

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## REV. JAMES MCCARTHY 1851-1912

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The Rev. James A. McCarthy was born at Albion, N.Y. in 1851 and received his preliminary education in the Catholic Parochial School at St. Joseph's Parish. Upon the encouragement of his pastor, the Rev. Father John Castaldi, he decided to become a priest. At the age of 23 he entered St. Bonaventure College at Allegany, N.Y.

Following his graduation he went to Genoa, Italy for study and perfecting himself for his priestly duties. He was ordained in Genoa in 1885. Upon returning to this country he served as an assistant pastor for one year. In 1887 he was appointed to the Catholic parish at Angola, N.Y. where he labored for 16 years. It was during his pastorate at Angola that his congregation undertook the building of a new church edifice and where he became endeared in the hearts of his parishioners.

In 1902 he was appointed to St. Mary's R.C. Church in Holley. It is fair to assume that his ability in getting a new church for Angola must have been in the Bishop's mind for Holley when this appointment was made. In 1904, under the leadership of Father McCarthy, St. Mary's Church in Holley was erected. Created out of our native Medina Sandstone, it is truly a memorial to Father McCarthy's labors there.

The original Catholic Church in Holley was located on East Avenue. The present church on Main Street cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000 and gives testimony to the skill of Italian stonecutters and craftsmen. Perhaps Father McCarthy was inspired by the fifth chapter in 1st Kings verse 5: "So I intend to build a house of the name of the Lord my God as the Lord revealed ..."

The Rev. James McCarthy suffered with Bright's Disease for over a year before his death in October 1912. His funeral was conducted by Bishop Colton out of St. Mary's Church, which he so inspired. He was buried in old St. Joseph's Cemetery in Albion, then known as Holy Cross. He was survived by his mother, Mrs. Patrick McCarthy of



Albion, along with two brothers, John and Edward, and three sisters, Julia, Mary and Nellie. The latter served as his housekeeper in the rectory at Holley.

The author of his obituary notes: "He was bright and quick-witted in mind and generous and sunny in disposition. ... No man ever entered the priesthood with loftier motives, and the record of his life is one of continuous devotion to high ideals. ... We knew him as "Sunny Jim" for his whole life had been marked by a display of those cheery qualities which make for the happiness of mankind."

Good actions are the invisible hinges on the doors of heaven.

Victor Hugo