

SHE'S THE FOUR-LEAF CLOVER IN THE CITY KATRINA TURNED OVER: THE
HISTORICAL SISTER GERTRUDE MORGAN AND HER POST-HURRICANE KATRINA
SPECTERS

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ABSTRACT

In the 1960s and 1970s, Sister Gertrude Morgan, artist, musician, street preacher and prophet, lived and ministered throughout the city of New Orleans. Through her artwork, music, preaching, and literal interpretation of the apocalyptic books of the Bible, she placed herself and New Orleans within the biblical text, playing a significant role in the coming apocalypse.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has seen the emergence of multiple Sister Gertrude specters. The historical Sister Gertrude is the inspiration for these Sister Gertrude specters, but ambiguous relationships exist between the historical Sister Gertrude and each post-Hurricane Katrina specter. Each of the specters pulls at a specific element of Sister Gertrude's life, work, and/or image. The four specific specters explored in this thesis were created by: Philadelphia DJ King Britt, the *New York Times*, commemoration efforts, and Preservation Hall owner Benjamin Jaffe. The tensions inherent in each of these specters cannot be understood without their comparison to the historical Sister Gertrude. Despite these tensions, the historical Sister Gertrude and her specters remain connected. Today's specter creators' search for authentic New Orleans by adapting Sister Gertrude runs parallel to Sister Gertrude's efforts to make New Orleans sacred through her religious worldview. The process happening in both cases is similar. In the concluding chapter, the Sister Gertrude specters are examined in light of the New Orleans rebuilding process.