

NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions

By Ned Hémard

The Stores With "K" Have Gone Away

The stores with "K" have gone away.
I wish it wouldn't be that way.
Perhaps they will come back some day,
Those lovely stores that start with "K".

Kreeger's, Krower's, K & B,
That purple sign was meant to be.
Cream cheese ice cream just for me!
Why'd they sell the K & B?

Katz and Besthoff really hopped.
To buy your booze that's where you shopped.
The Rite-Aid people really flopped
When Coca-Cola sales they stopped.

Krauss, our favorite fabric store, had
Pneumatic tubes from floor to floor.
Notions, swatches, goods galore!
Just add one more "Ain't Dere No More".

At Leonard Krower's you could find
A diamond ring or watch to wind.
On Dryades Kaufman's left behind
A memory fading from the mind.

Kress was no mere five and dime.
We loved to shop there all the time.
Kid gloves from Kreeger's were sublime.
To lose these stores was such a crime.

The pain of losing stores with "K"
Had locals kneeling down to pray
But the only thing that came our way
Was a hurricane that starts with "K".

Kirschman's now is "Rooms To Go".
Gee we really miss them so!
We just can't seem to stem the flow
Of stores with "K" that up and blow.

The stores with "K" have gone away.
And Sydney, we just got to say
The sculpture garden's A-OK,
But how we miss those stores with "K".

For those younger readers, or for those not from New Orleans, what follows are a few brief words of explanation. Many of these stores with "K" were located downtown on Canal Street. Years ago they were frequent destinations for ladies in white gloves wearing their best hat. Of course, other notable establishments without a "K" are also gone (such as Maison Blanche, D. H. Holmes, Godchaux's and Gus Mayer's).

In 1905 Sydney Besthoff, Sr., a Memphis druggist opened a store at 732 Canal Street in partnership with a New Orleans pharmacist, Gus David Katz. Soon K & B drugstores were at "almost every corner" with their big purple signs. In 1997 the chain was sold to Rite-Aid, which has since complied with the *vox populi* on such issues as Coke and ice cream. Sydney, III, with his great love of art, brought the community the beautiful Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden adjacent to the New Orleans Museum of Art in City Park.

Though gone, these stores are far from forgotten.

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