

LIVING WITH HISTORY IN NEW ORLEANS' NEIGHBORHOODS

New Marigny



PHOTO: TOLTON CONNER JR.

**PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS
INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE THE LOCAL SIDE OF LIFE
IN NEW MARIGNY, A NEIGHBORHOOD WITH
MANY CHALLENGES, MUCH HOPE, AND
DEDICATED HARD-WORKING CITIZENS.**



Convenient to both New Orleans' Central Business District and the Vieux Carré, historic New Marigny, also called Faubourg St. Roch, has all the makings of a desirable downtown neighborhood. Industrialization and flight to the suburbs hit this area hard, however, and the construction of I-10 over a main thoroughfare in the 1960s sent many residents and businesses packing. By the 1990s residents were faced with the effects of decades of poverty, neglect and poor urban planning. In 1995 a group of determined residents banded together to close a notorious bar and forged a strong neighborhood coalition in the process. Since then, the same committed residents, under the banner of the Crescent City Peace Alliance, have worked with Preservation Resource Center's Rebuilding Together program to paint and repair dozens of houses for elderly and disabled homeowners. They've also formed partnerships with local police to address crime, taken a systematic approach to blighted housing, and organized neighborhood tours and clean-ups.

Creole landowner Bernard de Marigny sold the lots in his 1806 subdivision, Faubourg Marigny, so quickly that he extended the development just four years later. Sales of the affordable, modest-





sized lots were spurred when the Pontchartrain Railroad, or “Smoky Mary,” began running on Elysian Fields Avenue in 1831. Development of the area downriver of Elysian Fields Avenue followed when Faubourg Franklin was laid out in 1834. This neighborhood, like Faubourg Marigny across St. Claude Avenue, was settled by French Creoles, German immigrants and free people of color between the 1830s and 1880s. Several musicians either grew up in the neighborhood or moved here as adults. Ferdinand LaMothe, better known as Jelly Roll Morton, snuck away from his upright Creole grandmother’s home just off Elysian Fields Avenue to play piano in the red light district, Storyville. Sidney Bechet, Manny Perez, Danny Barker and Paul Barbarin, all giants of New Orleans music, also made their homes in the neighborhood.

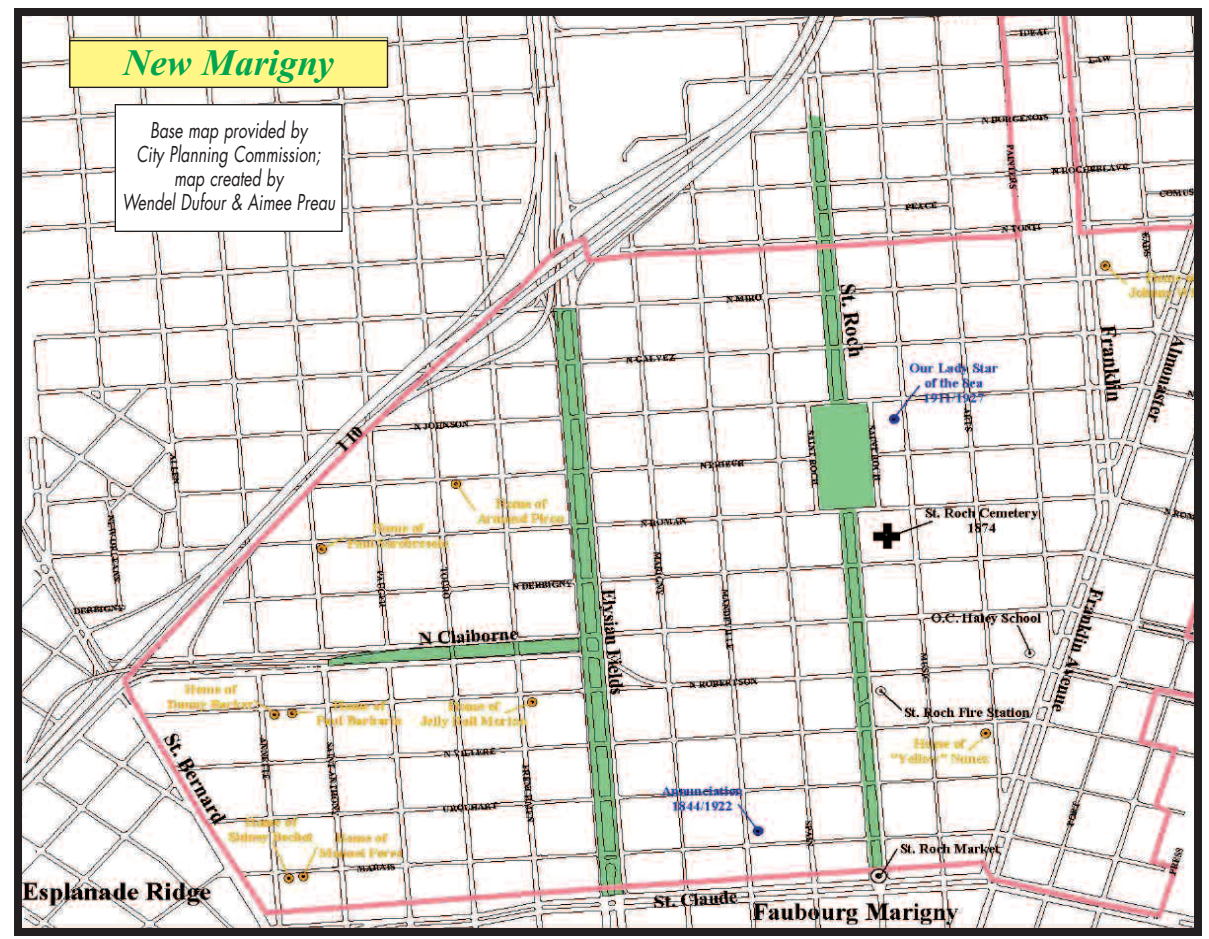
Driving or walking through New Marigny today, you’ll find 20th century funk palaces like the Saturn Bar on St. Claude Avenue and 19th century icons like the St. Roch Market, one of the last surviving public market buildings in New Orleans. The Circle Market at 1522 St. Bernard Avenue continues to thrive even with competition from national grocery chains. Under the ancient oaks along St. Roch and Elysian Fields avenues, Creole cottages and shotgun houses are gradually taking on a fresh coat of paint and new hope. A public park is underway for the formerly industrial Press Street corridor, and a streetcar line will soon connect St. Claude Avenue with the city’s business and tourist centers. For New Marigny, challenges remain, but things are looking up.

TOURS

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

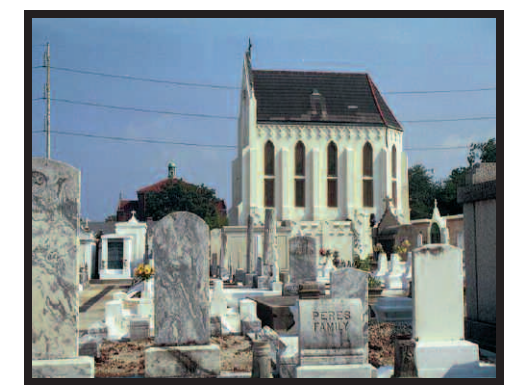
TOUR A

St. Roch Avenue and Cemetery (drive) The St. Roch Market (circa 1840) at the intersection of St. Claude and St. Roch avenues is a rare surviving example of a type of public, covered market once found in every neighborhood of New Orleans. Today, the picturesque wooden structure is home to a take-out seafood and sandwich shop, though its proposed redevelopment as a multi-use center was a key element of a 1999 Tulane University study for the area’s revitalization. Drive alongside the building to discover St. Roch Avenue, a mostly residential boulevard with a wide central median. The shotgun houses and Creole cottages here are representative of the neighborhood as a whole. St. Roch Avenue was first an extension of Poets Street in Faubourg Marigny but was renamed Washington Walk and reshaped as one of three boulevards anchoring Faubourg Franklin in 1834. (The other two, St. Claude Avenue and Franklin Avenue, still exist.) The name St. Roch comes from the magnificent Gothic Revival 1876 St. Roch Cemetery and Shrine located on the right between N. Claiborne Avenue and N. Roman Street. During the yellow fever plague of 1868, Lutheran Reverend Peter Leonard Thevis of Holy Trinity National German Church in the Bywater promised to build a shrine to St. Roch, a French saint associated with



infectious diseases, if his congregation were spared. The Chapel to St. Roch in the center of St. Roch No. 1, which faces St. Roch Avenue, is often sprinkled with ex-votos left by supplicants seeking the saint’s intervention. The walls surrounding the cemetery are filled with wall tombs, but if you look closely you’ll also see fourteen small shrines, one for each of the Stations of the Cross, where Catholics come for the Way of the Cross on Good Friday. One tradition holds that young girls who visit St. Roch Cemetery after visiting eight St. Joseph’s altars on St. Joseph’s Day will marry the man of their choice. Back outside the cemetery, the avenue diverges around Independence Park. Popularly known as St. Roch Playground, this New Orleans Recreation Department facility has been a launching ground for neighborhood baseball clubs since the 1940s. The two-block long green space faces Our Lady Star of

the Sea Catholic Church, 1835 St. Roch Avenue, a central-plan church with attached parochial school. Circle the playground and head back on St. Roch to St. Claude Avenue.





- 1798 Pierre Philippe de Marigny acquires Dubreuil Plantation
- 1800 Marquis Antoine Xavier Bernard Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville inherits from Pierre Philippe de Marigny Louisiana Purchase
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase
- 1806 Nicholas de Finiels develops street plan for Marigny; engineer Barthelemy Lafon contracts to lay out the street grid
- 1810 Marigny extends original subdivision, asking Lafon to plot area now known as "New Marigny"
- 1831 Pontchartrain Railroad (a.k.a. "Smoky Mary"), 2nd oldest railroad in U.S., opens on Elysian Fields
- 1832 World's largest cotton press opens on present Press Street
- 1836 New Marigny, with Faubourg Marigny, established as Third Municipality of the city with separate government
- 1852 All municipalities combined into single city government of New Orleans
- 1850-70 Fashionable Esplanade Avenue draws wealthier Creoles away from Marigny and New Marigny
- 1867 Yellow fever outbreak prompts Lutheran Reverend Peter Leonard Thevis to pledge construction of shrine to St. Roch if his congregation is spared
- 1874 St. Roch Cemetery begun
- 1876 St. Roch Shrine and Cemetery dedicated; Faubourg Franklin renamed Faubourg St. Roch
- 1895 Drainage improvements enable development beyond Peoples Street
- 1921 Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, a.k.a. Industrial Canal, built below New Marigny
- 1960s I-10 constructed over N. Claiborne Ave.
- 1995 Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association founded
- 1994 New Marigny established as National Register Historic District

Annual Neighborhood Events

- August: Night Out Against Crime
- October: Preservation Resource Center's Rebuilding Together program

Neighborhood Organizations

- Crescent City Peace Alliance
- Faubourg Franklin Foundation
- Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association

Circle Food Store

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GMAC	Cingular Wireless	Verizon Wireless	Sprint/Sprint PCS
Mervyn's	Dish Network	Capital One Credit Card	Texaco
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Since 1974 the Preservation Resource Center has promoted the preservation, restoration and revitalization of New Orleans' historic neighborhoods and architecture.



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