

914 Pleasant Street, New Orleans, LA

A brief history of the building and its owners.



PRODUCTIVE Double Two-Story Frame RESIDENCE, Nos. 914 and 916 Pleasant Street, Between Laurel and Constance.

BY GEO. G. FRIEDRICH & CO.,—Geo. G. Friedrichs, Auctioneer, office 832 Common Street--WEDNESDAY, March 7, 1900, at 12 o'clock m., at the Real Estate Exchange, No. 840 Common street, will be sold at public auction, by virtue and in pursuance of an order from the Hon. Geo. H. Thayer, Judge of the Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans, Division B, dated Feb. 1, 1900, rendered in the session of Mrs. Catherine Brueggemann (or Brigmann), No. ----- of the docket of said court, the following described real estate, to-wit:

THE COMMODIOUS DOUBLE TWO-STORY FRAME, SLATED RESIDENCE, Nos. 914 and 916 Pleasant street, containing, on each side, front galleries, parlor, dining-room, state-hall, pantry and kitchen below; and 4 bedrooms, hall, side gallery above; paved yards, cisterns, sheds, etc.; more fully described as follows:—to-wit:

DIED OF THE DOSE.

Edwin Litoff Takes Carbolic Acid by Mistake.

The awful fatality of carbolic acid as a household article again asserted itself last night, for Edwin Litoff, a lad 16 years of age, mistaking it for a medicine he employed for cramps, drank some of it, was thrown into convulsions almost immediately thereafter and died in a short while in great agony. The lad was a user of carbolic acid in a diluted state for his feet, but it was the undiluted stuff he caught up and the mistake cost his life. He died at 10:30 o'clock at his home. No.

916 Pleasant Street, near Laurel. The boy was a great big fellow, a handsome physical specimen, with a height and breadth of a man of 25. It was said by friends of his and members of the family that he was the jolliest of the jolly, so that there could not be the thought that he had destroyed himself. He was employed as a clerk in a cigar store in 123 Exchange Alley, and had been there several years. He leaves a distressed father and mother, two brothers and four sisters.

ABOVE (top): A photographic negative of 914-16 Pleasant taken between 1974 and 1976 as part of the Tulane University Irish Channel Survey.

ABOVE (middle): Auction advertisement, Daily Picayune, February 4, 1900.

ABOVE (bottom): Daily Picayune, November 17, 1905

LEFT: A chronological series (clockwise from top left) of plat maps showing the changes in the footprint of 914-916 Pleasant in 1874, 1885, 1896, and 1909.

Ferdinand Frederick William Bohning, a shoemaker, caused the construction of 914 Pleasant Street in 1866, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. On August 10, 1865, Bohning paid Richard Keen \$1200 for the property, which included all of Lot 5 and parts of Lots 4 and 6. Before signing the papers to officially take ownership, Bohning insisted that notary public Thomas J. Beck attest that “the said Ferdinand F.W. Bohning, instead of issuing his promissory note for six hundred dollars, as aforesaid; has paid in cash, on the spot...the total purchase price, Twelve Hundred Dollars, as aforesaid, lawful money, of the United States, unto the said Richard Keen.” Only ten months later, on June 30, 1866, Bohning mortgaged the property to one Jonathan Lengsfeld in the amount of \$4500 to secure funds for the construction of a new, double residence.

According to the Tax Assessments for the year 1866, the value of the land increased more than four-fold, to \$5000. To justify the increased assessment, the assessor wrote that there was “a New House, just built at [a] cost of \$5000.” Bohning must have begun renting the house very soon after, though we find no listing in the City Directory for the house until 1878. During these years, we learn from John Smith Kendall’s History of New Orleans (1922), this block of Pleasant Street was “a very remote part of the city, accessible only by the Tchoupitoulas line of busses, which, however, ran only as far Pleasant Street [but]...during the [the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial] exposition years 1884-85, the population spread rapidly over this part of the city.”

Bohning purchased the Pleasant Street property from Richard Keen during a period of major transition in New Orleans history. Though the city endured the majority of the Civil War under Union occupation, having fallen to the forces of Admiral David G. Farragut in April 1862, the war raged on until the South surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse in April 1865. When, on August 10, 1865, Bohning purchased the property, he and Keen were required to get permission from the occupation government. A letter from Notary Public Thomas J. Beck to Benjamin F. Flanders, the Supervising Special Agent for the U.S. Treasury in New Orleans, states, “Application is hereby made...in behalf of Richard Keen, for permission to sell and transfer to Ferdinand F.W. Bohning, of this city, the...described property.” Notary Beck included, as well, “the oath of allegiance [to the United States] taken by [Richard Keen].” In reply, one of Flanders’ assistants wrote, “No objection is found to exist and none is made by this Agency to the sale of the property belonging to Richard Keen.”

After paying off his mortgage to Lengsfeld, Bohning found it necessary to mortgage the house again, once more in the sum of \$4500, to Charles Weishaar. Despite his abundance of cash in 1865, Bohning failed to make timely payments to Weishaar on this second mortgage. Weishaar sold the debt to Mrs. Catherine Brueggemann. On February 28, 1876, the judge of the Fifth District Court for the City of New Orleans ruled that Bohning forfeit the house and grounds of 914-16 Pleasant Street to Brueggemann for non-payment of the debt. Brueggemann and her husband, Nicholas, moved into 916 Pleasant shortly thereafter.

Brueggemann was born Catherine Monken in Budenstadt, Germany on April 26, 1826. In 1847, at age twenty-one, she immigrated to New Orleans, where she married Herman Stumborg on June 25, 1851. Unfortunately, Stumborg passed away on Christmas Eve, 1872. Catherine remarried quickly, on August 23, 1873, this time to Nicholas Brueggemann, a cigarmaker, with whom she lived at 916 Pleasant, until her death in 1900.

A man named John J. Archer purchased the property from Catherine Brueggemann’s succession on April 7, 1900. Archer never made a home on Pleasant Street, choosing instead to rent out both sides of the house. The Roesch family, Germans in the barbershop business, lived on the 914 side during the first decade of the 20th century. By 1910, a family of Italian saloon keepers headed by brothers Angelo and Felix Fallo called the place home. During the first half of the 1920s, the Brechtel brothers, Frank J. and Jacob F., lived at 914 Pleasant.

In November 2009, Jessica and Nathan Richard DeBord purchased the property from Stephen A. Navarette. The DeBords purchased not just a home but a unique historical trust through which the stories of those who trod the same floorboards in the past may live into the future. In 2015, the DeBords commemorate the fifth anniversary of their marriage with a celebration of the rich history of their shared home.

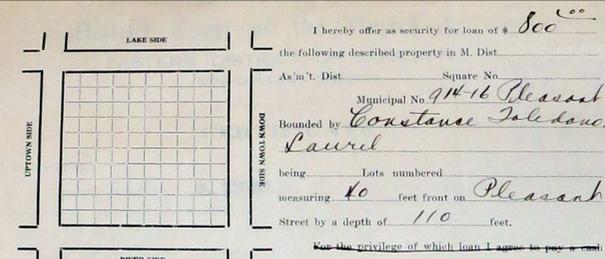
Office Supervising Special Agent, Treasury Dept.

THIRD AGENCY,

New Orleans, August 9th 1866

No objection is found to exist and none is made by this Agency to the sale or transfer of the property belonging to Richard Keen to that certain Ferdinand F.W. Bohning, of this city, of the parish of Jefferson.

By order of F. F. Flanders
Supv. Sp. Agt. U.S. Dep. of Treas.
Thomas J. Beck



I hereby offer as security for loan of \$ 500⁰⁰ the following described property in M. Dist. As in't. Dist. Square No. Municipal No. 914-16 Pleasant Bounded by Constance Toledano Laurel being Lots numbered measuring 40 feet front on Pleasant Street by a depth of 110 feet.

and further agree to pay for the examination of the titles, and all costs incurred, if the loan is not consummated, through no fault of this Association. The improvements now erected thereon being a double story dwelling, built years ago, containing 16 rooms, with outbuildings, all now in good condition, and insured for \$ 3000⁰⁰, and now occupied by tenants at \$ 40⁰⁰ per month. Said property is owned by John J. Archer and assessed for \$

I desire to purchase said property through the Association, under its rules, for the sum of \$ 500⁰⁰ and improve same to the extent of \$ under plans and specifications filed herewith. And if same is bought by the Association under this application, I hereby agree and bind myself to buy said property from the Association, whenever they notify me that the title is ready, for the sum of \$ 500⁰⁰, to be paid by my note for that amount, and to sign contract of loan and pledge, in accordance with the Charter and By-Laws; and as warranty for the fulfillment of this agreement and to hold it harmless against loss, I hereby pledge and hypothecate to said Association my shares of stock in said Association with all payments thereon present and future.

New Orleans, March 10 1900
Signed John J. Archer

TOP: The note sent by the office of Special Agent for the United States Treasury Benjamin F. Flanders granting permission to Thomas J. Beck, Notary Public, to conduct the Act of Sale from Richard Keen to F.F.W. Bohning. The status of New Orleans as an occupied city forced its residents to submit to total Union of control of business life. Benjamin F. Flanders would later go on to serve as a military-backed Governor of Louisiana from 1867 to 1868. Military edicts were not the beginning of Richard Keen's troubles, however. He only sold his property at the order of the court, after he had been sued by the Louisiana Mutual Insurance Company for non-payment of his debts. The court seized his Pleasant Street property and ordered it sold at auction to satisfy the insurance company.

ABOVE: When John J. Archer mortgaged 914-16 Pleasant to the Equitable Homestead Association, on March 16, 1920, the Association required a new appraisal of the condition of the home. The property secured for Archer the sum of \$800. At the time of the mortgage, the property consisted of “a double 2-story dwelling...containing 16 rooms with outbuildings, all now in good condition.” Whoever filled out the form confessed they did not know how many years ago the house had been constructed. Beginning in last quarter of the 19th century, homestead associations emerged as a dominant force in giving working class New Orleanians a chance at home ownership. Comprised of funds gathered from members, the homestead associations loaned money to countless individuals on good and easy terms.

Researched and written by:
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