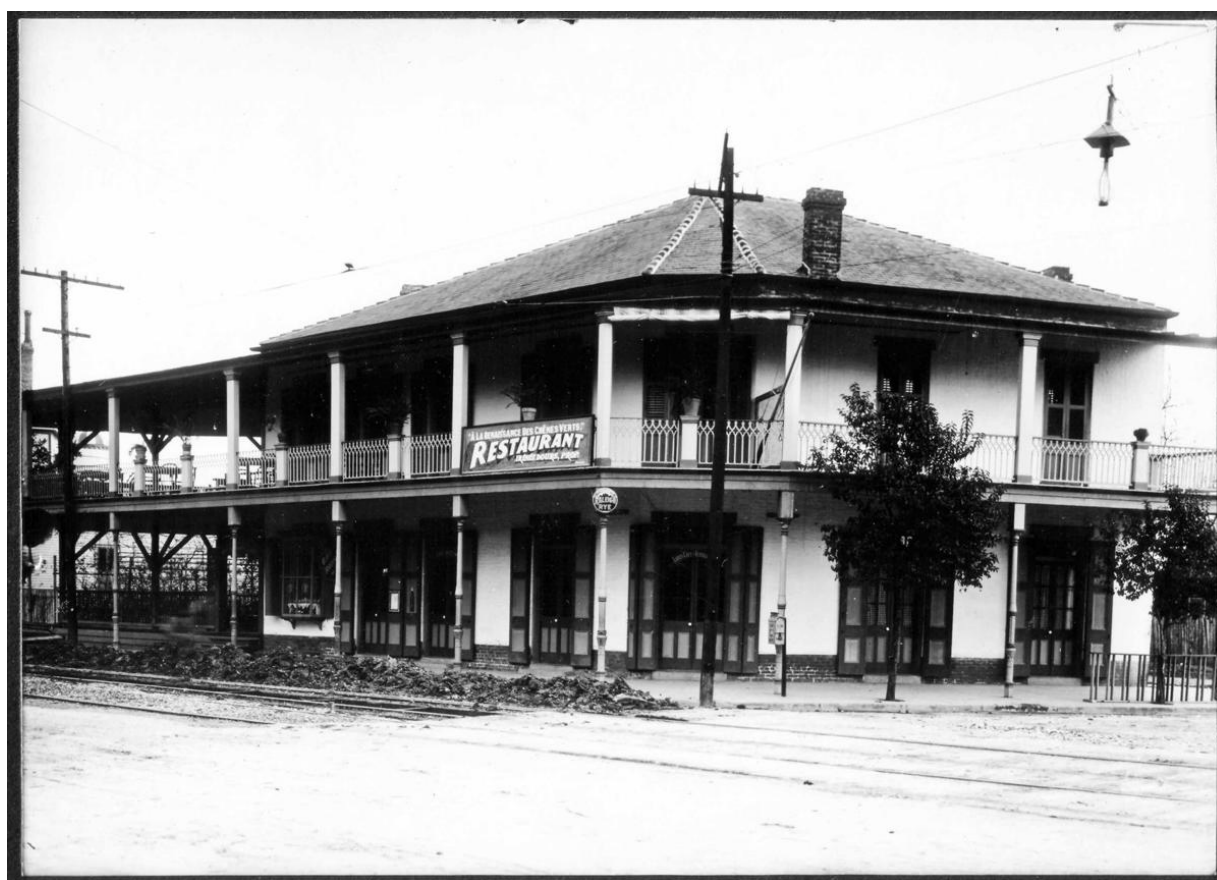


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This New Orleans restaurant has been owned by an Alciatore, a Tujague and a Brennan

BY SUE STRACHAN | STAFF WRITER JUL 19, 2019 - 7:00 AM

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Restaurant a La Renaissance des Chenes Verts, photographed by Charles Milo Williams, 1890 - 1910. The building at 900 City Park Ave. is now Ralph's on the Park.

PHOTO CREDIT: C. MILO WILLIAMS COLLECTION COURTESY LOUISIANA DIVISION NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Back in 1860, a new city park and the visitors it attracted were the lures for Jean Marie Saux to build a coffeehouse at 900 City Park Ave. (then part of Metairie Road). The site was opposite the park, which opened in 1854.

Today, Ralph's on the Park is in that spot, upholding what became the location's long tradition as a place for dining, imbibing and a good cup of coffee.

In 1893, Saux sold his coffeehouse to Fernand Alciatore, son of Antoine Alciatore, of Antoine's restaurant. Alciatore named it Restaurant a La Renaissance des Chenes Vert (Rebirth of the Green Oaks), and for years it was a place for fine dining.

Alciatore went to court to get permission to serve alcoholic beverages on Sundays, which was against the law, by claiming the restaurant was an "establishment being a place of public resort for the recreation and health of the public," stated a Times-Democrat article from 1895.

In 1901, Justin Tujague, of the Tujague restaurant family, purchased the business, and managers courted the “fancy ladies of Storyville, as well as young families as patrons,” according to the Ralph’s on the Park website.

The New Orleans Brewing Co. purchased the building in 1912 and leased it to Frank LaMothe, who renamed it LaMothe’s City Park Restaurant. He continued the policy of mixing society: LaMothe hosted an annual Ball of the Two Well-Known Gentlemen, a masquerade party that included both the women of Storyville, the city’s red-light district, and high-society types.

The restaurant closed in 1917, the same year as Storyville, which was the victim of a federal government crackdown on vice districts across the country.

The building remained shuttered until the early ’80s, when Martha and Jack Sands reopened it as Tavern on the Park.

The Sands also registered the building, named the Jean Marie Saux Building, on the National Register of Historic Places in Louisiana in 1983.

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Ralph's on the Park is at 900 City Park Ave., which was Metairie Road when it opened in 1860.

PHoto by Sue Strachan Staff Photo

Before the Sands reopened the restaurant, it may have had a brief life as a bar in the late '70s and early '80s. Ralph's on the Park proprietor Ralph Brennan recalled it as Parkway Tavern, while others seem to think it was called Parkview Tavern.

In 2003, Brennan purchased the building, which underwent extensive renovations to become Ralph's on the Park.

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