

history

The area in this tour includes the central part of the Vieux Carre--that part mid-way between N. Rampart and Decatur Streets. The Vieux Carre is the original city founded by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville in 1718. The Bourbon St. entertainment district is approximately seventy-five years old. Until the 1920's, Bourbon St. was the most fashionable residential street in the Vieux Carre. However, during that time it began a transformation into a street of nightclubs and restaurants. When the the red-light district (although in a new sub-rosa mode) moved from Storyville to the adjacent Tango Belt, the latter began to be considered as unsavory. Therefore, many high-caliber entertainment establishments such as cabarets and nightclubs began to open one block further over to the adjacent and then still respectable Bourbon St.



Prima's 500 Club, 1946
Photo by Walter Cook Reenan.

With the exception of the nightclubs on Bourbon St., the sites in this tour do not form a particular zone, but are included together because of proximity. Although the Vieux Carre, and especially Bourbon Street, went through a time of great change, more stringent enforcement of historic regulations has brought about restoration of many of the buildings, and much of the then-stylish gaudiness of Bourbon St. has now been mitigated to some degree.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE GOOD JUDGEMENT AND COMMON SENSE IN TAKING THIS TOUR AS IT IS IN AN URBAN AREA.

In 1987 the United States Congress, through Concurrent Resolution 57, designated Jazz "a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support and resources to make certain it is preserved, understood and promulgated."

This historic site tour is a program of the New Orleans Jazz Commission, a 17 member National Park Service public commission appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Commission was authorized on October 31, 1994 through Public Law 103-433 which established the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park - a new National Park focused on the early culture of traditional jazz.



The New Orleans Jazz Commission's concurrent mission with New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park includes the evaluation of historic sites associated with the origins and early history of jazz, as well as preservation and interpretation of jazz history.

Further information on the historic jazz sites contained in this tour can be accessed at:

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park.
916 N. Peters. 589-4841 www.nps.gov/nea



Hogan Jazz Archives at Tulane University.
6801 Freret St. Jones Hall. 865-5688

Special Collections - Tulane University. Jones Hall.
6801 Freret St. 865-5685

New Orleans Jazz Museum Collection, LA State Museum.
The Mint. 400 Esplanade 568-8215

Historic New Orleans Collection. 533 Royal St.
523-4662 *Williams Research Center.* 598-7171

New Orleans Public Library - Louisiana Division.
219 Loyola. 596-2610

Preservation Resource Center.
923 Tchoupitoulas. 581-7032

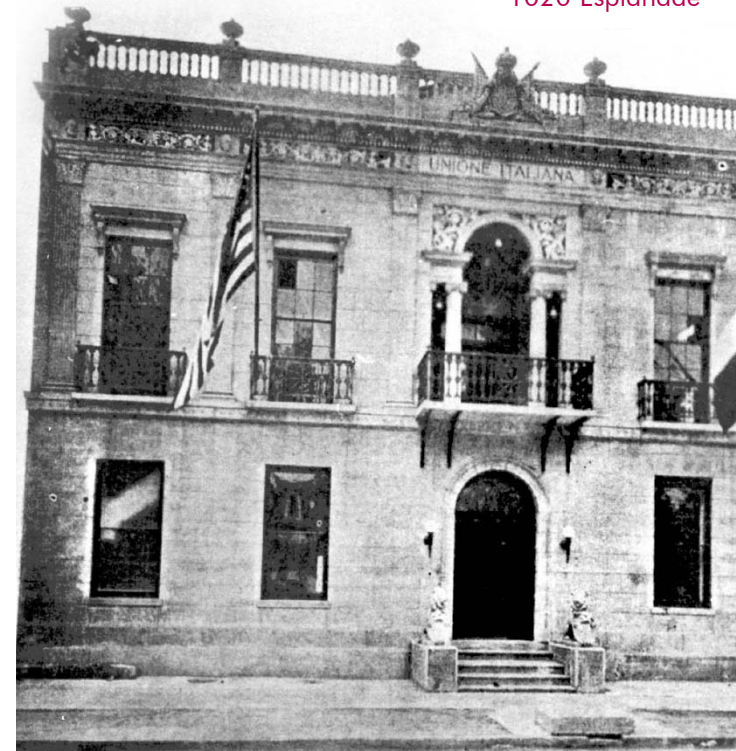
Visit our website www.nojazzcommission.com

New Orleans Jazz history

WALKING TOURS

CENTRAL VIEUX CARRE

Italian Hall
1020 Esplanade



4

NUMBER FOUR OF THE JAZZ HISTORY WALKING AND MOTOR TOUR SERIES

Sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz Commission

tour map

1. ITALIAN HALL. 1020 Esplanade Ave.

This imposing complex was assembled out of old buildings (one by architect James Gallier, dating to 1835) and new construction from between 1912 and 1920. As the Unione Italiana, which combined many Italian benevolent societies, it was the home of both the Contessa Entellina Society Band, made up of Albanian-Sicilian Italian-Americans and the Roma Band, of Sicilian Italian-Americans. During their rivalry a musician could be in one, not both. Many jazz bands played here for dances including the New Orleans Rhythm Kings upon their return to New Orleans. In 1929, it housed the Jones-Collins Astoria Hot Eight recording session, the first racially-integrated recording in New Orleans; Westwego-born clarinetist Sidney Arodin (Arnonidin) jumped the color barrier.

2. GEORGE LEWIS RESIDENCE. 827 St. Philip St.

This was the location where the 1943 recording of Lewis's Burgundy Street Blues took place, and also the site of the recording session for Bunk Johnson's Brass Band in 1945.

3. MORNING STAR BAPTIST CHURCH. 910 Burgundy St.

Bassist "Slow Drag" Pavageau's wife Annie, a talented musician in her own right, was the organist and choir mistress at this small church during the 1950's and 60's.

4. NEW ORLEANS JAZZ MUSEUM. 1017 Dumaine St.

This was the original site of the New Orleans Jazz Museum, which was opened by the New Orleans Jazz Club at this location in 1961. Their collection of very significant early jazz memorabilia is now housed in the Old U. S. Mint at 400 Esplanade under the auspices of the Louisiana State Museum.

5. DIXIE'S BAR OF MUSIC. 701 Bourbon St.

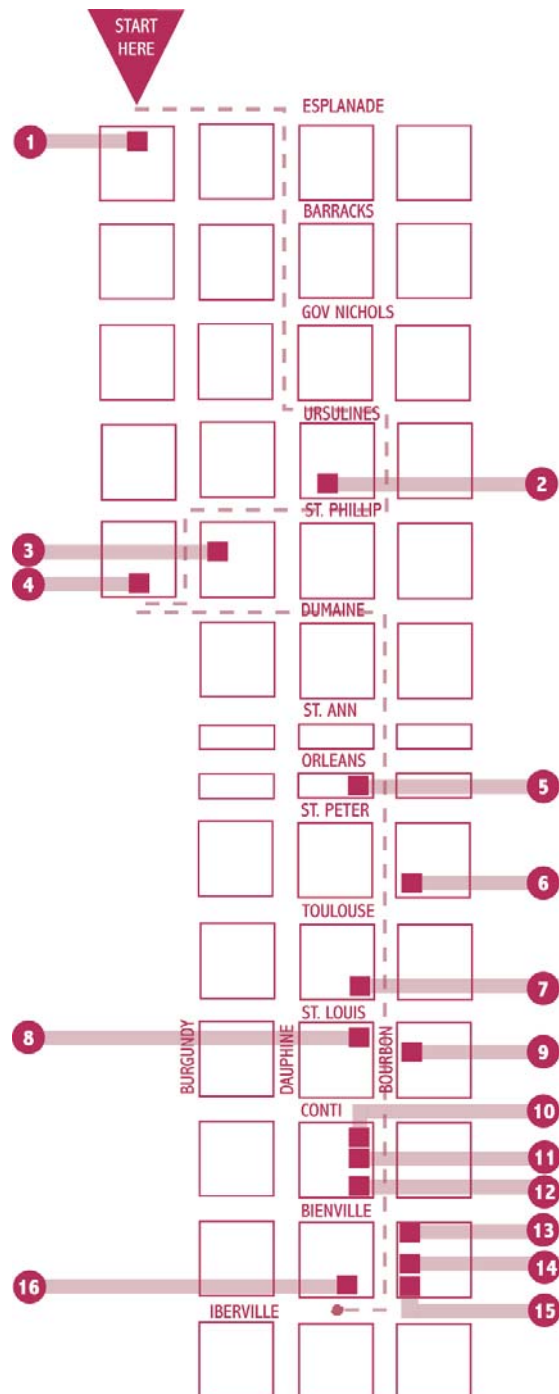
When Dixie Fasnacht moved her establishment from the 200 block of St. Charles St. to Bourbon St., she continued her policy of an all-girl jazz band with herself on clarinet. Her famous wall mural is now on display at the Old U. S. Mint.

6. PIER 600. 600 Bourbon St.

Starting as Dan's International Settlement Club in the 1950's and ending as Dan's Bateau Lounge in the 1960's, this location was also Dan's Pier 600 in between. Proprietor Dan Levy showcased Jack Bachman, Lester Bouchon, and Len Ferguson at the first, and Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, Bob Havens, and Godfrey Hirsch, at the second.

7. AL HIRT'S CLUB. 501 Bourbon St.

This location started as the second location for Dan's Pier 600, then became Al Hirt's Club, and then Al Hirt's Basin Street South. Hirt's group was the house band, but the club was also a venue for good jazz bands on tour.



8. 500 CLUB. 441 Bourbon St.

One of the early jazz spots on Bourbon St., Prima's 500 Club was operated by Leon Prima, Louis's older brother and himself a trumpeter of some repute. Prima and Frank Federico were highlighted at the opening in 1946, and music historian Hank Kmen later played in the band here.

9. DREAM ROOM. 426 Bourbon St.

Opened as the Silver Slipper by banjoist-businessman Steve Loyacano, it was later the New Slipper Club, then the Dream Room. Bandleaders Tony Parenti, Jules Bauduc, Merritt Brunies, Peter Bocage, and Sharkey Bonano all played here over the years. It was also the site of trombonist Jack Teagarden's last performance.

10. FAMOUS DOOR. 339 Bourbon St.

This Bourbon Street landmark has featured jazz for over half a century. Sharkey Bonano was a fixture for years and the Dukes of Dixieland, the Basin St. Six, and Roy Liberto and Santo Pecora's bands also held forth for long runs.

11. MARDI GRAS LOUNGE. 333 Bourbon St.

This club, known as Sid Davilla's Mardi Gras Lounge featured Lizzie Miles as well as Freddie Kohlman's band and others. Owner and clarinetist Sid Davilla usually sat in with the band on the last set.

12. PADDOCK LOUNGE. 315 Bourbon St.

This nightspot with a horseracing theme was run by equestrian Steve Valenti and later by his wife. The band in the early 1950's was Oscar "Papa" Celestin's and then after his death Octave Crosby's Band. The off-night group was Narvin Kimball's Gentlemen of Jazz.

13. OLD ABSINTHE HOUSE. 240 Bourbon St.

The Old Absinthe House has had an off-and-on jazz policy since the 1920's. Pianists included Steve Lewis, Frank Froeba, Burnell Santiago, and Walter "Fats" Pichon. Louis Armstrong was the attraction here during his return trip to New Orleans in 1955.

14. SHO-BAR. 228 Bourbon St.

Sharkey Bonano's band was here when the club had a jazz music policy.

15. EL MOROCCO. 200 Bourbon St.

During the late forties and early fifties Phil Zito then George Lewis held forth.

16. THE KING'S ROOM. 811 Iberville St.

Because of its location as part of the Iberville St. strip, this small night club under its various names was probably one of the few that survived the entertainment transition from the Tango Belt to Bourbon St. It featured pianist Armand Hug in the early 1960's.