

WHAT  
HAPPENED

Willie Mae's  
Scotch House  
reopened on  
April 2, 2007.



Willie Mae Seaton cooks fried chicken for volunteers helping to rebuild her Hurricane Katrina-devastated restaurant.



Kerry Seaton-Stewart and her grandmother, Willie Mae Seaton, after receiving the 'Classic' James Beard honor.



Willie Mae's Scotch House, at the corner of St. Ann and N. Tonti streets

Once a bar where Willie Mae Seaton would serve up Scotch and milk, **Willie Mae's Scotch House** grew to become a local and national sensation, known for perhaps the best fried chicken in America.

Volunteers  
helped  
rebuild  
Willie  
Mae's  
Scotch  
House  
after  
Hurricane  
Katrina.



PHOTOS COURTESY WILLIE MAE'S

Seaton, born in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, moved to New Orleans so her husband could work at Higgins Industries during World War II. She opened a beauty shop on the corner of St. Ann and North Tonti streets, which in 1957, she turned into a bar, where the house drink was Scotch and milk. Seaton started cooking in the bar's kitchen and eventually opened a restaurant, serving fried chicken, white beans, pork chops and other soul food.

For decades, the restaurant was not well known, even to many locals. But in May 2005, Seaton's restaurant was

honored with a James Beard Award for "America's Classic Restaurant for the Southern Region." The secret was out. But a few months later, when the levees failed after Hurricane Katrina, the restaurant flooded. The Southern Foodways Alliance led a national fundraising drive, and chef John Currence, a New Orleans native and Oxford, Mississippi chef, led a volunteer effort to rebuild the restaurant. The restaurant reopened in April 2007. Seaton's granddaughter, Kerry Seaton-Stewart, took over the restaurant when it reopened. Willie Mae Seaton died in 2015 at 99.