

33 1/3



**THE WILD  
TCHOUPITOULAS**  
by **Bryan Wagner**

B L O O M S B U R Y



## THE WILD TCHOUPITOULAS

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NEW YORK • LONDON • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

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Bloomsbury Publishing Inc  
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA

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First published in the United States of America 2019

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Cover design: Louise Dugdale  
Cover image © 333sound.com

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A catalog record for this title is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: PB: 978-1-5013-3336-1  
ePDF: 978-1-5013-3338-5  
eBook: 978-1-5013-3337-8

Series: 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

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*All royalties from this book are contributed to the  
New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian Council.*

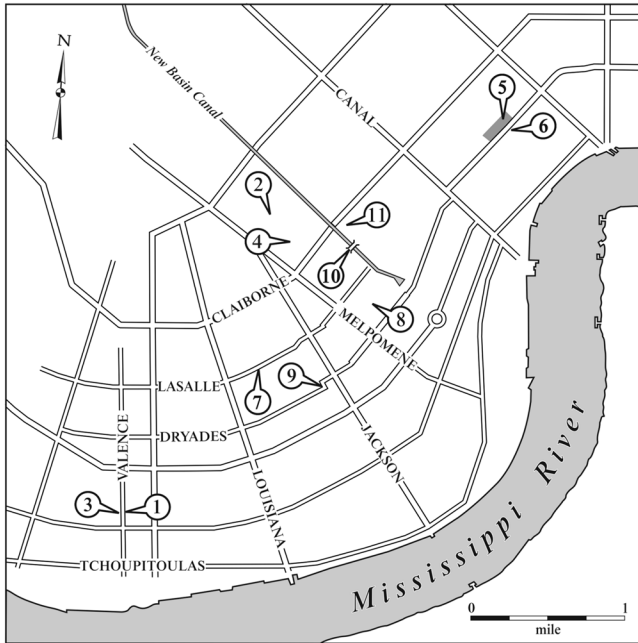


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# Maps



New Orleans in the 1930s and 1940s

## **New Orleans in the 1930s and 1940s**

1. **Neville Family Residences.** The family lived at 1016 Valence Street along with Big Arthur's mother, Rowena, before moving to the Calliope Projects in 1942. In 1954, the family returned to live in a camelback double shotgun house at 1104 and 1106 Valence Street, with the family on one side and Rowena and her sister Cat on the other.

2. **Calliope Housing Projects.** Built between 1939 and 1941, the Calliope Projects were modern, well-appointed residences when the Neville family relocated there in 1942. Art, Charles, and Aaron went to nearby St. Monica Elementary School where their classmates included James Booker and Allen Toussaint. The Calliope Projects were demolished in 2014.

3. **Jack Callahan's,** 938 Valence Street. A neighborhood bar, attached to a grocery, with a piano and jukebox. From the beginning, Jolly was a regular here. Art remembers that when he first heard the term "barrelhouse piano," it made him think about the pungent aroma from the empty beer barrels stored in the back at Jack Callahan's.

4. **Booker T. Washington High School,** 1201 South Roman Street. Opened in 1942, this was the first high school in New Orleans established specifically for black students. Charles attended and was a standout player in the band under legendary music teacher Yvonne Busch. The school auditorium had 2,000 seats, and it served as an important community center where large concerts and meetings

were held. The Hawkettes, with both Art and Aaron in the lineup, opened for Louis Jordan here. The school was closed following Hurricane Katrina, after which all buildings were demolished, except the art-deco auditorium, which is still waiting to be restored.

5. **Congo Square.** Since the early eighteenth century, Congo Square was a location where slaves and their associates were permitted to gather on Sundays to perform traditional music and dance. In the 1930s and 1940s, the area was officially known as Beauregard Square, named for Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard.

6. **J&M Recording Studio,** 838–840 North Rampart Street. Located across the street from Congo Square, J&M was a small independent studio run by Cosimo Matassa where many landmark rhythm-and-blues recordings were made between 1945 and 1956 by artists such as Roy Brown, Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, and Little Richard.

7. **Dew Drop Inn,** 2836 LaSalle Street. A combination hotel, restaurant, barbershop, and music club, Frank Painia's Dew Drop Inn was central to black entertainment culture from the 1940s to the 1960s. Variety shows featured not only music but also comedy, dance, and drag performances. Music included touring acts from Ray Charles to Duke Ellington and local groups such as Huey Smith and the Clowns. Jolly, Aaron, and Charles were all regulars here, and Charles also played in the house band.

8. **Club Tijuana,** 1209 South Saratoga Street. Club Tijuana was another large music venue that became essential to the

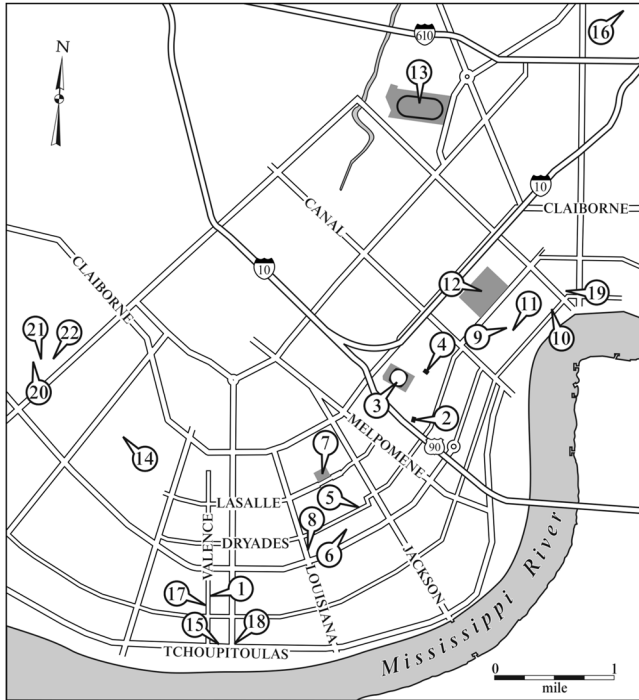
city's expanding club circuit in the 1950s. More casual than the Dew Drop Inn, and also less expensive, it focused on local musicians who had yet to make a name for themselves in the national recording industry.

9. **Victor Augustine's Shop**, 2019 Dryades Street. This record and voodoo shop sold charms, candles, dream books, and other miscellaneous paraphernalia, but it was best known for the back room where musicians would gather to play. It was run by Victor Augustine, also known as Doc the Mighty, who worked as an influential music scout when he was not reading palms and selling winning lottery numbers.

10. **Magnolia Bridge**. This was a wooden pontoon bridge that crossed over the New Basin Canal at Magnolia Street. It is famous in Mardi Gras Indian folklore as the location of many battles between Uptown and Downtown tribes. The Magnolia Bridge was taken down in 1937–38 when the section of the New Basin Canal from the turning basin to Claiborne Avenue was closed and filled in.

11. **Battlefield**. The battlefield is another legendary setting of Indian skirmishes in the early twentieth century. Its exact location is unknown. It is thought to have been on the downtown side of the New Basin Canal, likely around the area that now houses the city's train station, the Louisiana Superdome, and City Hall. Some people think the battlefield may have been further north by Poydras Avenue between Claiborne Avenue and Galvez Street.

MAPS



New Orleans in the 1970s

## New Orleans in the 1970s

1. **Neville Residences.** Members of the Neville family have continued to live in their old neighborhood along Valence Street with all of the brothers returning for a time in the early 1980s. Art lived at 1115 Valence Street until Hurricane Katrina, in a house he finally sold in 2017.
2. **Amtrak Train Station.** Opened in 1954 on a land that was previously important ground for Mardi Gras Indians, this train station was built during an early stage of the redevelopment of area around the New Basin Canal, which had been operating since 1838.
3. **Superdome.** Opened in 1975, the Superdome—a massive event venue for sports, concerts, and exhibitions—completed the redevelopment of the area by the New Basin Canal.
4. **City Hall.** Moved to its present location in 1958, City Hall sits on land adjacent to the Superdome, an area that was at one time crucial to Mardi Gras Indian tradition.
5. **H&R Bar**, 2425 Dryades Street. Since the 1960s, the H&R had been the headquarters for the Wild Magnolias, where Bo Dollis oversaw decades of intense weekly practices. The H&R burned in 2001, but the intersection of Second and Dryades remains a lively scene on Mardi Gras and St. Joseph's Night, as do many bars in the vicinity.
6. **Verret's Lounge**, 1738 Washington Avenue. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Jolly was with them, Verret's

was the home bar for the Black Eagles. It is the location where many of the live recordings of Black Eagles practices were made by David Draper in 1971–72. Subsequently known as the Turning Point Bar, the building was purchased by new owners in 2013 who revived the old Verret's name.

7. **Shakespeare Park.** Renamed A. L. Davis Park in 1979, this park was originally named not after William Shakespeare but after Joseph Shakspeare, a New Orleans mayor, though the spelling, strangely, has always contained the extra “e.” This park is the location for the Uptown Super Sunday and a point of convergence for Mardi Gras Indians on Mardi Gras and St. Joseph's Night. In 2005, it was the setting for a police action, during which Indians were beaten and arrested.

8. **Nite Cap,** 1700 Louisiana Avenue. A music venue, run by Alfred Doucette, that was at the center of the city's funk and soul scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both the Neville Sounds and Soul Machine played numerous sold-out shows at the Nite Cap.

9. **Ivanhoe Bar,** 601 Bourbon Street. In the late 1960s, Art Neville, George Porter, Zig Modeliste, and Leo Nocentelli began to play the Ivanhoe five to six nights a week, honing the sound they would bring to the Meters. It was here that Allen Toussaint heard them and decided to make them into the house band for Sansu Productions.

10. **Jazz Workshop.** A venue run briefly in 1969 by Earl Turbinton in a building owned by Jules Cahn on the 1100 block of Decatur that also housed the Listening Eye art gallery. The Jazz Workshop offered educational clinics for