

THE BUDDY BOLDEN HOME  
2309-2311 First Street

Architectural Rating: Green  
Construction Date: 1871

Nomination Information

Date: November 9, 1977  
Nominated by: Renna Godchaux  
Seconded by: Louis Martin, Jane Ferguson  
Recommended by: Donald Marquis, jazz historian

Site Description

Square 328, Lot 3  
4th M.D., 12th A.D.  
Zoning: C-I  
Lot Size: 30' X 93'

Owner

Mrs. Bertha Blaum Winstill

The nomination of this building was based upon it having been the boyhood home of Buddy Bolden, one of the most important early jazz musicians. Each of the four areas of criteria used in determining landmark qualification, and outlined in City Ordinance #5992 M.C.S., will be individually examined in order to provide information upon which a final decision will be made whether or not to designate the property.

Historic Personages (prepared by Donald Marquis)

Buddy Bolden (9/6-1877 to 11/4-1931) moved to First Street, with his mother and sister, in 1887 at age ten. He came into a neighborhood that offered, uniquely, various styles of music that within a few years he was able to assimilate and experiment with in a way, that, combined with his own abilities and proclivities led to the first consciously striven for type of music that eventually became jazz. (1).

Just two blocks away from his home on First Street was the main route of the brass band parades (South Rampart Street), where the Excelsior, Onward and other bands marched by. At Liberty and Philip Streets was Mount Zion Hall, and a block over on Jackson Avenue was Longshoreman's Hall where these brass bands played for dances later in the evening. Three and four piece string bands were frequently employed for dances as well at these locations. Up the other way, in the 2400 block of First Street, was the First Street or St. John Baptist Church, an emotion-oriented church of which the Boldens were prominent members. (2).

- 1.) Marquis, Donald M. IN SEARCH OF BUDDY BOLDEN: FIRST MAN OF JAZZ, Baton Rouge. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. Pp 20-21.
- 2.) Ibid. Pp 15-18, 28.

Around the corner on Liberty Street lived a man who gave Buddy his first lessons on cornet in 1894. A block and a half away on South Rampart Street lived William H. Peyton, an accordian player-leader, who hired Buddy in his first professional jobs. William Warner and Cornelius Tillman, who would later be regulars in Buddy's band, lived within a two block radius. A regular hang-out for musicians in those days was a barber shop at the corner of First and Liberty Streets. As a widow (now in her 90s) of one of the early barbers remembers, Bolden and his boys often rehearsed in a room behind the shaving parlor. (3).

Bolden, as well, did a lot of his practising at home or on the stoop in front of the home on First Street. Buddy also conducted much of the band's business from his home. (4). The Boldens moved from this house to 2302 First Street in 1904, according to city directory listings. In 1907, Buddy Bolden was committed to an insane asylum in Jackson, Mississippi.

The years between 1895 and 1905 were Buddy Bolden's most productive ones and those years conveniently coincide with the very earliest days of jazz music. There was no jazz or ragtime band recalled by anyone as such before Buddy put his band together. 2309 First Street cannot be definitely called the birthplace of jazz, but it can almost certainly be pin-pointed as the location where the first man of jazz grew up and the location at which he formed the ideas and put together the band that is remembered as being the first jazz band.

3.) Ibid. Pp 22-25.

Marquis, Donald M. THE BOLDEN-PEYTON LEGEND: A RE-EVALUATION. Jazz Journal. London, V. 50, No. 2, February 1977. Pp 24-5.

Marquis, Donald M. CORNELIUS TILLMAN, DRUMMER. The Second Line, July 1976. Pp41-43.

Marquis, Donald M. INTERVIEW WITH MRS. NELSON JOSEPH, April 30, 1971

4.) Interview with Clarence Vincent. November 17, 195.

In WILLIAM RAMSON HOGAN JAZZ ARCHIVES, Tulane University.

Interview with Edward "Kid" Ory. April 20, 1957.

In WILLIAM RAMSON HOGAN JAZZ ARCHIVES, Tulane University

(Attached to this report are quotations from New Orleans musicians who knew Bolden.)

### Architectural Significance

Tax and conveyance records indicate that this single story, frame double was built in 1871 for owner Thomas Mangan, a successful grocer. In 1887, the Bolden family moved into the river side of the house. The structure at 2305-07 First Street was built at the same time and is an exact duplicate of the building in which the Bolden's lived.

The building, which retains nearly all of its original architectural features, is typical of modest rental properties built in New Orleans during the 1870's and 1880's. Although a great many of these buildings still stand, a large percentage of them have been defaced or altered. As is typical of double residences for the period, the two doors, approached by low stoops, are located on either side of the entrance facade. Two standard sized sash windows are set between the doors. Louvered shutters are attached to these windows. Although the design of the house does not fall within any defined architectural style due to its simplicity, the molded cornice treatment over the doors and windows is similar to that found on simple Italianate-style buildings. The other significant architectural feature on the house is the attractive scalloped cornice drapery attached to the simple cornice molding.

### Cultural, Economic and Social History

The historical significance of this building is based upon it having been the residence of Buddy Bolden during the period that he was involved in the development of jazz. This house is one of the few physical monuments remaining to these early years of jazz, now that other important sites have been demolished, such as Louis Armstrong's birth place, Globe Hall, Odd Fellows Hall and Union Sons Hall.

### Architect

Unknown