

Harris County Historical Commission

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Marker #	00121	Year	2007	Inventoried BY	Jim Fisher	Date Last Inventory	11/25/2008
Marker TYPE	Marker with Post			Inventory Notes	inventoried prior to official dedication		

Marker Description Zydeco Music in Frenchtown

Marker SIZE	27" x 42"	Key Map Coordinates	454 W	Location Address			
Dedication Date	2/21/2009	Condition of Marke	Pending dedication	3100 Collingsworth at 3400 Eastex Fwy. (Hwy. 59)			

Notes

Class of 2007; THC 07HR04; marker installed, dedication set for May 31, 2008 postponed to Feb. 21, 2009; parking is minimal due to the location of this marker near the feeder road

Location City	Houston	Zip	77020
GPS Latitude	29 48.178	GPS Longitude	95 24.330

DB Ref. #	9845	Social or Community Organization		Parking	None
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- Hispanic African America Other Ethni Women's Cemetery Photos

Marker Text

In the 1920's, Creole families from Louisiana, known as "Creoles of Color," migrated to Houston, establishing the neighborhood known as Frenchtown. In addition to their culture and language, they also brought their music to Houston. Zydeco, a fusion of traditional Creole music and other styles, became an important form of expression for the families that settled in Frenchtown. Traditional Creole music featured an accordion backed by washboard percussion and sometimes a fiddle. This music was an integral part of social gatherings, called LA-LAs, which served the purpose of raising funds for the community. By the 1940s, musicians blended the music, also known as LA-LA, with Jazz and Blues to form the distinctive sound known as Zydeco. As the musical form grew in popularity, several Frenchtown venues, including the Silver Slipper, began to showcase Zydeco musicians. Another popular club was Johnson's, established by Charley Johnson; Lonnie Mitchell, Manager of the club after Johnson's death, also performed there. Johnson's granddaughter, Doris McClendon, later ran the club, changing its name to the Continental Lounge and Zydeco Ballroom. A regular performer was Clifton Chenier, known as the "King of Zydeco." An innovator, he modernized the style by adding electric guitars, a bass, drums, a saxophone and a trumpet to the more customary musical instruments. Through the years, the population of Frenchtown has become increasingly diverse. However, renewed interest in Zydeco in the late 20th Century helped ensure this dynamic neighborhood will continue to preserve its rich musical and cultural heritage. (2007)

Marker Sponsor:

Marker Mentor:

Marker Research:

Marker Narrative:

Directions: Eastex/Hwy 59, north of I-10; Calvacade/Collinsworth/Liberty Exit; marker is on the northbound feeder road, SE corner of Eastex Fwy/Hwy59 at Collinsworth