

Vienna Restaurant  
133, 135 S. Fourth Street  
Louisville  
Jefferson County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-153

HABS,  
KY,

56-LOUVI,  
24-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Architectural and Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VIENNA RESTAURANT  
(Brennan Building)

HABS No. KY-153

- Location: 133, 135 South Fourth Street, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky.
- Present Owner: One Thirty-Three South Fourth Street, Inc.
- Present Occupant and Use: Jefferson County Democratic Party and party headquarters. (The building was demolished in 1982 after this report was written).
- Significance: At one time the most elegant and sumptuous restaurant in Louisville, the Vienna Restaurant, is a very rare example of the Art Nouveau influence in Louisville. Aside from remnants of the interior, only the exterior remains as a reminder of the former grandeur.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Circa 1905. It is known that the restaurant, which was founded in 1893, was initially housed in a pre-1893 building, before its move to its circa 1905 building at 133 S. Fourth Street. Photographs of the interior taken circa 1906 show it in its finished state. The earliest known photograph of the exterior dates from 1913. It is probable that the facade uniting the two buildings was erected sometime after the consolidation of the property between 1907 and 1913.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Vienna Restaurant is located on lot 195 of block 14-E in the City of Louisville. The following references tracing the title of these lots are found in the Jefferson County, Kentucky Deed Books.
 

1882 Deed, November 11, 1882, located in Deed Book 254, page 564. Charles M. Thruston and Leonora Thruston sold the lot at 249 Fourth Street (now 133 S. Fourth Street) to William R. Ray.

1884 Deed, June 5, 1884, recorded in Deed Book 271, page 249. W.T. Underwood and M.B. Underwood sold the lot at 251 Fourth Street (now 135 S. Fourth Street) to George W. Norton for \$13,000.

1899 Deed, June 8, 1899, recorded in Deed Book 520, page 164. Martha H. Norton and George W. Norton, executors of George W. Norton, Martha H. Norton, Juliette N. Marvin and Joseph B. Marvin, Susan N. Coleman and John Coleman,

Minnie N. Caldwell, Lucie W. Norton and Mattie A. Norton, and George W. Norton, and Margaret M. Norton conveyed the lot at 251 Fourth Street to the Norton Company.

- 1900 Will, November 17, 1900, recorded in Will Book 23, page 370. William R. Ray devised the lot at 249 South Fourth Street to Isabel Ray LaVielle, his daughter.
- 1903 Deed, August 6, 1903, recorded in Deed Book 597, page 409. The Norton Company sold the lot at 249 South Fourth Street to H.C. Rhodes, Oscar Fenley and John W. Barr, Jr., trustees under the will of William R. Ray, recorded in Will Book 23, page 370.
- 1907 Deed, May 28, 1907, recorded in Deed Book 665, page 56. H.C. Rhodes, Oscar Fenley, and John W. Barr, Jr., trustees under the will of William R. Ray, Joseph L. LaVielle, Thomas D. Osborne and Christine C. Osborne, and Charles D. Ray, all by R.W. Herr, Commissioner of the Jefferson County Circuit Court, sold the lot at 251 South Fourth Street to Isabel LaVielle.
- 1935 Deed, September 23, 1935, recorded in Deed Book 1584, page 88. The Fidelity and Columbia Trust Company, executor of the will of Isabel Ray LaVielle, dated August 11, 1930 and recorded in Will Book 45, page 99, sold the two lots comprising the Vienna Restaurant to Wathan Realty Company.
- 1936 Deed, June 1, 1936, recorded in Deed Book 1601, page 480. Wathan Realty Company conveyed the property to John A. Wathan Distillery Company.
- 1940 Deed, July 1940, recorded in Deed Book 1758, page 2. Wathan Realty Company conveyed the property to John A. Wathan Distillery Company.
- 1941 Deed, July, 1941, recorded in Deed Book 1790, page 307. John A. Wathan Distillery Company sold the property to George T. Stagg Company.
- 1946 Deed, May 22, 1946, recorded in Deed Book 2129, page 317. George T. Stagg Company sold the lots to Morton Manufacturing Company.
- 1946 Deed, June 28, 1946, recorded in Deed Book 2141, page 491. Morton Manufacturing Company sold the property to Louisville Lodge #5, Loyal Order of Moose.

1950 Deed, December 11, 1950, recorded in Deed Book 2702, page 552. Louisville Lodge #5, Loyal Order of Moose sold the property to One Thirty-Three South Fourth Street, Inc.

4. Original plans and construction: No original plans are known to exist. A description of the restaurant in its original state reads as follows: "The first floor is elegantly fitted up as a restaurant, being furnished with fine Vienna imported oak tables and chairs, electric lights, fans, etc. as well as the snowiest of linen and fine tableware. The second floor is used as the kitchen and bakery where genuine Vienna bread, rolls, etc. are made; the third floor is devoted to fancy pastry, etc. ... The Cumberland Telephone connects every department." It is also known that the interior was decorated in the Classical Revival style, and bentwood furniture was used to accentuate the interior.

One exterior photograph of the restaurant survives from 1913 showing it in its final form.

5. Alterations and additions:

1951 Following occupancy by the Jefferson County Democratic party two stained glass panels, one at each end of the facade, were removed and stored in the basement to be replaced with fans. In the stained glass panels over the doorways the central lettering, probably "249" and "251" respectively, was replaced with stained glass, reading "BRENNAN BUILDING," in honor of Mr. Brennan, a prominent Democrat. Also, following occupancy, the interior of 133 South Fourth Street was partitioned and converted to office space.

1959 At 11:54 p.m., August 6, 1959, a fire swept through the upper two floors of the restaurant, completely destroying those floors.

- B. Historical Context: The Vienna Restaurant was one of the city's most elegant restaurants. Opened in 1893 as the Vienna Restaurant and Bakery by Frank Erpeldinger, a native of Vienna, it was host to both residents and visitors to Louisville. Following the death of Frank Erpeldinger in 1925, the restaurant was sold to a Chicago firm in January of 1927.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### General description:

The front facade of this three-story commercial building boasts a rare form of Art Nouveau style. The walls are faced with colorful ceramic tile with contrasting, light-color terra cotta trim used on the window enframement and roof elements. Colorful stained glass panels above the large clear glass windows on the first floor further enhance the building. A vertical sign that reads "Vienna" is above the central main entryway. It is also faced with ceramic tile and terra cotta trim. The simple glass double doors of the main entryway and a balustrade atop the flat roof are among the non-Art Nouveau elements. Inside the building is dark stained woodwork that trims the walls, ceilings and doorways.

Prepared by: David Arbogast  
Historian  
National Park Service  
August 1974  
and  
Susan McCown  
Historian  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
Spring 1981

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### A. Early Views:

Two photographs, R. G. Potter Collection, ca. 1906, show the interiors of the Ladies' Dining Room and the Gentlemens' Dining Room. Prints of these photographs may be found in the following places:

Jefferson County Democratic Headquarters, 133 South Fourth Street, Louisville, Kentucky.

Cunningham's Restaurant, 900 South Fifth Street, Louisville, Kentucky.

Louisville Pictorial Souvenir, Louisville, Kentucky.

"Where to Dine," Courier-Journal, March 25, 1913.

Four photographs, two of which are the same as above, and two of which show the front of the same rooms from the interior, plus a portrait of the owner, Frank Erpeldinger, are in Greater Louisville - Illustrated, National Publishing Company, Louisville, 1908.

An interior photograph of the restaurant before remodeling in a reprint of an article now found in the Jefferson County Democratic Headquarters, but listing no source. At the top of the page is written "Louisville, Kentucky, Resources and Industries," page 85.

An interior photograph of the restaurant before remodeling in Commercial History of the State of Kentucky, edited by T. Edgar Harvey, by Post D of the Traveler's Protective Association of America, Courier-Journal Job Printing Co., Louisville, 1899, p. 120.

A photograph of the exterior in its final form in "Where to Dine," Courier-Journal, March 25, 1913.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books located in the Clerk's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

Will Books located in the Probate Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Newspaper clippings:

"The Vienna Restaurant Holds a Warm Place in a Former Louisville Man's Heart," Louisville Times, December 31, 1908.

"Famous Old Restaurant to Change Hands," Louisville Herald-Post, January 14, 1927

"Fire Sweeps Restaurant on Fourth," Courier-Journal, August 7, 1959.

"Curio Now Having Its Day," by Floyd Edwards, Louisville Times, February 6, 1961.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, Inc. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1974 at the HABS Field Office in Louisville by Prof. John Haggard, (Syracuse University), Project Supervisor; David Arbogast (Columbia University), Project Historian; Mary Oehrlein, Project Foreman; Bayer Lee (City College of New York), Architect; and Mary M. Herd (University of Tennessee) and Charles Raith (University of Cincinnati), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive data in the spring of 1981, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher took the photographs of the structures in 1979.

ADDENDUM TO  
VIENNA RESTAURANT  
133-135 South Fourth Street  
Louisville  
Jefferson County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-153

HABS  
KY,  
56-LOUVI,  
24-

XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013