



## MOVED AWAY

Most Hurricane Katrina evacuees moved elsewhere in the Gulf Coast region. These metro areas were the top destinations outside the affected areas<sup>{+1}</sup>:

1. Dallas-Fort Worth
2. Atlanta
3. Memphis
4. San Antonio
5. Austin
6. Los Angeles
7. Chicago
8. Miami
9. Washington
10. New York

<sup>1</sup> Based on FEMA aid applicants' addresses as of July 31, 2007

*Source: FEMA, Greater New Orleans Community Data Center*

# Some ache for New Orleans but not ready to return

By Judy Keen, USA TODAY

John "Chappy" Chapman is happy in Nashville, but he agonizes over the things Hurricane Katrina took from him.

The storm destroyed his dream home in Waveland, Miss., and his restaurant in Long Beach, Miss. "I miss my home so much," says Chapman, 55, owner and chef at the new Chappy's Seafood Restaurant in Nashville. He opened it in June 2006 after deciding that rebuilding on the Gulf Coast could take decades.

Chapman, his wife, Starr, and daughter Laura moved into a friend's Nashville home after the storm. He was so shellshocked, he says, that those days are still a blur. "You feel so empty," he recalls. "You've got nothing left. Every day was tearful."

**PAW PRINT POST:** [Memories of post-Katrina animal shelters sting in hurricane season](#)

Chapman doesn't think he'll live on the coast again. "I'm not afraid," he says. "It's just that I lost so much."

## About 125,000 fewer people live in [New Orleans](#) now than in 2005 when Katrina made landfall Aug. 29, prompting vast flooding and mass evacuations.

Like Chapman, others who fled the Gulf Coast after Katrina ache for home but say they're not ready to return to places so filled with bad memories and so altered by the storm. Some fear another disaster; some are frustrated with the pace of recovery:

- "My mind is not at ease with the levees," says Lena Crinel, 73, who moved to New Orleans in 1961. She was at a church retreat in Alabama when Katrina flooded her home. She didn't go back until 2007, and when she did, "It looked like it had just happened."

Crinel lives in Muscle Shoals, Ala., and says new friends and a new church have made her feel welcome, but it's not home. Her daughter, Lisa, repaired the New Orleans house and wants her mom to come back.

"I told her to give me until after Mardi Gras to think about it," she says. "It will never be the old, original New Orleans."

- Henry Butler is torn, too. A renowned pianist and singer, he was born in New Orleans and lost his home in the city's Gentilly neighborhood to Katrina. A favorite piano, musical scores, studio equipment and a library of Braille books were ruined.

He moved to Colorado after the storm and now lives in Brooklyn.

"I'd love to live back in New Orleans ... but I'm still recovering," says Butler, 59, who often performs in his hometown.

He's waiting, Butler says, for the city's commitment to its culture to be reborn. New Orleans' influence on his music "is always going to be big in the core of my being," he says, "but right now I'm not feeling living there."

- Frank Joseph left his hometown hours before Katrina struck and lived in Alabama, Virginia, Texas and California before settling in Quitman, Ga., where he is plant manager for a laundry service. He says he's not ready to move back to New Orleans.

"There's an eerie feeling that seems to have settled over the city," says Joseph, 35. "It's just not how it was when we left."

He says New Orleans is too unstable for his five children. "Maybe five years down the line," he'll reconsider, he says.

- Marcus Gilmer didn't want to leave New Orleans after Katrina, but when he lost his apartment lease and started having panic attacks, he knew he had to.

"I felt like I abandoned the city," says Gilmer, 30, who moved to Chicago, where he is editor of *Chicagoist*, a culture and news blog. "I miss it dearly."

He feels connected to New Orleans and was homesick this year when he didn't make it back for Mardi Gras. He would love to return, but distance and time have given him new perspective.

"I miss the city for what it was before Katrina — not that it was perfect," Gilmer says. "It's easy to look back now and kind of idealize it via nostalgia. ... It still has its faults, and it's changed."

- When Pamela Broom left New Orleans, she says, "I was thinking I'd never return. I was thinking I was too old for the frontier life."

She moved to Durham, N.C., then to Chicago. In 2007, she returned to New Orleans to be near her sister and mother, who is 94.

"Some people say I should have stayed away," says Broom, 53, deputy director of the New Orleans Food & Farm Network. "You still see so much of what was devastated and is not coming back or is coming back so slowly that it breaks your heart."

Although she missed her hometown so much that she once wept in a Durham grocery checkout line because she was longing for her Winn-Dixie in New Orleans, Broom isn't sure she's home to stay.

"I'm here," she says, "as long as I'm here."

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**