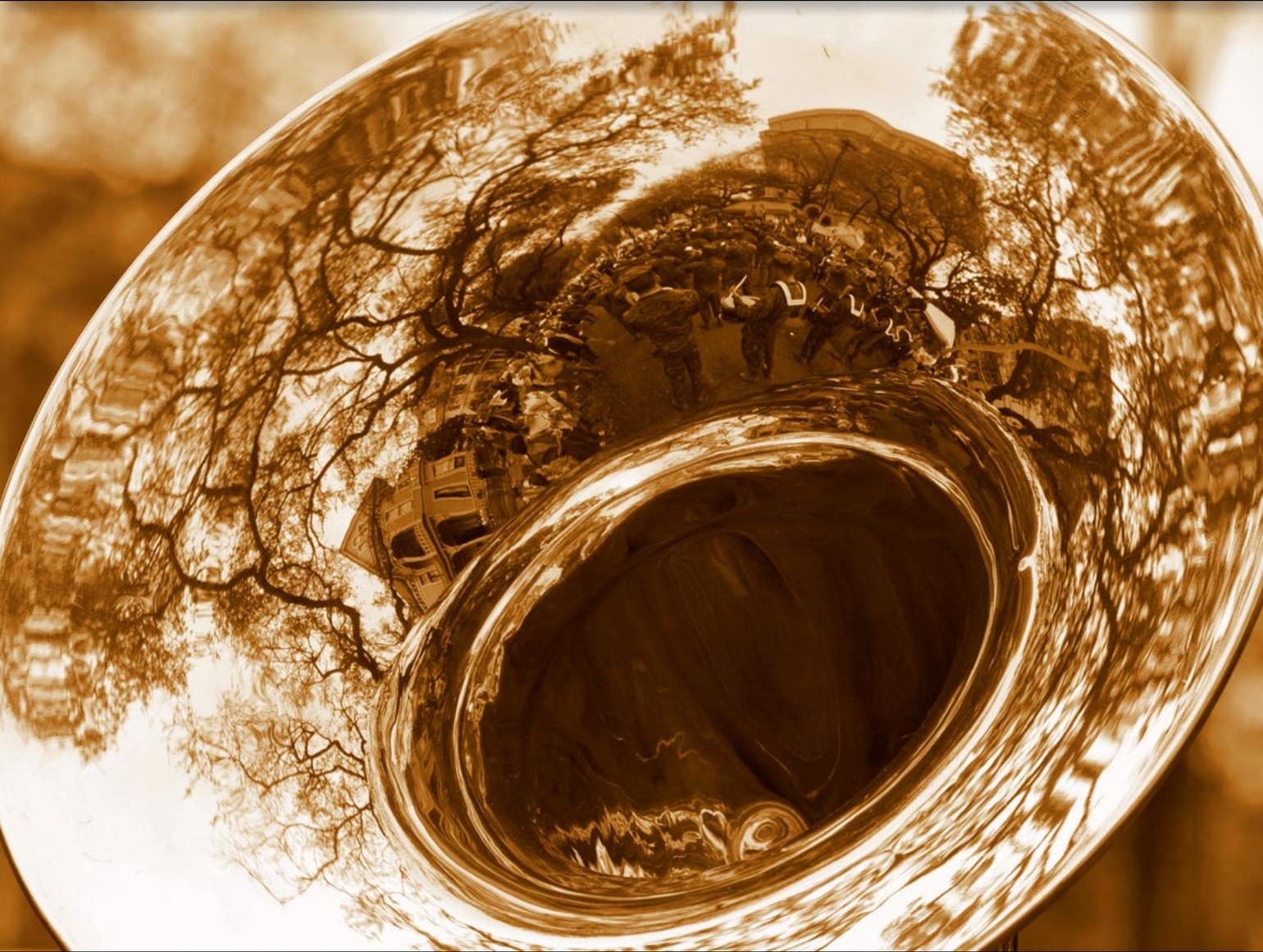




Foundation Document Overview

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

Louisiana



Contact Information

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Purpose



Devoted to preservation of a national musical treasure, NEW ORLEANS JAZZ NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK provides venues, oral histories, seminars, and demonstrations to experience jazz music and culture in the city where it originated, New Orleans.

Significance

Significance statements express why New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- New Orleans is widely recognized as the birthplace of jazz, with many distinctive social and traditional practices associated with its origins continuing in the city today.
- Through partnerships and programs, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park emphasizes the blend of people and cultures that make jazz America's most widely recognized indigenous music.
- New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park connects people to the culture of New Orleans by working with organizations and individuals to present performances and cultural events that bring the experience of jazz to life.
- The park's museum collection includes recordings and oral histories that document the lives of local musicians and the vibrant street culture of New Orleans' neighborhoods.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Music Demonstrations**
- **Story of Jazz**
- **New Orleans Social Traditions**
- **Community Relationships**
- **Recognition of Important Places in Jazz History**
- **Museum Archives**



New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park contains related resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park's related resources include:

- **Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs / Benevolent Societies**
- **Congo Square**
- **Tremé District**
- **The Hogan Jazz Archive**
- **Louisiana State Museum Jazz Collection**
- **The Historic New Orleans Collection**
- **The Third Ward of New Orleans**

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- New Orleans' location as an international port, along with its diverse history, created an atmosphere in which music traditions from the Caribbean, African nations, European colonial settlements, and indigenous North American tribes would interact and evolve to create a new distinct American sound reflective of the 20th century American character.
- With origins in the late 19th century, New Orleans-style jazz traveled the steamboats and railways throughout much of the country in the early 20th century, finding new audiences in musical hubs such as Kansas City, Chicago, and New York, while blossoming in the mid-20th century into multiple musical forms popularly called swing, bebop, cool, modern, and fusion.
- Today, as in the past, jazz in New Orleans is experienced through the live spontaneity, improvisation, and interplay between musicians and audiences, bands and dancers, parade leaders, and neighborhood revelers.
- Traditional storytelling and oral histories provide a personal window into the experience of musicians and musical families in New Orleans, who often drew upon music as a means to respond to oppression, fight against racial isolation, promote community celebration, and show reverence to forbears.
- From the African Caribbean drumming in 19th century Congo Square, to the sounds of stride piano in the Storyville District, to the riffs and improvisational vocals in black vaudeville saloons—places and neighborhoods that granted and nurtured African American expression from the 1800s through recent history played a critical role in the formation and evolution of jazz.

Description

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park was created by Congress in 1994 to celebrate the origins and evolution of the uniquely indigenous American art form of jazz. A story rich with innovation, experimentation, controversy, and emotion, the park provides a setting to share the cultural history of the people and places that helped shape the development and progression of jazz in New Orleans.

The park consists of approximately five acres of leased space across several sites in and around the historic French Quarter district. The Old US Mint anchors the eastern edge of the French Quarter and houses a ranger station and state-of-the-art performance space. Perseverance Hall—with its ranger station and outdoor space—sits within Louis Armstrong Park just above the northern border of the French Quarter. The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park visitor center has a stage and exhibit space in the historic French Market area adjacent to the Mississippi River. Park staff also provides administrative and operational support from the park headquarters within a 19th century storefront building on the western side of the French Quarter. The sites in Louis Armstrong Park and the French Market are leased from the City of New Orleans. The Old US Mint is owned by the State of Louisiana and the park has a short-term agreement to provide visitor services from the facility.

The breadth and scope of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park does not necessarily draw from the history of these leased sites, but rather from the cultural history of the region. The park preserves jazz resources and disseminates information about the origins, development, and changes in jazz and its many contributions for societies locally, regionally, nationally, and around the world. As the widely recognized cradle of jazz, New Orleans represents the coalescence of singular cultural attributes that fostered the creation and early evolution of that music form, and it is this reality that is reflected in the establishment of this unique park.

Park guests experience jazz music by attending demonstrations and educational performances at park sites and at large-scale festivals that are cosponsored by the park in public spaces within or near the French Quarter. The park also provides opportunities to learn about jazz in New Orleans through audio tours, brochures, and self-guided maps that highlight venues, businesses, neighborhoods, and homes important in New Orleans music history. The park maintains partnerships with local research institutions to participate in collaborative oral history projects.

