

Juke Joints in Kerrville Texas

Juke Joint (also Juke Joint, Jook Joint, or Juke) is the vernacular term for an informal establishment featuring music, dancing, gambling, and drinking, primarily operated by African Americans in the southeastern United States. A juke joint may also be called a "barrelhouse". A juke joint was a space where you could find the entertainment you were hoping to find.

Classic juke joints found, for example, at rural crossroads, catered to the rural work force that began to emerge after the Emancipation Proclamation. Plantation workers and sharecroppers needed a place to relax and socialize...

Juke joints may represent the first "private space" for African Am. Paul Oliver writes that juke joints were "the last retreat, the final bastion where black people could commune together and get away from the pressures of the day." As mentioned earlier Juke Joints occurred on plantations, and classic juke joints were found, for example, at rural crossroads. ~~the twentieth century~~. They began to emerge after the Emancipation Proclamation. At the beginning of century, the fiddle was the most popular instrument for Southern musicians, white and black alike. The fiddle-based music that was played for slaves at their dances forms the foundation of much of what is now termed "old-timey" or country music. The banjo was popular before guitars became widely available in the 1890s.

During the 1940's segregation excluding African Americans from music venues, entrepreneurs created an alternative known as the Chitin' Circuit. The Chitlin' Circuit was a **collection of performance venues throughout the eastern, southern, and upper Midwest areas of the United States that provided**

commercial and cultural acceptance for African American musicians, comedians, and other entertainers during the era of racial segregation in the United States through the 1960s. The Chitlin' Circuit was considered to be by, for, and about Black people. Topics of plays were often farcical and over-dramatic. There is debate as to when the Chitlin' Circuit peaked. Some say its peak was in the 1930s, some say it was after World War II, and others say it was the time of the blues.

Each of the proprietors of the Joint Joints in Kerrville's African American community supported Doyle School with their time, talents, and monetary giving's.

Famous Door

One of the most popular venue in the Doyle District was The Famous Door. *It* was established in the 1920's as a grocery store, and dance hall. In 1944 Mr. Ed Bratcher became the owner, and the Famous Door took on a whole new meaning. The Famous Door Café advertised being famous for Food, Friends, and Fun. With segregation excluding African Americans from music venues entrepreneurs created an alternative known as the Chitlin Circuit. The Famous Door hosted such acts as local performers, and nationally known jazz groups. Music provided a common language that helped bridge cultural and generational gaps that brought people together. The Famous Door is considered to be the first integrated establishment in Kerrville to welcomed all customers. The Famous door closed its doors in 1996. There is a historical marker commemorating it existence.

Mrs. Ella Phelps

Mrs. Ella Phelps was a business lady who not only ran the classes Jute Joint but owned a row of efficiency apartments, and a 12 room hotel. She was a member of Barnett Chapel Methodist Church and a supporter of the Doyle Community. She grew a garden, and raised ducks, chickens, and goats. She was known throughout Kerrville for her Soul Food. Names of other Jute Joints were, The Cabin, Butter Balls Place, later became known as the Dream, John Silvas, today known as Purnadas.

The Green Door

The Green Door was owned by Beulah and John L. Pennick's. it was established in the mid to late 1950" s as a place for teenagers to come dance, do homework, and enjoy each other's company. There was an outdoor patio, with a jute box on the wall connected to the big jute box in side. In the mid 60's there were not enough teenagers to support the Green Door they began selling adult beverages. The Green doors menu consisted of breakfast menu, hamburgers, enchilada's, steaks, fried chicken, soul food, and in the winter chitlins.

The Pleasure Garden

The proprietor of the Pleasure Garden was Mr. Hilly Frazier. At one time it was the most popular of the Jute Joints in Doyle District. The Pleasure Garden was established in the 1940's, and closed its doors in 1972. The Pleasure Garden was known for serving the best B-B-Q and the coldest drinks in the regions, it was an outdoor musical venue that

brought in popular Blues Entertainment. A few of the entertainers were, Big Joe Turner, Big Mama Thornton, BB King, and other Blues groups. Another attraction was you danced outside under the lights, beneath the trees, under the moon and stars. That gave it a touch of soulful romance.

Four Walls, Three Windows, an Open Door

Four Walls, three windows an open door

Step right up come on in.

Get a drink meet some friends.

In four walls, three windows an open door

Jute box blasting! Blues they are singing!

Pool table leaning!

Dominos clanging.

In four walls, three windows an open door.

Dancing outside under the sky line!

Stars are shinning! Bright as diamonds!

Step right up come for some more.

Inside four walls no windows two open doors

Eight foot ten fence surrounds a slab.

Brisket chicken and sausage up for grabs.

Kids in trees on the outside.

Getting an eyeful of what's on the inside.

Four Walls, three windows an open door

Step right up come on in.

Get a drink meet some friends.

In four walls, three windows an open door.

CLIFTON FIFER JR.

The Pleasure Garden

Sitting under a big oak tree.
Recalling old memories.
Dreaming of what use to be.
While thinking about Uncle Hilly.

Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Listening to the music of the great ones.
Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Recalling good times

I hear BB sing
I Pay the Cost to Be the Boss!
I hear Big Mama Thornton whale.
You a'int Nothing But a Hound Dog.

Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Listening to the music of the great ones.
Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Recalling good times

When did all those times change
Lord I miss those childhood dreams
Dancing under the stars and moon
To the old Blues men singing their tunes!

Sitting here just wondering
What happened to all of those things
Where could I go to find
Some peace and simpler times

Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Listening to the music of the great ones.
Sitting in the Pleasure Garden.
Recalling good times.

CLIFTON FIFER JR.

Famous Door

1944 – 1996

In the 1920's this building was called Kelly's Place. It served as a grocery store and Café.

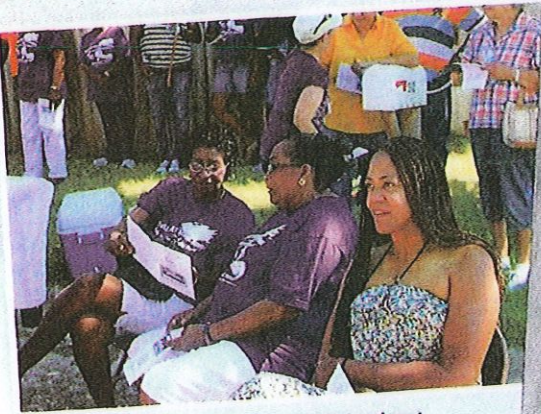


Edward Bratcher, Sr., co-founder/co-owner of The Famous Door Café and Bratcher properties in Kerrville, Texas. Mr. Bratcher was also a chef at the historic Blue Bonnet Hotel in Kerrville (center, third from left). Photo circa late 1920s or early 1930s.





The soon-to-be-renovated Famous Door Café.



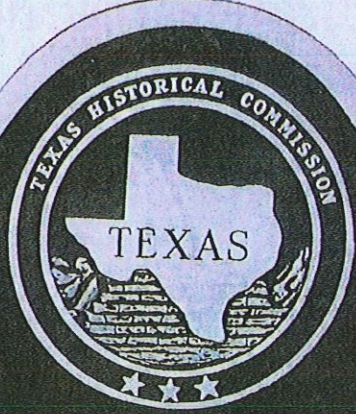
A great turnout despite the mid-day heat.



Kerrville Mayor Jack Pratt.



Francine Prosser-Johnson, COO South Texas Center for Pediatric Care gives keynote address.



THE FAMOUS DOOR CAFÉ

THE FAMOUS DOOR SERVED THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN KERRVILLE FOR SEVENTY YEARS AS A CAFÉ, GROCERY STORE, AND, MOST PROMINENTLY, AS A DANCE HALL. HENRY KELLEY ESTABLISHED HIS CAFE AND GROCERY IN THE 1920s, AT A TIME WHEN JIM CROW LAWS SEGREGATED AND RESTRICTED ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. THE CAFÉ BECAME AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY, HOSTING A 1938 DANCE FOR EMANCIPATION DAY AND A 1942 DANCE TO CELEBRATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S BIRTHDAY AND BENEFIT THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS (LATER THE MARCH OF DIMES). EDWARD BRATCHER, SR., A PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN CHEF AT THE BLUEBONNET HOTEL, BECAME MANAGER AND CHANGED THE NAME TO BRATCHER'S PLACE. IN 1944, PROPERTY OWNER A.L. LEWIS SOLD BRATCHER AND HIS WIFE, CORDELLIA MILLS BRATCHER, THE RESTAURANT AND OTHER ADJACENT PROPERTY.

WITH SEGREGATION EXCLUDING AFRICAN AMERICANS FROM MUSIC VENUES, ENTREPRENEURS CREATED AN ALTERNATIVE KNOWN AS THE CHITLIN' CIRCUIT. TOUR STOPS HOSTED LOCAL PERFORMERS AND NATIONALLY-KNOWN JAZZ, ROCK AND RHYTHM AND BLUES MUSICIANS. DURING THIS TIME, THE RESTAURANT BEGAN HOSTING MUSICAL ACTS AND CHANGED ITS NAME TO THE FAMOUS DOOR CAFÉ, ADVERTISING AS BEING "FAMOUS FOR FRIENDS, FOOD, AND FUN." AS NEW MUSICAL TRENDS DEVELOPED, THE FAMOUS DOOR INTEGRATED ITS LINEUP, INCLUDING GROUPS FROM KERRVILLE AND SAN ANTONIO OFTEN CREDITED AS EARLY DEVELOPERS OF PSYCHEDELIC ROCK IN THE 1960s. PATRONS LATER RECALLED THE FAMOUS DOOR AS THE FIRST INTEGRATED BUSINESS IN KERRVILLE THAT WELCOMED ALL CUSTOMERS BEFORE IT CLOSED IN 1996. MUSIC PROVIDED A COMMON LANGUAGE THAT HELPED BRIDGE CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL GAPS.

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

(2012)

Hometown Events

Who
Kerr County Historical
Commission Marker Dedication

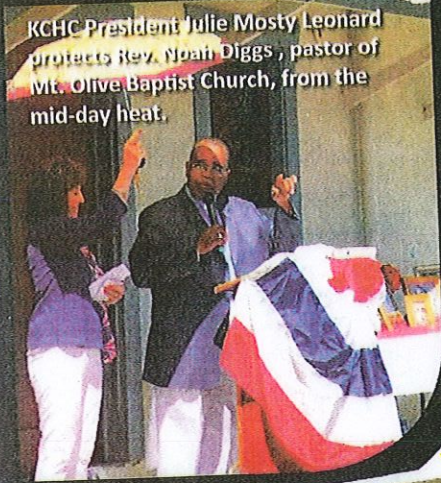
What
The Famous Door Cafe

When
Saturday July 25, 2015

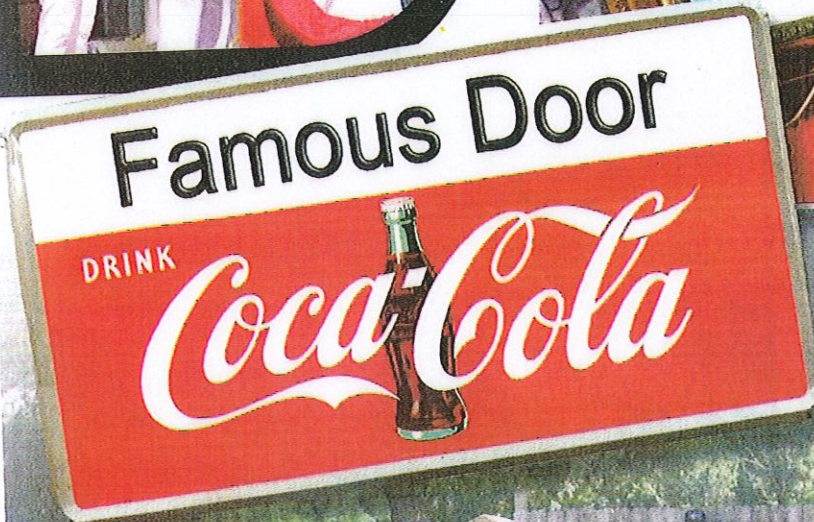
Where
215 W. Barnett, Kerrville



Presentation of Colors by Cub Scout Pack 139.



KCHC President Julie Mosty Leonard protects Rev. Noah Diggs, pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, from the mid-day heat.







Lester Lewis Tifer
2-6-1955 Onside Famous Door

Ella Phelps
Jute Joint,
Hotel, and Café
1930'S – 1970's









The Cabin

1940'S – 1980'S

Café Dance Hall



ButterBall'S

Place

Later

The Dream



Green Door
1950'S – 1990'S
John L. Pennick
And
Beulah Pennick

First established as a gathering place for teenagers. Later became a Jute Joint.



PENNICK'S GREEN DOOR

TURNER

NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTER
120 W. DAVIS

Pleasure
Garden

1940's - 1974









