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## **The Mayor of Frenchmen Street: Otis Fennell and his FAB Archive**

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### **Abstract**

The little gay bookshop in New Orleans's Faubourg Marigny neighborhood had a sign announcing: "It's Not Just Porn." Its primary intention was to alert passersby that while the shop openly sold erotic photographs and pornographic magazines, it was above all else a bookstore. However, it also functioned as a reminder that queer lives were multifaceted; one that few would admit to needing when it was placed on the wall in 2003. By that time, the bookstore was nothing if not a memento of times past, and Otis Fennell, its latest owner, had plenty of reminiscences to go around. He realized, as he watched his fellow gay booksellers shutter their doors, that the gay movement that raised him had been replaced by a sort of post-gay ambivalence. In response, he transformed the store into a pseudo-archive of which he himself was as much a draw as the old books that lined his shelves.

**Keywords:** Gay spacemaking, gay liberation, gay bookstore, New Orleans, Faubourg Marigny, American South, gay identity