



*Mobile is known as the City of Six Flags, for the flags that have flown over it—the French king flag, the British Union Jack, the Spanish flag, the U.S. flag, the Republic of Alabama flag of 1861, and the flag of the Confederate States of America.*

# Church Street East Historic District

## Bishop Portier House

307 Conti Street

This one-and-a-half-story Gulf Coast cottage constructed of handhewn timbers was erected circa 1834 at a cost of about seven thousand dollars to serve as the home of Michael Portier, the first bishop of Mobile and father of Spring Hill College, who described it as “an honorable residence and a handy one.” Fr. Abraham Ryan, the Confederacy’s “poet-priest,” lived here in the 1870s, and it served as the bishop’s dwelling until 1914. Restored in 1958 as a private residence, its design is attributed to French seminarian Claude Beroujon. Although the type is five-bay cottage with Creole-style casement windows, the detailing is classical style, with a Federal pilastered entrance framed by a transom and sidelights, entablature, narrow architrave, and frieze embellished with triglyphs and metopes; a Tuscan-columned gallery; and segmental arched dormers with denticulation and curved upper lights.



*Listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey, this house shares the same original designer as that of the first Spring Hill College Administration Building and the interior of the body of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, although the latter was substantially altered over time. It is now open to the public.*





*The box grand piano, circa 1840, is made of rosewood with mother-of-pearl inlay, a scroll-carved music rack, and several remaining ivory keys.*



*The staircase features arrow-shaped balusters.*



*Bishop Portier House has beautiful fireplace mantels.*





*A chandelier suspends from an elaborate medallion.*



## **Barton Academy** *504 Government Street*

Renowned architects James Gallier, Sr., and James and Charles B. Dakin designed this Greek Revival-style public-school building in 1836 as the brainchild of Alabama legislator Willoughby Barton. Substantial funding came from Alabama's "first millionaire" and first state attorney general, Judge Henry Hitchcock, as well as from taxes on "spirituous liquor, bear baiting, bullfighting and pool rooms." The two-story façade features a gabled monumental hexastyle Ionic portico, flanked by projecting pilastered bays. The brick walls are stuccoed and scored to resemble stone, and the dome rests on an Ionic-colonnaded rotunda. All of these elements are indicative of the style that was popular during that era for statehouses and other grand public structures. Originally occupied by four separate tuition and denominational schools, the building subsequently served as a free public school, a Civil War hospital, again a school, and finally the home of the Board of School Commissioners. It is currently vacant.



*Barton Academy was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and is listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey. It was renovated in 1969-70.*



## Hall-Ford House

165 St. Emmanuel Street

This 9,000-square-foot, two-and-a-half-story, five-bay, center-hall house was built in 1836 for commission merchant and eventual Mobile mayor Edward Hall, a native Philadelphian. It features a rare masonry first floor, scored with stucco to simulate ashlar, and a frame-clapboard second level. The two-story, front-elevation gallery is supported by six brick and plaster Doric columns below and six wood Doric columns above. Fluted pilasters frame the ends of the first-story gallery, and the dormers are pedimented. All doors are fitted with Carpenter locks, each with a small brass “penny” inserted on the lock’s face.



*The substantially remodeled Hall-Ford House features an original rear- elevation courtyard, rear ell, and a two-story brick servant’s quarters.*



## **Government Street Presbyterian Church** *300 Government Street*

Reminiscent of a classical Greco-Roman temple, with a massive denticulated triangular pediment and brick walls scored to resemble stone, the Government Street Presbyterian Church was erected in 1836 for around sixty thousand dollars. It was designed by architects James Gallier and Charles Dakin and constructed by mason Thomas James. The distinctive recessed porch utilizes a distyle-in-antis plan, with Ionic columns between end bays with large box pilasters. The interior is distinguished by a deeply coffered diamond-pattern ceiling, a main-auditorium three-sided balcony with columns similar to those used in Athens' Tower of Winds (40 B.C.), side molding with Greek key design, and, behind the pulpit, four Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with rosettes and denticulation.



*The Government Street Presbyterian Church, one of the least-altered Greek Revival church buildings in America, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994.*





*The main auditorium features a deeply coffered diamond-pattern ceiling and a pipe organ occupying the full rear balcony.*