

## **History of Storyville**

In 1897 an effort was made by city politicians to contain the spread of, monitor and regulate the practice of prostitution in the city of New Orleans. Alderman Sidney Story proposed a law that there be a "certain district, outside of which it will be unlawful for prostitution to be carried on..." As no good deed goes unpunished the district still carries his name – Storyville.

Storyville was located on the land now known as Armstrong Park and the Iberville Housing project. Located adjacent to one of the city's railway stations where travelers arrived in the city, Storyville became a noted attraction. "Blue books" were published guiding visitors around Storyville and included house descriptions, prices, services and even descriptions of the women within the houses. Establishments in Storyville ranged from cheap "cribs" to elegant mansions. Madams such as Lulu White, Kate Townsend, Minnie Haha and Fannie Sweet became local celebrities.

Storyville played an important role in the development of Jazz music. Many notable musicians played in Storyville including, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver and Tony Jackson. Louis Armstrong delivered coal to Storyville as a young boy, no doubt stoking his interest in music. Tourists who visited the saloons and brothels, heard the music, returned home and fueled its spread across America and abroad.

Twenty years after its creation, Storyville was closed down by a federal order attempting to eradicate prostitution near naval bases. The neighborhood was soon targeted for "slum clearance." Almost all of the buildings were demolished in the 1930s to clear the land for the Iberville Housing Project. Only a few buildings remain, three of which are being proposed for landmark designation.

**New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission  
Landmark Designation Report  
December 11, 2009**



**Frank Early's "My Place" Saloon.  
1214-16 Bienville Street**

**Frank Early's "My Place" Saloon  
1214-16 Bienville Street, including 240 Crozat Street**

**Landmark Designation Report**

**Construction Date:** Unknown  
**Architect:** Unknown

**Site Description:** Square 124, lot 5-D forming the corner of Bienville and Crozat Streets, measuring 32' x 64'.

**Municipal District:** 2  
**Assessment District:** 06  
**Owner:** Abdel I. Mousa  
**Date Nominated:** January 11, 2000

The nomination of this property was based upon its architectural and historical significance. City Ordinance No. 5992 MCS defines a Landmark or Landmark site as: An unimproved parcel of ground (landmark site) or such parcel with improvements or such improvements without grounds (landmark), wheresoever located in the City of New Orleans, subject to the jurisdiction of the Historic District Landmarks Commission, of particular historic, architectural, or cultural significance, which said parcel or parcels, plus its improvements, if any, 1) Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community; or 2) Are identified with historic personages or with important events in national, state, or local history; or 3) Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or 4) Are representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual ability has been recognized.

**History of the Property**

This is a two story, frame building sited on a corner. It features a second floor gallery that wraps the corner and maintains its wrought iron railing. Although the first floor has been heavily altered, the second floor retains some of its character with its ornate brackets.

This structure was operated as a saloon by Storyville businessman Frank Early. It had a reputation as a place to hear good music, especially during the time that the legendary pianist Tony Jackson played on the premises. Popular as a piano "professor", Tony Jackson lived on the second floor of the building and composed his hit song "Pretty Baby" while living there.

**Landmark basis:**

Criteria:

- 1) Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community...

Despite the rush of city fathers to wipe the stain of Storyville off the map of New Orleans, the history of Storyville is intertwined with the history of New Orleans. It was an extremely colorful chapter in the already colorful history of the city. Of the hundreds of building that formerly occupied the Storyville area, only a handful remain. The staff of the HDLC finds that Frank Early's "My Place" Saloon meets one of the four landmark categories in that it reflects the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state or community.