

The 2012 Rex Procession: "Lore of the Ancient Americas"

**Tuesday, February 21, 2012
New Orleans, Louisiana**

1. Rex, King of Carnival, Monarch of Merriment Rex's float carries the King of Carnival and his pages through the streets of New Orleans each Mardi Gras.

2. His Majesty's Bandwagon From this traditional permanent float one of the Royal Bands provides lively music for Rex and for those who greet him on the parade route.

3. The King's Jesters Even the Monarch of Merriment needs jesters in his court. Rex's jesters dress in Mardi Gras colors—purple, green, and gold.

4. The Boeuf Gras This is one of the oldest traditions and images of Mardi Gras, symbolizing the great feast on the day before Lent begins.

5. Tribute to Rex

6. Title Float: "Lore of the Ancient Americas" Long before European explorers visited American shores rich and diverse cultures thrived throughout North, Central and South America. Filled with powerful symbols and images, a rich tradition of storytelling helped preserve the history and mythology of these ancient cultures. Now these stories, images and traditions inspire the design of the floats of the 2012 Rex Procession, each float telling a story told long before Columbus.

7. The Eagle and the Serpent According to their ancient legend, the homeless Aztecs wandered until a prophetic vision was fulfilled: the Chief Priest spotted an eagle, perched on a cactus, with a snake in its beak. This was the sign that the Aztec had found their home, Tenochtitlan. This symbol is preserved in the national seal of Mexico.

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Mexico

Aztecs: <http://aztecs.mrdonn.org/place.html>

8. Coatlicue is the Aztec Goddess who gave birth to the moon and the stars. She is also known as "the Lady of the Serpent," and is represented as a woman wearing a skirt of writhing snakes and a necklace of skulls. She is the mother of the God Quetzalcoatl.

Wikipedia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coatlicue>

Myth Encyclopedia: <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Ca-Cr/Coatlicue.html>

9. Legend of the Spider Woman Spider Woman appears in the mythology of several Native American tribes, often as the wise creator of life. She also taught humans to weave--Navajo weavers often rub their hands in spider webs to absorb the wisdom of the Spider Woman to

help them as they weave. A Cherokee legend claims Spider Woman stole the sun and returned it to her people.

Myths Encyclopedia: <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Sp-Tl/Spider-Woman.html>

Associated Content:

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/352395/the_native_american_myth_of_the_spider_pg3.html?cat=37

Ya-Native: <http://www.ya-native.com/legends2/GrandmotherSpiderStealstheSun.html>

10. Natchez, Sacred Fire Among the Natchez, as among other tribes, fire symbolized the sun and its power. In Natchez temples, sacred fires were constantly burning, and failure to maintain the Sacred Fires would result in dire consequences for the people. Once a year every campfire was extinguished, then each fire would be rekindled from the Sacred Fire.

University of Arkansas:

<http://arkarcheology.uark.edu/indiansofarkansas/index.html?pageName=Natchez%20Sacred%20Fire>

Native American History:

http://books.google.com/books?id=TnQVJ01VDisC&pg=PA66&lpg=PA66&dq=natchez+sacred+fire&source=bl&ots=B9diJtps1v&sig=PilgOGmjdCpKlk7YeRSdEzq8Mcg&hl=en&ei=nKnVTtbnOeunsAKStvGQDw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CCwQ6AEwATgK#v=onepage&q=natchez%20sacred%20fire&f=false

11. Why the Owl Has Big Eyes Raweno, the Everything Maker, was busy forming animals, but she didn't like to be watched. Owl, waiting to be formed, wanted to have red feathers like the cardinal. Owl disobeyed Raweno, and watched her work. Raweno was angry, and covered owl with mud, and pushed on her head, which made her eyes grow big with fright and her ears stick up.

Angelfire: <http://www.angelfire.com/ca/Indian/OwlHasBigEyes.html>

East Side Indian: <http://eastsideindianed.org/Legend12December.htm>

12. Butterfly Messenger Butterflies appear in many Native American legends as messengers, bringing dreams as we sleep, and carrying our wishes to the Gods. A Hopi legend says that butterflies leave magic on the flowers, which the medicine men then harvest. This float illustrates the Butterfly Kachina doll.

Insects.org: <http://www.insects.org/ced4/mythology.html>

Wings in Motion: <http://www.entomon.net/indian-butterfly-legends-and-poems.shtml>

13. El Dorado Often thought of as the legendary "City of Gold," this was originally the name given to the Chief of the Muisca tribe in South America. At his initiation as Chief he was covered with gold dust and dived into a deep lake, followed by offerings of gold and jewels.

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Dorado

National Geographic: <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/archaeology/el-dorado/>

14. Ghost of the White Deer A Chickasaw brave named Blue Jay wanted to marry Bright Moon, the Chief's daughter, but the Chief told Blue Jay that he must first slay a white deer, a

nearly impossible task. Blue Jay never returned from his quest. Bright Moon refused to marry, but she often saw the Ghost of the White Deer in the campfire's smoke.

Native American Lore: <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore128.html>

Ghost of the White Deer: <http://deewebs.homestead.com/whitedeer.html>

15. The Streetcar Named Desire This permanent float honors the most famous of all of New Orleans' streetcar lines.

16. The Royal Barge Complete with Royal Gryphon, the Royal Barge is one of Rex's permanent floats. This float is the last remnant of the Royal Navy, once a feature of each Rex Parade.

17. Hurakan is the Mayan God of wind, storm and fire. He lived in the windy mists above the clouds and blew with all his might to bring the land up from the seas. After the gods tried and failed to create man from mud and from wood, Hurakan helped create man from maize, or corn. The word "hurricane" derives from his name.

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huracan>

Helium: <http://www.helium.com/items/845638-the-origin-of-the-word-hurricane>

18. The Spirit Land Native American shamans always felt the Spirit Land was close, and that the spirits of the dead were near by. Legends tell how the spirits of the dead are transformed into birds so they can fly away to the Spirit Land.

The First People: <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/TheSpiritLand-Gallinomero.html>

Ya-Native: <http://www.ya-native.com/legends2/JourneysintoSpiritLand.html>

19. The Rabbit's Wish for Snow Rabbit, who had small ears and a long tail, wanted to eat tender shoots high in the willow tree. He prayed for snow so that he could reach them, then fell asleep in the tree while the snow melted. When he fell from the tree, he left his tail behind and his ears snagged and stretched, changing his appearance forever.

Circle of Stories: <http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/storytellers/tchin.html>

20. Quetzalcoatl One of the most important Aztec gods, "The Feathered Serpent" combined the image of the magnificent quetzal bird, symbolizing the wind and the heavens, with the snake, symbolizing earth and fertility.

Myth Encyclopedia: <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Pr-Sa/Quetzalcoatl.html>

21. Choctaw Creation Myth The Choctaw tell the story of how their ancestors, after emerging incomplete and misshapen from the earth, searched for a new home. They carried a magic pole, and each night they planted it in the ground, walking in the direction it leaned. When it stayed upright they had found their new home. They carried their ancestors bones with them, and buried them in a large mound at the site where the magic pole had remained upright.

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctaw_mythology

22. Wabashas, the Snail Man This Osage legend tells how humans were created. A snail was washed into the river, and carried far from home. He asked the Great Spirit to help him, and the Great Spirit turned him into a warrior, and gave him a bow and arrow to defend himself.

Totems:

http://books.google.com/books?id=kPOXTJPTm5sC&pg=PA159&lpg=PA159&dq=wabasha+snail+legend&source=bl&ots=aAp7n_jNTA&sig=Ct1qDr2bQYL_0IDDzyfOrYlyOFc&hl=en&ei=MUncTq3kB-mw2wWuyIm-Dg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false

23. How Glooskap Found the Summer Long ago the Wawaniki found their land enveloped in endless winter. Glooskap, their leader, summoned a magic whale which carried him South until he found Summer. He brought Summer back to his people, and the Summer god and the Winter god agreed that half of the year would be cold, and half would be warm.

Native Lore: <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore11.html>

First People: <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/HowGlooskapFoundtheSummer-Algonquin.html>

24. The White Buffalo The Lakota tell of the appearance of a white buffalo which transformed into a messenger, a girl carrying a sacred bundle. The messenger taught the people the ceremonies and prayers they would need to survive, then transformed again into a white buffalo, disappearing across the prairie.

Legends of America: <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-whitebuffalo.html>

Purple Hawk: <http://www.impurplehawk.com/legend.html>

25. Dreams of the Painted Lodge The tepee, or tipi, was the home of the Plains tribes, perfectly adapted to nomadic life. The buffalo hide covering was painted with symbols revealed to each lodge's owner in dreams.

Painted Lodge: <http://www.pcalton.com/Ewers/EwersDoc.html>

26. Lakota Peace Pipe The Lakota tribe tells the story of a messenger, a beautiful woman who brought a special pipe to the Chief of the Lakotas. She told him that the pipe would help his hunters find the buffalo, and that it should be smoked when making treaties or when special blessings were needed. The pipe was passed down to each new Chief of the Lakotas.

Native American Lore <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore30.html>

27. Hiawatha's Canoe Longfellow immortalized the legends of several Northern tribes in his epic poem, "Song of Hiawatha," introducing memorable characters such as Nokomis, Minnehaha and Mondamin. In the poem Hiawatha builds a canoe to float "light upon the river...like a yellow leaf in Autumn."

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Song_of_Hiawatha

First People: <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/Hiawatha-The-Unifier-Iroquois.html>

28. Coyote Trickster The Coyote appears in Native American legends as a cunning trickster. One legend tells how Coyote stole fire from the Fire Beings, passing the stolen fire to the fox, then to the squirrel, and finally to the frog, who hid the fire in wood, where the Fire Beings could not find it. Coyote showed humans the secret of rubbing pieces of wood together, to free the fire.

Native American Lore: <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore06.html>

Native American Trickster Tales: <http://members.cox.net/academia/coyote.html>

His Majesty's Royal Calliope The Calliope provides a lively and traditional musical counterpoint to the brilliant array of bands in the Rex Procession.