

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
JUNE 24, 2019  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2019-0318  
1216 E. 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Partial demolition of a ca. 1919 house to construct an addition. The applicant proposes the removal of the back wall of the house to construct an addition that will have 1,306 square feet on the ground floor and 221 square feet on the second floor.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled, Arts and Crafts-style frame bungalow with a prominent, front-gabled, partially-inset independent porch with heavy brackets, double square wood posts, and Arts and Crafts detailing; second-story addition to the right side above a porte-cochere; single and paired 9:1 and 12:1 fenestration; non-historic stone veneer wainscoting at the bottom of the porch.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house appears to have been built around 1919; the first owners and occupants were Dr. Edward Abner and his wife, Maude, who lived here until around 1923, when they moved to Denver, Colorado. Edward Abner was an African-American physician who had his office at 302½ E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Little is known of his medical practice in Austin, but he was one of a handful of African-American physicians to practice in the city at that time. A later census report reveals that when he and his wife moved to Denver, he was an agent for an insurance company there.

The house was rented by an African-American porter for the Packard dealership in the mid-1920s, then purchased by Sadie Niemtschk, the former proprietor of a hotel on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building at 600 Congress Avenue. Mrs. Niemtschk had no occupation listed in the city directories for the period she lived in this house, from round 1925 until around 1931.

Around 1931, the house was occupied by Lorena Bellamy and her husband, Peter. Peter Bellamy died in 1932, and Lorena Bellamy continued to live in the house until around 1944. She was a maid for a private family; her son, also named Peter Bellamy, worked as a chauffeur, then as a waiter at the Austin Country Club.

Beginning around 1954, the house was used off and on as the residence of members of the Tony Villasana family. Tony Villasana was born in Mexico and owned a café when he first moved to Austin. He became a food products salesman, and around 1935, he opened Tony's Tortilla Factory, first located near Republic Square, and later directly across Lydia Street from this house, at 1300 E. 7th Street. He and his wife lived at times at 1300 E. 7th Street, or at this house; his son, Tony, Jr., who took over the tortilla (and tamale) factory, also lived here later. Tony Villasana, Sr. had a second tortilla factory in Houston, and eventually moved there. He died in Houston in 1974, but the tortilla factory here was maintained by other members of his family until the 1980s.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The case is on for review by the Commission to determine if the Commission desires to initiate historic zoning on this property and review the details of the proposed addition. The addition will affect the rear of the house, but should the Commission feel that the house qualifies for

landmark designation, a Certificate of Appropriateness would be necessary for modifications to the house.

The house was recommended as contributing to a local or National Register historic district in the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016).

Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house may meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is an ornately-detailed bungalow with special considerations on the detailing of the deep front porch. The house also has a second-story sleeping porch addition above the porte-cochere, which is unusual for the style of the house.
- b. **Historical association.** The house has associations with an early African-American physician, Dr. Edward Abner, whose family was the first to own and occupy this house from the time of its construction in 1919. The house reflects the shifting demographics in East Austin as, after Dr. Abner and his wife moved on to Denver, Colorado around 1924, the house was then owned by an Anglo widow who had previously run a hotel on Congress Avenue. Around 1931, the house again reverted to African-American ownership with the family of Peter and Lorena Bellamy, who lived here until around 1944, and finally, has associations to Tony Villasana and his family, who appear to have lived off and on in this house from the mid-1950s onward; their tortilla factory, a long-standing Austin business, was located directly across Lydia Street at 1300 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.
- c. **Archaeology.** The house was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The house does not possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.




#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Consider whether the proposed addition to this house will foreclose the opportunity to landmark this house in the future due to its size and impact on the existing house, and whether the house satisfies the criteria for landmark designation. If the Commission declines initiation of historic zoning, then staff recommends completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center.

## LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2019-0318

LOCATION: 1216 E 7TH ST

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.





1216 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
ca. 1919







OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
1216 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
 By City Historic Preservation Office  
 June, 2019

- 1918            The address is not listed in the directory.  
                  NOTE: Dr. E.W.D. Abner is listed at 302½ E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, which was also  
                  his office.
- 1920            Dr. E.W.D. Abner (colored), owner  
                  Physician, 302½ E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1922            Dr. Edwin W.D. and Maude Abner, owners  
                  Physician, 302½ E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1924            J.W. and Sallie Boyd (colored), renters  
                  J.W.:            Porter, C.H. Houston Packard Company, Packard  
                                    automobiles, 704 Brazos Street.  
                  Sallie:            Furnished rooms  
                  NOTE: Dr. E.W.D. Abner is not listed in the directory.  
                  NOTE: Sadie Niemtschk is listed as the proprietor of the Haynie Hotel, 600  
                  Congress Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. She had no separate residential address for herself.
- 1927            Sadie Niemtschk, owner  
                  No occupation listed
- 1929            Mrs. Sadie Niemtschk, owner  
                  No occupation listed
- 1930-31        Mrs. Sadie Niemtschk, owner  
                  No occupation listed  
                  Also listed is Paul H. Niemtschk, a conductor.  
                  NOTE: Peter H. and Lorena Bellamy are listed at 2509 Cole Street; he  
                  was a driver for T.H. Williams & Company, a specialty dry goods store,  
                  500-02 Congress Avenue. With them lived their son, Peter H. Bellamy,  
                  Jr., a porter at Snaman's, ladies' wear, 608 Congress Avenue; and Peter  
                  H. Bellamy's Sr.'s mother, Hattie Bellamy, who had no occupation shown.
- 1932-33        Lorena Bellamy, renter  
                  No occupation listed  
                  Also listed is Theresa Bellamy, no occupation shown.  
                  NOTE: Sadie Niemtschk is not listed in the directory.
- 1935            Lorena Bellamy, renter  
                  Maid  
                  Also listed are Peter H. and Theresa Bellamy; he was a chauffeur.
- 1937            Lorena Bellamy, renter  
                  No occupation listed  
                  Also listed are Kinchlow T.M. Bellamy, a student at Tillotson College; and  
                  Peter H. and Theresa Bellamy; neither had an occupation shown.
- 1939            Lorena Bellamy, owner

Maid

Also listed are Peter H. and Theresa M. Bellamy; he was a waiter at the Austin Country Club.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1941    | Lorena Bellamy, owner<br>No occupation listed<br>Also listed are Peter H. and Theresa Bellamy; he was a cook.  |
| 1944-45 | Henry and Jimmie Sistrunk, renters<br>U.S. Army<br>NOTE: Neither Lorena, Peter H. nor Theresa Bellamy are listed in the directory.   |
| 1947    | The address is not listed in the directory.<br>NOTE: Antonio Villasana is listed at 1300 E. 12 <sup>th</sup> Street; he was employed by Tony's Tortilla and Candy Company. |
| 1949    | Vacant   |
| 1952    | Vacant   |
| 1955    | Tony Villasana, Jr. owner<br>No occupation listed  |
| 1959    | Tony, Jr. and Erelene Villasana, owners<br>Proprietor, Tony's Tortilla Factory, 1300 E. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street.  |
| 1962    | Vacant   |
| 1965    | Vacant   |
| 1968    | Leon and Cotilla Griffin, renters<br>Custodian, public schools   |
| 1973    | Tony and Emma Villasana, owners<br>Proprietor, Tony's Tortilla Factory, 1300 E. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street.<br>Also listed is Ray Villasana, a student.                        |
| 1977    | Emma Villasana, owner<br>Proprietor, Tony's Tortilla Factory, 1300 E. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street.  |
| 1981    | No return  |
| 1985-86 | Tony Villasana, renter<br>No occupation listed   |
| 1992    | Emma Villasana, renter<br>Retired  |

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

##### **Dr. Edwin W.D. and Maude Abner (ca. 1919 – ca. 1923)**

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Edward D. and Maude Abner as the owners of this house. Edward D. Abner was 51, had been born in Texas, and was a physician in general practice.. Maude

Abner was 31, had been born in Texas to Mississippi-born parents, and had no occupation listed. Both are listed as mulatto. They had no children listed with them.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Edward and Maud Abner living in a rented apartment in Denver, Colorado. The census report reveals that the Abners lived in a racially-mixed neighborhood. Edward Abner was 61, had been born in Texas, and was the manager of an insurance company. Maud Abner was 41, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Both are listed as Negro.

**Sadie Niemtschk (ca. 1925 – ca. 1931)**

Sadie B. Niemtschk's 1950 death certificate shows that she was living at 3201 Rosewood Avenue in Austin at the time of her death. She was a widowed housewife who had been born in Texas in 1874.

**SADIE B. NIEMTSCHK**  
**Sadie B. Niemtschk, 76, 3201 Rosewood, died Thursday in an Austin hospital.**  
**She had been a resident of Austin for 50 years.**  
**Funeral services were held at the Hyllin-Manor Funeral Home Thursday with the Rev. Joe E. Love officiating. Burial was in Oakwood Cemetery.**  
**Survivors include two sons, James Niemtschk and U. T. Niemtschk, both of Austin, and a sister, Mrs. E. A. Noack of Kingsbury.**

Obituary of Sadie Niemtschk  
 Austin American, December 22, 1950

**MRS. SADIE B. NIEMTSCHK**  
**Funeral services for Mrs. Sadie B. Niemtschk, 76, were held at the Hyllin-Manor Funeral Home Thursday with the Rev. Joe E. Love of the East Avenue Baptist Church officiating. Survivors include two sons, James Niemtschk and U. T. Niemtschk, both of Austin, and one sister, Mrs. E. A. Noack of Kingsbury.**  
**Burial was in Oakwood Cemetery.**

Story on the funeral of Sadie Niemtschk  
 Austin Statesman, December 21, 1950

**Lorena Bellamy (ca. 1931 – ca. 1944)**

Peter H. Bellamy married Larena [sic] Marshall in McLennan County, Texas in November, 1906. Peter Hereford Bellamy, Jr. was born in Austin in February, 1911.



The 1930 U.S. Census shows Pete H. and Lorena M. Bellamy as the owners of the house at 2509 Cole Street in Austin; that house was worth \$1,100. Pete H. Bellamy was 46, had been born in Texas to a Florida-born father and a South Carolina-born mother, and was a delivery man for a department store. Lorena M. Bellamy was 42, had been born in Texas, and was a maid for a private family. They had a son, Pete H. Bellamy, Jr., 19, who had been born in Texas and worked as a delivery man for a department store.

Peter H. Bellamy died in 1932 while living in this house. He was born in 1884 in Texas, and was a delivery man for a dry goods store.

Lorina [sic] Bellamy appears in the 1940 U.S. Census as the owner of this house, which was worth \$2,000. Lorina Bellamy was a 52-year old widow who had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed. With her lived her son, Peter H., 29, a Texas-born waiter at the country club; Peter's wife, Teresa, 27, who had been born in Texas and was a public school teacher; and their daughter, Mary Elizabeth, 5, who had been born in Texas. The family also had lodgers: Mary J. Sims, 64, a Texas-born public school teacher; and Larry Lee and Leslie B. Hodges. Larry Lee Hodges was 26, had been born in Texas, and was an embalmer at a funeral home. He lived in Houston in 1935. Leslie b. Hodges was 28, had been born in Texas, and was a registered nurse in a private home.

#### **Tony and Emma Villasana (ca. 1954 –**

Tony Villasana appears in the 1930 U.S. Census as the renter of the house at 112 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. Tony Villasana was 28, had been born in Mexico, and was the owner of a café. His wife, Carmine, 25, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 daughters, Carmine, 7; and Odalia, 4. Both girls had been born in Texas.

Tony and Carmen Villasana appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of the house at 1302 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. Tony Villasana was 37, had been born in Mexico, and was a salesman for a food company. Carmen Villasana was 33, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 4 children: daughter Gudelia, 13; Tony, Jr., 8; Henry, 4; and Irene, 2. All the children had been born in Texas.

According to an article by Virginia B. Wood in the Austin Chronicle (August 2, 2013), Antonio Villasana came to Austin as a child in 1912 when his family fled Mexico during the revolution. He opened Tony's Café near Republic Square in the 1920s; his children opened various locations of the Tamale House, and a grand-daughter opened Mexico Tipico on the east side. The building remaining at 1300 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street was the retail store and offices for the tortilla factory; the factory itself burned down.

Tony Villasana, Sr. died in Houston, Texas in October, 1974. His death certificate indicates that he was living in Houston, and was a widower who had been born in 1901 in Tamaulipas, Mexico. He was the owner of a tortilla factory.



Tony Villasana outside the tortilla factory at 1300 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, ca. 1948. The house at 1216 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street is in the background of the photo. *Courtesy, Vasquez-Valera family and published in the Austin Chronicle, August 2, 2013; article by Virginia B. Wood on the opening of the Silo on Seventh Restaurant in the old tortilla factory office and store building.*

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TAMALES**

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AUSTIN,  
TEXAS**

**SERVING YOU IS OUR PLEASURE**

Advertisement for Tony's Tortillas  
Austin American, December 22, 1950

## **TONY'S TORTILLAS MADE HERE**

Austin homemakers can give their guests a real treat in the way of a Mexican dinner during the cold weather season by including some of the tasty Tony's tortillas, which are processed in the factory at 1300 East Seventh Street operated by Tony Villasana.

These fine tortillas are available at all retail food outlets in Austin in two sizes of packages—the 15-

cent size containing 10 tortillas and the 25-cent package of 20.

Tony's Tortillas also are distributed within a 75-mile radius of Austin generally, the territory extending as far north as Waco and including San Marcos, Lockhart, Smithville, Rockdale, Georgetown and other Central Texas cities.

Villasana has been processing these fine tortillas here for the past 15 years. They are made from white grain corn cleaned by means of a blower and processed by modern machinery and wrapped so that patrons are assured of a product that is produced under the most sanitary conditions.

Villasana has been a resident of Austin for the past 38 years. Before entering his present business, he was associated here for three and one-half years with the old Bon Ton Cafe and for nine years with Louke's Cafe and for a time operated his own restaurant on Congress Avenue across from the old county courthouse.

He said he was the first processor in Austin to place on the market pecan candy in individual pieces wrapped in cellophane. He also at one time distributed toasted tortillas. In his present plant, he employs seven persons under normal conditions.

Story on Tony's Tortilla Factory  
Austin Statesman, November 17, 1951



## Tony Plant Proud Of Health Notice

Tony's Tortilla and Tamale Factory, 1300 East Seventh Street, is mighty proud of the large, framed health certificate that hangs on the wall in the main office.

The certificate, signed by city and state health officers, says: "For your health protection, this firm has cooperated with the Texas State Department of Health and the local health department in having a minimum of 80 per cent of its personnel, including the management, trained in the sanitary methods of food preparation and service."

The factory was organized in Austin over 20 years ago by Tony Villaseca Sr., whose son, Tony Jr., now manages it. The factory retails and wholesales tortillas and tamales, (including a frozen line), in Central Texas. It also wholesales a line of imported spices.



**YOUNG MANAGER**—Tony Villasano Jr., son of Tony Sr., is managing the tortilla and tamale factory organized by his father at 1300 East Seventh street. Tony Sr. is in Houston directing the business of a similar factory opened there. (Neal Douglass Photo.)

Story on Tony's Tortilla Factory  
Austin American-Statesman, October 18, 1953

# **Tony's Quality Tortillas Fine For Snack Meal**

The interval between Thanksgiving and Christmas when people are busy with holiday preparations is a time when many housewives desire to prepare those tasty snack meals that serve as a pleasant diversion from a round of turkey and other highly flavored dishes.

The change in menu can be effected quickly and simply through the use of Tony's sanitary tortillas which are available at all leading food markets in Austin and Central Texas.

These fine tortillas can be used as the central ingredient in a number of special dishes and can be served individually or in combination with other foods with equal zest to the diner.

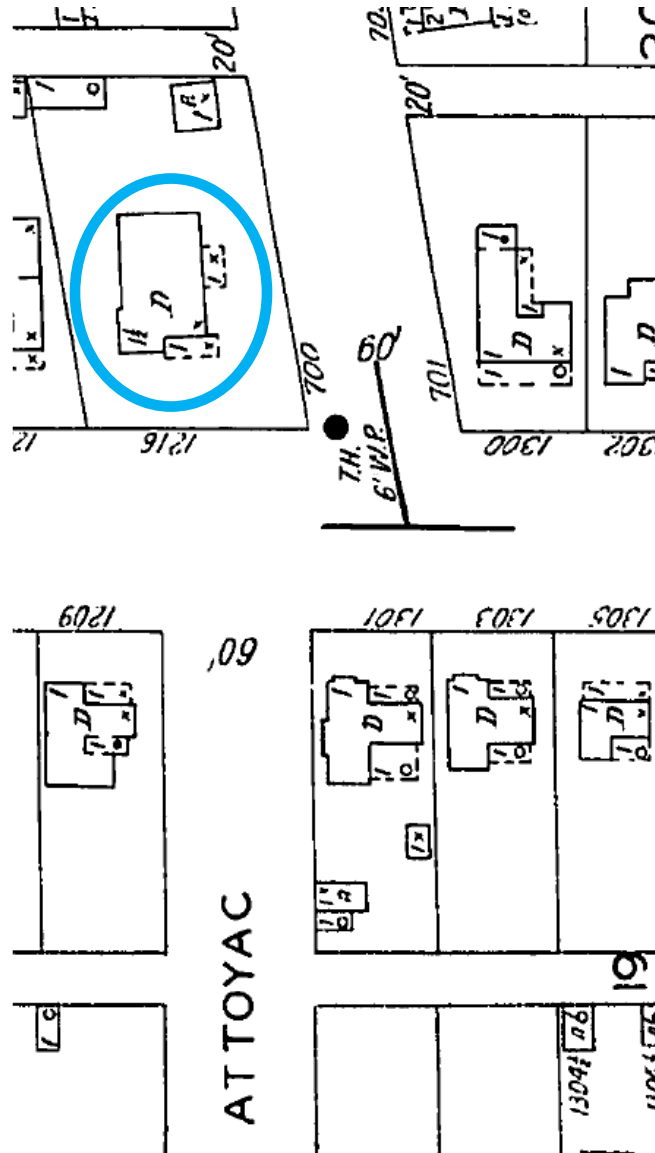
Tony's tortillas are processed here in Austin in the factory operated at 1500 East Seventh Street by Tony Villasana, well known Austin caterer. These tortillas are packaged in two sizes—the 15-cent package containing 12 tortillas and the 25-cent size of 24.

Villasana has been processing these fine tortillas here for more than 15 years. They are made from fine grain corn cleaned by means of a blower and processed by modern machinery and wrapped so that patrons are assured of a product that is processed under the most modern sanitary conditions.

Tony's tortillas are also distributed within a 75-mile radius of Austin generally, the territory extending as far north as Waco and including San Marcos, Lockhart, Smithville, Rockdale, Georgetown, Taylor and other Central Texas cities.

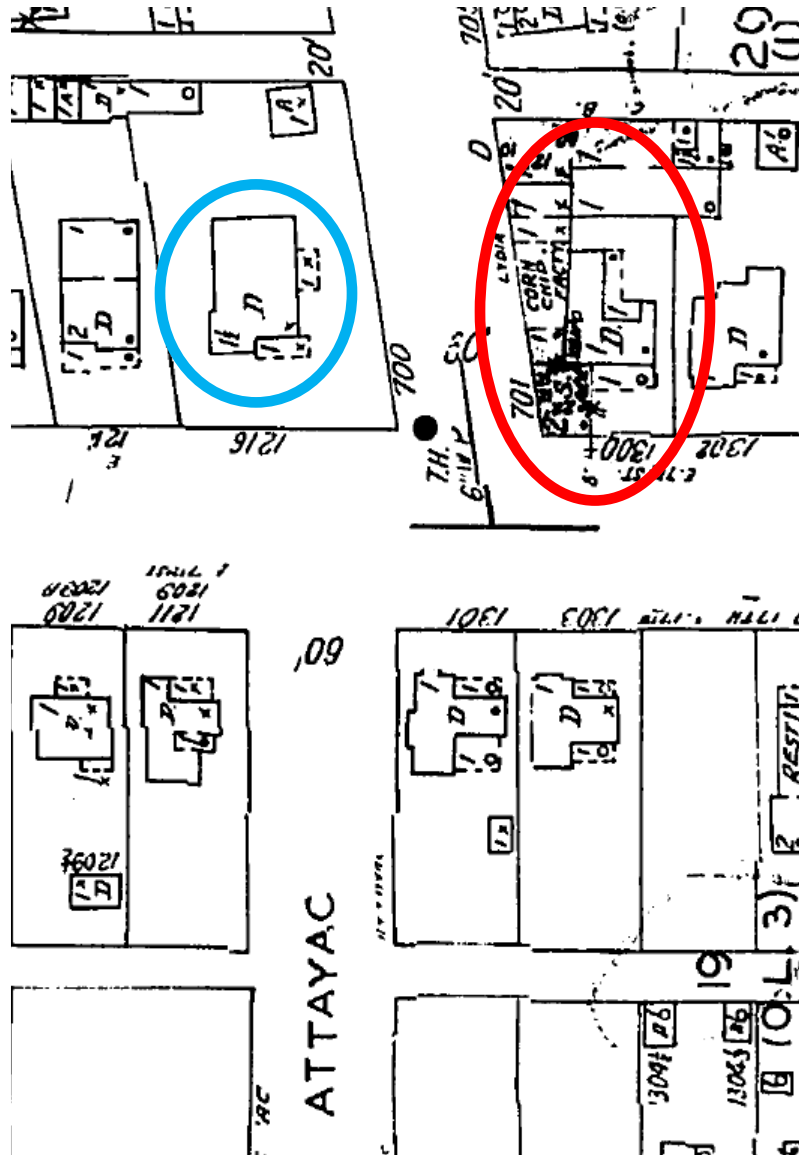
Villasana also operates a factory in Houston at 1010 McKee Street which has an extensive distribution territory in South Texas.

Article on Tony's Tortilla Factory  
Austin Statesman, December 5, 1953



The house appears on the 1935 Sanborn map. The site of the factory at 1300 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street is shown as a dwelling. The current stone building was not yet constructed.





The 1962 Sanborn map shows the house with the same configuration as shown on the 1935 map above. Across Lydia Street, the house remains, but the current stone building on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Lydia has been constructed and is labeled a corn ship factory (red)..