



John S. Epstein & Sydney J. Besthoff, III

Catherine Campanella



Gustave Katz was a New Orleans pharmacist who owned a drug store on St. Charles and Jackson Avenues before he and pharmacist Sydney Besthoff Sr. opened the Katz & Besthoff drug store on Canal Street. Katz died in 1940, and his family sold their interests in the business to the Besthoff family. (Courtesy Besthoff Family Collection.)



Sydney Besthoff Sr., a pharmacist with Besthoff's pharmacy in Memphis, Tennessee, opened the first Katz & Besthoff drug store at 732 Canal Street in the New Orleans downtown shopping district with pharmacist Gustave Katz. Besthoff died in 1926 of a heart attack. (Courtesy Besthoff Family Collection.)

257 New Orleans Sa_ 189 Justave Kat Harmacist Dr aug 31 Nureyade 51

This is a receipt from Gustave Katz's pharmacy on St. Charles and Jackson Avenues in New Orleans. Katz was in business for himself from 1896 to 1905 before partnering with Besthoff. (Courtesy Besthoff Family Collection.)

1896

In 1896, when Katz & Besthoff were operating their separate pharmacies, Felix J. Dreyfous drafted verbiage for the state bill requiring funding for City Park and that it be disbursed by CPIA (City Park Improvement Association) of which he was a founding trustee and commissioner He is seen here holding the original minute book (then fifty-years old) of the CPIA in this 1941 photograph. In 1933 the Times-Picayune Loving Cup was given to him. Upon his death in 1946 he had served City Park for 55 years. (NOPL)

On land that was an oak forest where Native Americans traded along the banks of Bayou St. John, Jean Louis Allard's Plantation was carved. It evolved to become one of the largest and oldest public parks in the nation. Filling 1,300 acres it is 457 acres larger than New York's Central Park.



Duelists arrived at the park (in 1896) at 4:30 a.m. – a sweetheart had been slandered – each man was only slightly wounded. Duels were common events.

Weekly musical performances were provided by the New Orleans & Spanish Fort Railroad (whose route is show on the map).

In 1897 a mule-driven carousel first operated and the park gained property – 1,805 feet along Bayou St John and 4685 feet on Metairie Road which increased the park size to 213 ¹/₂ acres.



1904

Seen here is Katz & Besthoff drug store's first location at 732 Canal Street. The drug store only occupied the bottom floor, described by a customer as "20 feet wide and filled with all sizes of jars and ointments." The second and third floors were leased out in the beginning, but eventually became the drug store's home offices after a few years. Note the Huyler's Candy banner across the front window listing Katz & Besthoff as the sole agents to sell their candy. One of the things that made K&B successful was the unique and exclusive items carried in their drug stores. (Courtesy Besthoff Family Collection.)



Less than two blocks from the K&B (beginning on Canal at Camp/Chartres Street) this trolly headed for Esplanade to City Park and along City Park Avenue to the cemeteries where it turned toward West End. From there it returned to Canal Street, making it's way to Audubon Park before heading back to its origin on in the city proper. Viewed here is a 1903 advertisement.



SEEING NEW ORLEANS

Daily and Sunday from Canal and Camp Streets, leaving at 10:30 a.m. Making a thirty mile trip through the French and American quarters, viewing over one hundred points of local and historic interest. Returning at 1:30 p m.

Gentleman in charge of car delivers an interesting lecture during trip.

ROUND TRIP, - 50 CTS.

New Orleans-Crescent Information and Employment Bureau, 810 COMMON STREET, NEW ORLEANS, LA. In the year Katz & Bestoff joined forces, Armand Veazey led the band at the opening of the mile-long City Park Race Track which competed for business with the nearby Fair Grounds. David H. Barnes (**cited in the 1905 photograph**) was the president of the City Park Jockey Club. The grandstand was in the area where the stadium sits today. Closed to racing in 1908 when the Locke Law prohibited betting on horses, the track was used for aviation shows. The grand stand was later moved to the Fair Grounds site.



Katz & Besthoff, Ltd. delivery truck outside their newly opened location #2 at 841 Canal St. This location was across the street and next door to Maison Blanche Department Store. **This location opened in 1911**. Their motto was "Only the Best".



When the second K&B opened, the Delgado Museum of Art also opened its doors in City Park on December 16, 1911. The permanent collection now contains over 40,000 objects.

In 1910 Lebenbaum and Marks submitted a plan designed by builder Julius Koch for the art museum made possible by the generous donation of \$150,000 from Isaac Delgado. Gifts from wealthy New Orleanians included paintings, precious stones, Etruscan glass, Greek vases, bronzes, and ceramics. The New Orleans Artists' Association contributed several paintings.



The K&B on Canal & Dauphine (K&B #2) opened in 1911 (GNC, today). Next door and across the street from Maison Blanche (now Ritz Carlton).



On December 24, 1910 through January 2, 1911, the first international aviation competition in the south was held at the City Park racetrack. On opening day John Bevins Moisant (below) circled the business district (and the K&B stores) four times while Christmas Eve shoppers waved. He returned to the park with the record for the longest sustained flight over a major city – 46 minutes. During the competition at the park's racetrack Moisant lost a race with an automobile by seconds while setting the record for a one mile flight – – 57 seconds.

On New Year's Eve Moisant competed with four pilots for the \$4,000 Michelin Prize He flew from City Park headed for the competition's start field in Harahan. After circling three times at 200 feet, wind shear at twenty-five feet caused the plane to crash as he attempted to land. He was killed. In 1946, the city named its new airport in Kenner, Moisant Field.



K&B powder ----**1914**



Mrs. Sarah Lavinia Todd Hyams died in New York in September, 1914 while returning from a European tour to collect artworks for her collection. She bequeathed her jewels (valued at \$30,000 or a half-million dollars today) for the building of identical fountains/wading pools in Audubon and City Parks and her art collection to the Delgado Museum.



K&B #3 at Louisiana and St Charles was originally in the Ghisalberti Bldg in **1920.**The building was originally Woodland Creamery (inset 1908). It was torn down in 1967 to build new K&B----site of the Rite Aid today.



Horse racing returned to City Park and a flowery but not entirely accurate 1919 article in The Modern *City* stated that the Business Men's Racing Association "maintains one of the finest tracks in the world...The officers and directors of the Association consist entirely of merchants and business men of the Crescent City and the entire proceeds of the meets are devoted to the further development of New Orleans...the Association donated several hundred acres of land adjoining the beautiful City Park which is in the process of development". The track's land and improvements were sold by H. D. Brown in 1917 to the New Orleans Business Men's Racing Association. In this 1918 photograph people gather near the finish line. In 1919 the grandstand was dismantled and reassembled at the Fair Grounds to replace the grandstand burned to the ground in 1918. The park acquired the land in 1920 which would become the site of Municipal Stadium. The old City Park grandstand stood at the Fair Grounds until a seven-alarm fire destroyed it in 1993.





This postcard is from the National Show Case Co. and exhibits the display cases at Katz & Besthoff drug store at 732 Canal Street. Customers were assisted by clerks until self service became the norm in drug stores around 1940. Below is the reverse of the postcard. It states that Besthoff is partial to "National" fixtures and has three contracts with the company. This would have been from before 1923, before the fourth K&B location was opened on Carrollton and Oak Streets. (Both author's collection.)

During the 1920s visitors entering City Park's Pizzati Gate would be greeted by these one-hundred year-old bare-breasted ladies on Anseman Avenue. They had originally hovered high above the main entrance to the New Orleans Cotton Exchange building (see below a 1903 view) which was built in 1823 but being readied for demolition in 1920. They were acquired by the park along with the granite caryatids which flanked the exchange's door and the standing figure between the two ladies in the photograph. Their tenure in the park was brief – some citizens were outraged. The ladies went on to reside at Metairie Cemetery and the caryatids can still be seen near the cemeteries on City Park Avenue.





Louisiana & St. Charles (K&B #3) in the Ghisalberti Bldg. (location opened in 1920)

Photo taken in 1966/67 before the building was torn down.



In 1922 twelve of the trees in City Park were marked with the names of local playgrounds – each indicating a place for its children to gather and by the end of the 1920s an Annual Playgrounds Outing had become a tradition. In this 1925 photograph girls pose in front a stand offering Jax Beer. Best Grape, and Best Orange, and Cherry Pop. The sign to their left admonishes "Drinking Water – DO NOT WASTE IT"



March **1929**, K&B opened Store #6 at Claiborne and Napoleon. The drawing shows a "fountaineer" delivering sodas to a car waiting at the curb. Today Touro Imaging Center is on this site.



The original pigeon house, was replaced in 1928 with the brick structure seen below which was given to the park by Felix J. Dreyfous in honor of his granddaughter Carol Vera Dreyfous. Designed by Carol's father architect F. Julius Dreyfous, the Pigeonniere is located on Pigeon Island near the Casino. It was refurbished in 2005 by descendants of Felix. This photograph was taken in 1941.



1931 – K&B Soda Fountain, 235 Carondelet in the Cotton Exchange Building.



Enrique Alferez (1901-1999) was nationally known for his art deco sculpture in concrete and metal when **he came to New Orleans in 1929. His designs are found on bridges, the stadium gates, the Popp Fountain, and in sculptures throughout the park spanning a period of 70 years.**

In the Botanical Garden is *Benches with Figures* of native insects and animals, *Satyrs on Poles* mythological creatures atop poles designed as woodland creatures, *Water Maiden* in the Shriever Fountain, two *reliefs Reclining Nude* and *Reclining Nude eating Grapes.*, and two small fountains spewing from sculptured magnolia buds – all created in 1932. In the the1980s Alferez was commissioned to restore the original works and create *Woman in a Huipi* (1981) and *Sundial* (1983) in the center of the *Benches with Figures*. And *Flute Player* (1995). His final return to the park resulted in his last work, *Renascence* (1998) west of the Pavilion. His presence in the park is unmistakable but he is also remembered by an oak named for him in1980 as well as a street near the museum dedicated in 1983



K&B tin from long ago – probably from the 1930's



After a 1909 hurricane caused much damage to City Park, a wood and iron-girder bridge replaced a wood bridge over the lagoon behind what would become NOMA. It was dedicated to the memory of former Park Commissioner (1892—1900) George H. Grandjean who had supervised construction of the lagoons. In **1938** this second bridge was demolished and replaced by the bridge we now use constructed by the WPA.



K&B 1400 Broad (Broad&Bell) – 1930's and today.



Note the beautifully ornate parapet surrounding the top of City Park's Peristyle when photographed in 1910. It was removed by WPA workers in 1936 (as seen below during the 1940s), deemed to be causing roofing problems. In 1989 Mae and Vincent Saia along with Friends of City Park generously funded its renovation. The Peristyle is now an anchor of the Goldring/Woldenberg Great Lawn which was completed in the Spring of 2010.



1930's Car Hop menu from Katz & Besthoff. K&B offered curb service at all of their locations until the late 1930's.



Dueling Oak in a 1930s view. The tomb beside it is said to be that of Allard.



K&B #5 – Broadway & St Charles – 1939 and today as a Rite Aid.



A marker north of Harrison Avenue in the center of the park recognizes a 1938 bequest of \$43, 231,.88. by Rene Couturie who was an importer of wine, liquor, and other luxury goods as well as Director of Acme Homestead Association and an active member of Elks. He was a Colonel in the Washington Arlillery in 1893 and a park board member. The 33 acre Couturie Forest was designated as a community arboretum in 1939 (the year K&B #5 opened) when 6,000 trees were planted. Pictured is a 1941 aerial view of the forest in the distance.



Celebrating Christmas in New Orleans at K&B #2 located at 841 Canal St.(next door and across the street from Maison Blanche Department Store) during the 1930s.



City Park's Popp's Fountain was designed by Olmsted Brothers in the late 1920s after Rebecca Grant Popp donated \$25,000 for a memorial to her husband John F. Popp. Ionic columns reflect the taste of that era. Partially built by private contractors it was dedicated in 1934. The WPA added tile walk-ways, landscaping, and the art deco fountainhead designed by Alferez. We see it here in in 1936 in the new extension north of Harrison Avenue


Gentilly Shopping Center K&B ----Mid 1940's



Brothers John and Harry Batt Jr. had operated non-lucrative childrens rides in City Park since the late 1940s before Harry Sr envisioned Storyland (page 86). Agreeing to deed it to the city if he was allowed to choose its location in the park, Storyland was dedicated on December 30, 1956 to the memory of his parents. Behind it he placed six kiddie rides – gross ride revenue soared as Storyland drew huge crowds.



This INDIAN motorcycle, purple of course, was used to make deliveries all over New Orleans......"Only the Best",Katz & Besthoff



By 1940 the WPA had improved and beautified many playgrounds, one of which can be seen here in front of the Carousel pavilion. In 1940 the record attendance of 34,345 in the stadium is thought to have been set during the Jesuit/Holy Cross game, far surpassing the seating capacity of 26,500. The second of the pair of **Dueling Oaks was** uprooted during a hurricane in 1949.



If a customer needed something delivered from Katz & Besthoff on the corner of Carrollton & Claiborne...



After William McFadden sold his estate to the city prospective uses included the mayor's residence, a convalescent home, a hospital, and a chicken farm. By **1949 Samuel Barthe opened a boys elementary school** in the mansion until the Christian Brothers opened their academy for fifth through seventh grade boys in 1960.



Workers are pouring concrete by hand while building City Park Stadium in 1935 which will have sixteen ramps and 26,500 seats. A WPA employee captioned this photograph "WPA-built stadium in New Orleans' mammoth City Park. The famous Sugar Bowl sports and football classics will probably be held here during the 1936-37 holiday season"



1946 LSU---TULANE Football Schedule



K&B bowl and menu from 1950's



Marconi Drive at Navarre Street is pictured here in 1950. Note the stadium lights in the distance.



The newly opened Wisner overpass was the site of the 1956 Soap Box Derby. Begun in 1950 and sponsored by the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD), the *New Orleans Item*, and Chevrolet, the races attracted crowds as large as 10,000 to watch some 130 boys compete. Otto Potier, 15, won the Keating Trophy and a chance to compete in the national finals in Akron, Ohio.



This was on the river side of Carrollton and Claiborne – K&B built their new location diagonally across the street in 1959. Today a bank stands where this K&B was. A Walgreens stands (since 2006) where the K&B was built across the street to replace it.



Streetcar 877 on Claiborne Ave.....notice the K&B (pre 1960) on the corner of Carrollton and Claiborne.





K&B at Carrollton and Claiborne built in **1961** – Walgreens (inset) today. Notice the still existing tower in the background



In 1962 Tad Gormley was inducted into the National Athletic Trainers Association Hall of Fame and into the Louisiana Association in 1990. In 1938 Francis Thomas (Tad) Gormley became the Athletic Director of City Park after a distinguished career beginning in 1908 when he worked with athletes at the Young Mens Gymnastic Club. From 1921 until 1923, he served as the head men's basketball coach at LSU, posting a 25-11 record. He was a trainer at Tulane and Loyola and coached the 1932 U.S. Olympic Track Team, was an official in the New Orleans Prep School Athletic League, and a football and basketball referee. Upon his death in 1965 the stadium was named for him. He was also the man who originated what would become the annual New Orleans Turkey Day Race. Tad Gormely is pictured here in 1923.



K&B at1320 Broad (Broad and Esplanade) today and 1960's



City Park Stadium hosted the first AFL exhibition game held in New Orleans, organized by Jack DeFee and promoted by Dave Dixon to demonstrate local fan support for major-league football. It pitted the New England Patriots against the Houston Oilers in 1962.

The Beatles performed on September 16, 1964 and in 1965 the stadium was renamed in honor of Frank "Tad" Gormley shortly after his death.







 All STAR SHOW
 Gates Open 6:00 p.m.

 SEPT. 16, 1964
 8:00 pm

 General Adm.
 \$5.00

— OPENING ACTS — FROGMAN HENRY. JACKIE deshannon & the bill black combo Dec 1,**1966** ,K&B in Harahan opens-----see Santa on the roof? Today it is a Dollar Store.



In 1988 the sculpture of Hebe was replaced with 'Wave' by New York born kinetic sculptor Lin Emery. It was a gift by the owner of California philanthropist's Frederick Weisman Company. Emery's "Morrison Wave" once graced City Hall's Duncan Plaza – **created** from discarded metal serving trays, coffee pots, and miscellaneous items from the Roosevelt Hotel after it closed in the 1960s.



Louisiana and St Charles Ave location soon after this newly built location opened in **1967**



K&B at Veterans and Power Blvd. – **1970** – today as a Walgreens.



Called the "Father of Land Reclamation", Edward Wisner bought hundreds of thousands of acres of south Louisiana swampland beginning in 1900, with plans to reclaim them for farming interests. Meanwhile, he made a fortune improving and trading land but the Gulf of Mexico took much of it back. However, Wisner made another fortune in a prospect he had not foreseen – oil. The Wisner Tennis Center (opened 1968, demolished 2008) and Wisner Boulevard (originally developed by City Park) was improved via revenue from oil wells willed to the park), and the **Wisner Wing of NOMA (pictured) in 1970** keep his memory alive.



City Park's carousel and the pavilion housing it, (built in 1906) is one of only 100 antique carved wooden carousels in the country and the last in Louisiana

Carved by Looff and Carmel the "Flying Horses" were listed, along with their pavilion on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Some carved horses from the Spanish Fort carousel are now believed to be among the park's Flying Horses located in the Hines Carousel Gardens along with modern amusement rides Storyland was restored by Friends of City Park in 1986 as was the Carousel . 2006 brought their reopening – and they are still there to delight New Orleanians.



In the 1960's/70's this was the site as you entered K&B Drug store. The ice cream freezer,45 records and Jiffy Pop popcorn. Who could ask for anything more?



Storyland opened in 1956 populated by nursery rhyme characters, some hanging in the ancient oaks and all designed by Blain Kern. Humpty Dumpty'a "wall" was Storyland's maintenance shop. Built adjacent to the Flying Horses at a cost of \$25,000, Storyland attracted ½ million visitors in 1958 when Park Amusement Company was managed by Frank Davis. It is seen here during the **1960s**.



Former K&B at Veterans and Martin Behrman today/opening day 1976 (inset).



Like Katz & Besthoff, Jean Marie Saux saw the future and planned accordingly. The first entrepreneur to realize City Park's potential to draw crowds, Saux built and operated a coffeehouse in 1860 across from it. His building would become the area's oldest structure – older than any now in the park. **During the 1970s and early 80s the Saux Building operated as Parkway Tavern**, a popular but by no means beautiful venue (monkeys were painted on the window transoms). In 1983 the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. After Jack and Martha Sands renovated it in 1985, they opened Tavern on the Park restaurant. In December, 2003 Ralph Brennan opened Ralph's on the Park.



Oldest former K&B location (St Charles and Broadway) still in operation in original bldg (as Rite Aid). Originally a Newcomb Pharmacy location (bottle inset).K&B bought this location in 1928. This was K&B's 5th location to open.



In 1904 Francis B. Dunbar donated a pavilion (**the oldest structure in the park**)) which was located along Bayou Metairie. Restored in the 1980s it now serves as the storyteller gazebo in Storyland. In 1876 George W. Dunbar with his sons Francis and George invented a new process for preserving shrimp and other shellfish. They became the largest packers south of Baltimore with U.S. Sales and foreign markets in France, England, Germany, and Mexico. The company won the Silver Medal of Merit at the Paris Exposition of 1878, an award from the International Fisheries Exhibition in London in 1883, and was recognized in the New Orleans World's Fairs of 1884—86. G.W. Dunbar's Sons established in 1865 at #3 Tchoupitoulas along with two canneries "in the suburbs" packed gulf shrimp oysters, turtle, ready to eat Barritaria shrimp, fruit syrup, figs and other semi-tropical fruits distilled in French cordials. (NOPL)







Other books by Catherine Campanella Contact catherine.campanella@gmail.com





10% of the proceeds from New Orleans City Park is dedicated to Friends of City Park.

10% of the proceeds from Lake Pontchartrain is dedicated to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundations efforts to restore the New Canal Lighthouse at West End.



Contact John S. Epstein at johnsnur@att.net