditions as may appear to you necessary to insure my compliance with the contract before, or after the period which shall be fixed.

The course which the business has taken is known to you. But I will beg leave to recapitulate concisely the leading facts, all of which may be judicially proved, and which by their inevitable consequence have delayed the completion of the works, and made my total ruin, or my moderate ease of fortune depend upon your compliance with my request.

In the year 1811, you granted me the ordinance, which enabled me to proceed to measures necessary to supply your City with Water. I received it in July 1811, but the very site on which the works were to be erected, was dependant on an Act of Congress relinquishing any possible right of the United States to the ground. However, I relied on the liberality of Congress, and applied by your permission to that honorable body. The ground was not granted, and this delay, as well as the change of the location of the Engine House was greatly injurious to me. But I proceeded with my works and had already sent to New Orleans men, parts of the machinery when war was declared in 1812.

It became then impossible to send out the remainder of my works, and they were lost to me, as well as the expense of all my preparations. This loss exceeded Ten thousand Dollars, and it was a loss not only of money, but of the confidence of my friends, who would otherwise have assisted me.

Under the circumstances you were pleased to grant me an extension of time of two years: and as it was not possible to send any machinery from the Atlantic ports, I removed with my family to Pittsburgh, where I formed a connexion which appeared to ensure the completion of the works from thence. The death of Mr. Fulton put an end to these expectations, but I still had another resource, and an engine furnished by Messrs. Evans, Rogers and Stackhouse, was ready to be sent to New Orleans when the disastrous events of the war, and the evident dangers which threatened your City induced these Gentlemen to decline the risk of sending the Engine to your port, least it should, with all the property in the Engine house and machinery which I possessed there be lost by the occupation of the enemy. They gave me notice of their determination by a letter which I transmitted to you,<sup>1</sup> and a further indulgence till Aug'st, 1816 was allowed me.

<sup>1</sup> This letter in the private collection of Samuel Wilson, Jr., is as follows:

“B. H. Latrobe esq'r

“Sir

“The present situation of New Orleans and the doubt whether it will be prudent to risk the safety of the engine and machinery necessary to water that city has induced us to decline for the present com-

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The victory of the 8th of Jan'y, 1815, and the subsequent peace, revived my courage, and made me forget my losses and disappointments, and being called by the Government of the United States to the restoration of the Capitol, I returned to Washington in July 1815, and immediately made arrangements for the construction of a Steam Engine, and all the rest of the necessary machinery with Robert McQueen & Co. of New York, men of the finest reputation and ability in their line. These essential machines were to have been ready to ship so as to have been in New Orleans in March or April 1816. But it will be recollected that the winter was excessively severe, and notwithstanding all my exertions, the Engine could not be got to Sea until the 2 of June. Before that day the news of the Crevasse which had inundated the City had arrived, and Mr. Noble, the Engineer after putting the engine on board, and providing everything for its erection, infected with the panics that pervaded the Atlantic States, and which saw in the inundation the certainty of an unhealthy autumn, and danger of sickness and death to every stranger, refused to accompany her. I immediately applied to two others, Ellis, and Criddle, both of them men, who had been long employed by me,—but both refused to risk their lives in the undertaking. While I was endeavoring to provide otherwise for the emergency, I received a letter from my Son, that security for the performance of the Contract was expected within eight days. When I received his letter that period had long ago expired, and as the arrival of the machinery which was ready in New York could not but be uncertain, he had not thought it prudent to give the security.

Relying on that indulgence in your honorable body which I had before experienced—I immediately transmitted to my Son a Memorial, stating to you all train of unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances which had postponed the completion of the works until that moment, and solicitating a few additional months, on the plea that the most expensive parts of the works the Engine house and the Engine was actually complete and on the spot.

This Memorial with the letters and Instructions accompanying it, appear to have arrived, while my Son was engaged in the Survey of the Coast as a Commissioner of the United States with Commodore Patterson and Mr. Duplessis, for the purpose of fixing upon the site of a Light house.

He returned to New Orleans on the 26th day of September 1816, and on the 28th the fire that laid so great a portion of your City in ashes, ruined his fairest prospects of professional success, and as far as my funds were influenced by his pecuniary ability and credit, did me most essential injury. For some months after this event, I did not receive from my Son, any letters which at all relieved my anxiety, nor do I yet know whether my memorial was presented to pleting such work for that establishment as may be wanted. We think it best to defer it till the fate of that section of the Union is decided and the uncertainty of money transactions at an end. We hope you will on consideration see it your interest to abandon it at least for a short time.

Very respectfully

Pittsburgh 15 December 1814

The Pittsburgh Steam Engine Co.  
By Geo. Evans''

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your honorable body. But I have learned from his correspondence that he had not succeeded in removing those difficulties which had arisen from your want of confidence in the ultimate completion of the works.

I have now arrived at a period in the history of my exertions to comply with an engagement to which, in spite of the most unusual train of disappointments, I have exerted myself to adhere, till my whole fortune and comfort in advanced life depends upon a few months of perseverance; a period the most affecting of all, the death of a Son so deserving of my love and confidence, and of whom I can say nothing that you do not know; for he had become your fellow citizen, and had shared your labors, your danger, and your glory; and had he lived, I do not doubt that his riper Talents would have been an ornament to the State in which he had spent his youth, and acquired his experience.

At this period, I most respectfully solicit of you that you will grant me a further term in which I may send out and put up, the machinery prepared in New York and Philadelphia, and which for more than 12 months has awaited the favorable term of your sentiments towards me. It is my intention, as soon as the President of the United States can grant me the permission, personally to appear before you and to see that the works are completed.

Mr. Rodgers in the mean time will await your decision. When I shall have the honor to be present, I have not the most distant doubt but that in a few months, before the autumn of 1818 shall be closed, to procure for you such a supply of water, as shall remove many of the evils, of which its deficiency may be the cause.

I have the honor to be with the sentiments of the truest Esteem & Respect

Your obedient Servant

B. Henry B. Latrobe

Capitol U.S. Washington City  
Oct. 13, 1817

The death of Henry Latrobe at the early age of twenty-four was indeed a tragic loss, not only to his family but also to American architecture, for in the few years of his residence in New Orleans he had achieved successes which promised to give him a position to rival or even exceed that of his father. On first arriving at New Orleans, he associated himself with Lacarrière Latour and with him probably built the house of Jean Baptiste Thierry, editor of the *Louisiana Courier*, in 1814. This house (721 Governor Nicholls Street) has a most unusual porch, with low segmental arches supported by simple Greek Doric columns, almost as certainly the work of Latrobe as the typical New Orleans plan of the rest of the house is the work of Latour. Thierry died in 1815, and among the court records of his succession, the names of Latrobe and Latour appear several times, evidence of their connection with the building of the house.

In 1815-16 young Latrobe erected the building for the Charity Hospital as well as two elegant houses for Bernard Marigny. The latter were demolished about 1910, when the Civil Courthouse was erected on Chartres Street. In 1816 he also prepared the design for the great lighthouse at the mouth of the Mississippi, and in the same year he constructed the building for Davis' ballroom, which was unfortunately destroyed by fire when nearly completed. Among his other works were houses for Honoré Landreaux, Mr. Mossy, Madame Chabaud, Duncan Kenner, and Richard Butler. The wings which Butler added to Ormond Plantation near Destrehan are also probably the work of Henry Latrobe, for they were built between 1811 and 1819, and their mass and detail indicate that they must have been done by one familiar with Pennsylvania work.

After receiving the news of his son's death, the elder Latrobe terminated his affairs in Washington and prepared to come to New Orleans to complete his contract, the City Council having voted to grant him a further extension. It is his account of this journey and of his stay in New Orleans that are the subjects of his writings here presented.

Besides designing the Claiborne monuments and the customhouse previously referred to, Latrobe did considerable work in the development of sugar houses and machinery before coming to New Orleans. After his arrival he also engaged in other business besides his waterworks, designing a hoist for Vincent Nolte's warehouse and preparing a plan for the decoration of the public square, including a fountain in its center.

On July 17, 1819, he purchased a house from Louis St. Blancard in the faubourg Clouet, about a mile below the city. Then, after a brief return to Baltimore to complete his work on the Cathedral and Exchange there, he brought his family to live in New Orleans. With him came his wife, their daughter Julia, and their son Benjamin, Jr., their other son, John H. B. Latrobe, being then a cadet at West Point. Their new home occupied a beautiful site above Clouet Street, facing south across the Mississippi, whence there is an excellent view of the city at the bend in the river. From here he could see his new central clock tower rising above the cathedral, and as his waterworks neared completion, his design was selected by the directors of the Louisiana State Bank for their new building. He seemed at last to be assured of the success for which he had made so many sacrifices.

The design for the bank proved to be Latrobe's last work. Before it could be erected and before the cathedral tower or the waterworks were completed, he was stricken by yellow fever, which had again become epidemic, and died on September 3, 1820, the

anniversary of his son's death. He was buried the following day in the Protestant Burial Ground. There is no monument to mark the spot, and the location is now unknown. After his death the waterworks were taken over by the city, and they were finally completed about 1822.

The plant continued to operate until about 1840, but proved to be inadequate to supply the needs of the rapidly growing city. On April 1, 1833, therefore, the State Legislature approved an act to incorporate the Commercial Bank of New Orleans, "the chief object of which said Company is to be the conveying of water from the river into the City of New Orleans and its faubourgs, and into the houses of its inhabitants." Under the provisions of the Act the city was permitted to continue the operation of Latrobe's waterworks, the water being used principally for street-cleaning purposes. The engineer for this new project was Albert Stein, who had erected similar works in Cincinnati, Richmond, Lynchburg, and Nashville.

Latrobe's family never realized anything from the waterworks, and soon after his death they returned to Baltimore, declining to accept the succession, but taking with them most of his furniture and library. Thus the enterprise to which Latrobe had devoted so much of his energies and all of his fortune failed entirely to realize his objective, which was to re-establish his fortune and provide for the future of his family.

The original manuscripts of Latrobe's journal, together with his sketches, are in the collection of the late Ferdinand Claiborne Latrobe II, of Baltimore, a great grandson of Benjamin H. B. Latrobe, and are now in the possession of his widow, who has granted permission for their publication. Parts of these New Orleans journals, together with other writings of Latrobe, were published in 1905, under the title *The Journal of Latrobe*, by D. Appleton and Company, New York; they contain some errors and omit many of the most interesting passages. The present work presents the original manuscripts in their entirety, with only such slight regularization of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and so forth, as is usual in transposing a typical early nineteenth-century manuscript into printed form. The manuscript consists of seven small copy books, containing from forty to sixty-five pages each. An eighth book, number three in the series, is unfortunately missing from the F. C. Latrobe collection and could not be located elsewhere. This lost book contained entries made between January 25 and February 16, 1819. Evidence that it was written is contained in a letter which Latrobe wrote to his wife on February 12, 1819, in which he said "I have filled three books with remarks which I shall send you by the first Baltimore vessel."

Several of the books contained general headings or were indexed by Latrobe. These

headings and index listings have been used to supply the subheadings in the text. In cases where such headings were not provided by Latrobe, they have been supplied by the editor and are so indicated (by brackets). The subdivision of the text into seven chapters corresponds to the arrangement of the manuscript in the seven copy books. The pen sketches inserted in the text are placed as nearly as possible where they occur in the original and are reproduced at approximately their original size. The other sketches in pen, pencil, wash, and water color are reproduced from Latrobe's sketch books. The two letters contained in this introduction are from the polygraph copies in the Latrobe letter books in the family collection in Baltimore. Quotations from Latrobe's letters contained in the footnotes are from the same letter books unless otherwise noted. Mrs. Gamble Latrobe, of Wilmington, Delaware, has an important collection of letters written by Latrobe and his wife from New Orleans and has generously permitted their use in the footnotes and in the appendix. These letters are of particular significance, because Latrobe's letter books, so carefully kept during the years from 1803 through 1817, are not known to exist for the years 1818, 1819, and 1820, the years in which his New Orleans journeys occurred.

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Samuel Wilson, Jr.

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