

LIVING WITH HISTORY IN NEW ORLEANS' NEIGHBORHOODS

Faubourg Marigny

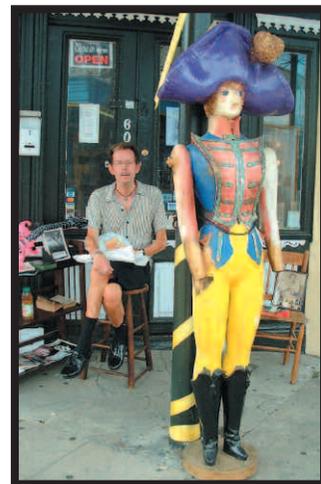


PHOTO: MARY FITZPATRICK

**PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS
INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE THE LOCAL SIDE OF LIFE
IN THE VIBRANT FAUBOURG MARIGNY, AN EARLY
19th CENTURY NEIGHBORHOOD SAVED FROM
“MODERNIZATION” BY FARSIGHTED RESIDENTS.**



People in Faubourg Marigny are passionate about preservation. They saw their downtown neighborhood, developed as New Orleans' second suburb in 1806, abandoned by city officials and desecrated by “modern” zoning regulations in the 1950s and '60s. Building by building, they fought to save their historic neighborhood. Based on a Tulane University study of the merits of zoning as an alternative to historic districting led by Marigny resident, architect and professor Eugene Cizek, the City Council adopted Historic Marigny Zoning in 1971. This was the first historic zoning since the Vieux Carré. In 1974 these farsighted citizens won designation for “The Marigny” as a National Register historic district. Some fought for the preservation of a neighborhood where their families have lived for more than 100 years. Equally



passionate newcomers glimpsed beauty under the skin of 20th-century poverty and neglect. Their combined efforts through the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association have created zoning and regulatory models that are now used in historic neighborhoods across the city. A quarter of a century later, Marigny is on the beaten path for Orleanians and visitors looking for great music, fine food, and an authentic,

intact, and livable historic neighborhood. It is a true success story of citizen involvement.

Immediately downriver of the Vieux Carré, Faubourg Marigny was once the plantation of Marquis Antoine Xavier Bernard Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville, the Creole bon vivant who made the dice game “craps” popular in America and who dazzled New Orleans by his flair and enormous inheritance. After subdividing the property in 1806, Marigny entertained talks with American entrepreneurs who wanted to make this district the new business hub of the post-Louisiana Purchase city.

The faubourg was never to be a prosperous American business center, however. Instead, it developed gradually with a distinctly European flair and a cosmopolitan mix that included Creoles, free people of color and immigrants, especially Germans, as well as a smattering of the newly arrived Americans.



Bernard Marigny’s combination of class and *joie de vivre* continues to make him the patron saint of this slightly bohemian quarter.

Today’s Marigny is still cosmopolitan, a singles-friendly and artist-friendly neighborhood where people from all over the world have chosen to make their home. Beautiful Creole and Classic Revival cottages that stood abandoned after residents left for the suburbs in the 1950s have been restored and painted in rich golds, brick reds and moss greens. Historic banks, corner stores and even bakeries have been refurbished as homes and guesthouses, while riverfront warehouses now accommodate artists’ studios and performance spaces. Weekends bring shoppers to independent galleries and rummage stores in lower Marigny, while the restaurants and jazz clubs of the Marigny Triangle draw people from everywhere.

TOURS

We encourage you to use good judgment and common sense in taking these tours.

TOUR A

Marigny Triangle (walk/bike) The City of New Orleans controlled the 100-foot deep lots along Esplanade Ave., which are oriented toward the street grid of the French Quarter, but the streets turn sharply as you enter Marigny, aligning with the river and Elysian Fields Ave. Follow Bourbon St. one block downriver from Esplanade Ave. to where it becomes Pauger St. The charming Spanish-influenced cottage that follows the angled street at 1436 Pauger St. was built by Jean Louis Dolliole, a builder-architect responsible for some of the characteristic houses of the Creole faubourgs, sometime before 1821. Dolliole was a free person of color, as were many Faubourg Marigny property owners and builders—including those who built the early Creole cottages you see at 1428 Bourbon and 1455-57 Pauger St. The 1815 Creole cottage at 1515 Pauger St. is undergoing renovation as the Musee Rosette Rochon, dedicated to Rochon and other free people of color who were accomplished in business, the arts and science.

Follow Pauger St. two blocks, noting several charming Creole cottages, then turn right on Burgundy St. The mid-19th century commercial building (2000-2006 Burgundy St.), early 20th-century bank (2001 Burgundy St.), and associated storehouses at Burgundy and Touro streets are a reminder of the small Main Streets that once powered this and other historic neighborhoods. Sun Oak, a standout among the many Creole and Victorian cottages in the 2000 block of Burgundy St., has been restored by its owners as a city landmark and house museum. The herringbone brick sidewalks serve as a reminder that quality sidewalks are essential to making any neighborhood habitable in a city of streets prone to flooding. Continue one block to Frenchmen St., named for the French martyrs shot by Spanish Governor Alejandro O’Reilly in 1769, then turn right to walk past neighborhood restaurants, B&Bs, and Washington Square, the only New Orleans public space with a French-style double alley of oaks. An integral part of the faubourg’s original plan, this square—once a paved basketball court—was restored to its original European layout in the 1970s thanks to efforts of neighborhood residents. Follow Frenchmen St. to sample the jazz clubs and bistros that occupy the 19th-century storefronts here or turn right at Chartres St. and veer right along Kerlerec St. for two blocks to end again at the Dolliole cottage.

TOUR B

Architects Row, NOCCA Riverfront, Plessy Site (drive/bike) The monumental Greek Revival building at 2601 Chartres St. (corner Franklin St.) was built as the Moreau Street Methodist Church in 1854 to serve the neighborhood’s German residents. Just beyond, the row of circa 1836 homes at 2609-33

Chartres St. has been called the most intact row of Creole cottages left in the Marigny. The two three-and-a-half-story brick row houses at 2701 and 2707 Chartres St. (corner Port St.) are all that remain of the ten 1836 Creole-style townhouses built here by La Compagnie des Architectes, which developed a similar row in the 1100 block of Chartres St. The former warehouse at 2800 Chartres St. (corner St.



Ferdinand St.), built in the 1880s, is now part of New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, an arts training program that draws the state’s most promising high school students.

Continue on Chartres St. to Press St. (railroad tracks), the present-day boundary between Faubourg Marigny and Bywater, then turn left one block to Royal St. On the corner is the place where Homer Plessy, of the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, was pulled from a train for defying “separate but equal” racial laws in 1891. A coalition of residents and neighborhood high school students plan a memorial here.

Turn left on Royal St. and look immediately to your right to see the gardens and labyrinth of Lazarus House hospice. Just beyond, you’ll spy the bell towers of Holy Trinity, built for German Catholics in 1853. The influx of German immigrants to this area caused it to be dubbed “Little Saxony” in the mid-19th century. Proceed three blocks to Franklin Ave., which was originally the lower boundary of Marigny and once the site of a “rope walk,” a long unbroken shed where rope was formed. This neighborhood enterprise divided Faubourg Marigny from Bywater, a division still evidenced by a telltale jog in the streets that meet Franklin Ave. Neighborhood cafés and restaurants occupy many of Franklin Avenue’s historic commercial buildings today. Continue on Royal St. to Elysian Fields Ave. and the Marigny Triangle, noting the meticulously refurbished historic homes (many with businesses on their ground floors) along the way.

TOUR C

Elysian Fields (walk/bike/drive)

Elysian Fields Avenue was conceived as the grand boulevard of Faubourg Marigny in the manner of its Parisian namesake *Champs Elyseés*. New Orleans’ Elysian Fields, however, was planned with a central canal for transporting goods to and from Lake Pontchartrain. It became increasingly commercial after the Pontchartrain Railroad opened in 1831. Start at the corner of Rampart St. and Elysian Fields Ave. and head towards the river, noticing the guesthouses that are driving restoration in the 900 block. The frame

cottage at 933 Elysian Fields Ave. is a rare hybrid of the side-gabled Creole style with Greek Revival details. The steeply-pitched hipped-roof design of the Creole cottage (ca. 1810) at 820 Elysian Fields Ave., the oldest house remaining on this street, suggests that this was a rural site when the home was built. By the mid-1850s, the faubourg was commercial enough to prompt Ferdinand Nolting to build the Creole storehouse at 707 Elysian Fields Ave. (corner Royal St.) and develop 635 Elysian Fields Ave. as a commercial bakery. Stella and Stanley Kowalski, fictional characters in the Tennessee Williams play “A Streetcar Named Desire,” were supposed to have lived at 632 Elysian Fields Ave. All traces of the riverfront Marigny plantation home just downriver of Elysian Fields Ave., where Bernard de Marigny is said to have dined with both Louis Philippe of France and the Marquise de Lafayette, have sadly disappeared.





Feelings Café

- 1721 French engineers plot the Vieux Carré
- 1743 Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil acquires plantation below present-day Esplanade Ave.
- 1798 Pierre Philippe de Marigny acquires plantation
- 1800 Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville inherits father's estate, including present-day Faubourg Marigny, making him one of richest people in New World
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase
- 1806 Nicholas de Finiels develops street plan for Marigny; engineer Barthelemy Lafon lays out street grid
- 1812 Former town common, now Esplanade Ave., subdivided into lots
- 1831 Pontchartrain Railroad (a.k.a. "Smoky Mary"), 2nd oldest railroad in U.S., opens on Elysian Fields Ave.
- 1832 World's largest cotton press opens on present-day Press St.
- 1836 Faubourg Marigny established as Third Municipality of the city with separate government
- 1852 Municipalities combine into single city government of New Orleans
- 1892 Homer Plessy arrest, an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate "separate but equal" legislation, staged at Royal St. depot
- 1971 City Council adopts Historic Marigny Zoning in the Triangle
- 1972 Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association founded
- 1974 Historic Marigny Zoning instituted in the Rectangle
- 1974 Marigny placed on National Register of Historic Places
- 1976 Washington Square restored
- 1978 Faubourg Marigny becomes local historic district under the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission



"They told me to take a streetcar named Desire, and then transfer to one called Cemeteries and ride six blocks and get off at—Elysian Fields."

Blanche Dubois
"A Streetcar Named Desire"



Published by
PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER
OF NEW ORLEANS
923 TCHOUPITOULAS STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70130
504/581-7032
www.prcno.org

Since 1974 the Preservation Resource Center has promoted the preservation, restoration and revitalization of New Orleans' historic neighborhoods and architecture.



This brochure is made possible by a generous grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities