

# 2715 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA

## a brief history



The beautiful home at 2715 St. Charles Avenue was constructed in 1858-59 by Cornelius Bicknell Payne, a prosperous steamboat agent. Payne, who lived at the corner of St. Charles and Fourth, built two homes in the vacant lots upriver from his own home, following a pattern he had set with a number of properties in the Fourth Municipal District. Payne sold the house on May 3, 1859 to Peter Runedette Fell for \$9000. At the time of Fell's purchase, the Act of Sale noted that the buildings were "subject to a lease." The sale of the property the year previous described it as "vacant", leading to the conclusion that the home was built during the period of Payne's ownership. Payne was a steamboat agent and real estate speculator responsible, as well, for constructing 2701 St. Charles Avenue. Fell made his living in a number of different businesses, notably as a purveyor of china and glassware. The listing for P.R. Fell in the 1861 edition of *Gardner's Directory of New Orleans* shows Fell at "old" No. 651 St. Charles Avenue and his commercial concern, Fell & Marsh, at No. 36 Natchez Street.

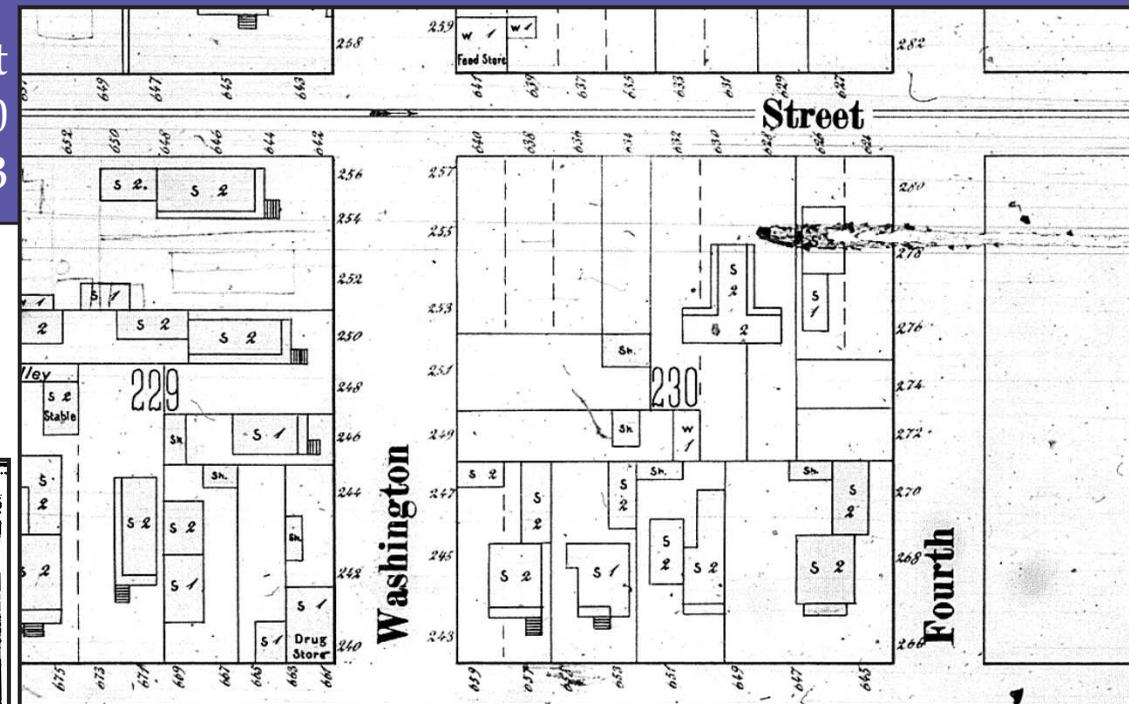
The house sits on two lots, numbered 5 and 6, and has part of lot B at its rear. In the 1850s, one of the lots facing Washington Avenue was divided into lots A and B, lot B being the rear half of the original lot and lot A being the front half. On March 10, 1876, Lucien DeBuys purchased lot B from Rufus Rickey, thus adding the rear section to lots 5 and 6, which DeBuys already owned. The survey in the middle of this page, from the act of sale before Notary Public James Fahey, shows this division.

Numerous surveys of the property show that the footprint of the house has remained virtually unchanged in the century and a half of its existence. The earliest survey in the archives dates to ca. 1872. The survey, by City Surveyor Jonathan Frederick Braun, shows a two story home with a slate roof [shown above right]. The 1883 Robinson Atlas, based partly on Braun's surveys, shows the same structure [shown right, middle]. Maps produced by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company in 1887 and 1896 show the same structure, as well, albeit with greater detail. Only in 1909 do we find some change to the home, with the addition of one room on each floor at the rear of the side wing. The 1909 Sanborn map contains the notation "open 1st," showing the new section of the porch and the enclosed 2nd floor. The 1896 and 1909 Sanborn maps appear at the bottom right.

A Times-Picayune advertisement for an auction by Stern's Auction Exchange, dated September 24, 1915, describes the contents of the home in that year, when it was owned by Katherine Walker Behan, wife of William J. Behan. William Behan served as Mayor of New Orleans from 1882 to 1884 but ran unsuccessfully a number of times afterwards. Mrs. Behan purchased the home in 1904, the same year her husband made his last attempt at the mayor's office.

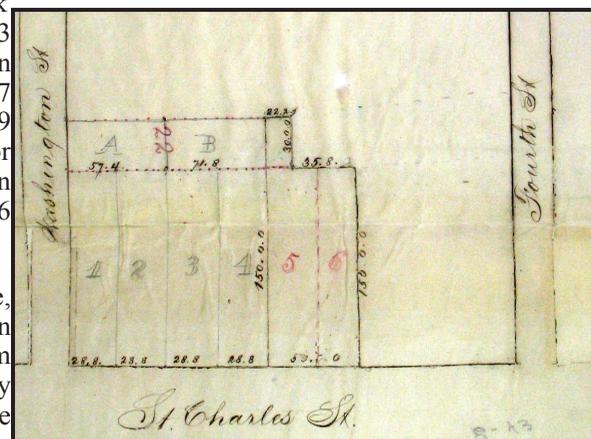
YEARS	OWNER
2013-present	Paul Fisher
2004-2013	Barbara Dunlap
1991-2004	Hill C. Riddle, Jr.
1954-1991	Garing-Ewing-Powell Family
1904-1954	Walker-Behan-Dreux Family
1889-1904	Isaac Lyons
1888-1889	John W. Phillips
1873-1888	Lucien DeBuys
1871-1873	John Mitchell Conway
1870-1871	Richard Gregory Taylor
1859-1870	Peter Runedette Fell
1857-1859	Cornelius Bicknell Payne

Fourth Municipal District  
Square 230  
Lot 5-B



**STEAMSHIPS.**  
**Brazos Maritime.**  
 To sail on **HOLIDAY**, May 6th, at 8 A. M.  
**SOUTHERN STEAMSHIP COMPANY.**  
 United States Mail Line—For Brazos Santiago  
 via Indianola—The superior iron steamship  
**ARIZONA**, H. Dennis, commander, will sail as above,  
 carrying the U. S. Mails. For freight or passage, having  
 elegant accommodations, apply on board, or to  
**C. B. PAYNE, 67 Camp Street.**  
 A copy of the new tariff of reduced rates will be  
 furnished to shippers on application.

We are much indebted to our friend, C. B. Payne, Esq., for special favors.



**BY STERN'S AUCTION EXCHANGE**  
**Contents of Residence, 2715 St. Charles Ave.**  
**Friday, September 24th, 11 A. M.**  
 Handsome Birdseye Maple Parlor Set, robes, pictures, hall carpet, refrigerator, bars, upholstered Pullman Plush. Upright piano, pillows, art squares, shades, screen, hat rack, iron beds, springs, mattresses, sideboard, cooler, engravings, folding bed, lounge, hall table, chairs, oak and mahogany bed, heater, gas stove, etc. room, furniture, C. tables, rockers, chairs, JACO. H. STERN, Auctioneer. Sept. 22-23-24

Fell J. R. clerk, Factors row, 34 Perdido  
 Fell & Marsh (P. R. Fell, Alanson Marsh,) com. and forward. mers. 36 Natchez  
 Fell P. R. (Fell & Marsh,) 651 St. Charles  
 Fell Wm. blacksmith, 311 Claiborne  
 Fellenzes G. lab. St. John n. Bayou bridge  
 Fellon James, clerk, 286 St. Peter

