

2018 Parade Notes/Links

The 2018 Rex Procession: "L'Ancienne Nouvelle-Orléans" Tuesday, February 13, 2018 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. In the early years of the New Orleans Carnival Rex's float was redesigned each year. The current King's float, one of Carnival's most iconic images, has been in use for over fifty years.

2. His Majesty's Bandwagon From this traditional float one of the Royal Bands provides lively music for Rex and for those who greet him on the parade route. One of those songs will surely be the Rex anthem: "If Ever I Cease to Love," which has been played in every Rex parade since 1872.

3. The King's Jesters Even the Monarch of Merriment needs jesters in his court. Rex's jesters dress in the traditional colors of Mardi Gras – purple, green and gold. The papier mache' figures on the Jester float are some of the oldest in the Rex parade, and were sculpted by artists in Viareggio, Italy, a city with its own rich Carnival tradition.

4. The Boeuf Gras The Boeuf Gras ("the fat ox") represents one of the oldest traditions and images of Mardi Gras, symbolizing the great feast on the day before Lent begins. In the early years of the New Orleans Carnival a live Boeuf Gras, decorated with garlands, had an honored place near the front of the Rex Parade.

5. The Butterfly King Since the earliest days of Carnival, butterflies have been popular symbolic design elements, their brief and colorful life a metaphor for the ephemeral magic of Mardi Gras itself. The invitation to the 1882 Rex ball added butterfly wings to the King of Carnival, creating the enduring image of "The Butterfly King." The Butterfly King float, introduced in 2012, is the first new permanent float to join the Rex Procession in many decades.

6. Title Float: "L'Ancienne Nouvelle-Orléans" The 2018 Rex Procession honors New Orleans as it celebrates its Tricentennial, and recalls and presents elements of its rich history and culture. With a focus on its first century, float designs depict the people, places and events that shaped this unique American city. Beginning with designs honoring "Father Mississippi" and the indigenous people who first lived here, and concluding with a float depicting Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans, the 2018 Rex Procession colorfully illustrates New Orleans' first century.

7. Father Mississippi From ancient times, the powerful Mississippi River, like the other great rivers of the world, has inspired legends and myths. "Father Mississippi" is the personification of this dominant natural force, without which there would be no New Orleans.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi_River

<http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ah-mississippiriver.html>

8. Chitimacha Indians The Chitimacha Indians and their ancestors inhabited the Mississippi River delta area for thousands of years before the arrival of French and the Spanish settlers. Their society was strongly matriarchal—male chiefs were approved by female elders.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chitimacha>

<http://www.chitimacha.gov/history-culture/tribal-history>

9. De La Salle (1682) This bold French explorer first visited New Orleans in 1682 by sailing down the Mississippi River from Canada, claiming “Louisiana” for France. He tried to return with settlers in 1684 but poor navigation left him marooned in what is now Texas, where he died in 1687.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Salle_expeditions

<https://www.texasbeyonhistory.net/stlouis/lasalle.html>

10. A Streetcar Named Desire Streetcars are an important symbol of New Orleans, and this permanent float honors the best known of all of New Orleans’ streetcar lines. This iconic float depicts “The Streetcar Named Desire,” made famous by the playwright Tennessee Williams. It is the only Rex float not pulled by a tractor.

11. Bienville and Iberville (1700) Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne (Bienville) joined his older brother Pierre (d’Iberville) on a voyage to explore the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. In 1718 Bienville oversaw the founding of New Orleans, which eventually became the capital of French Louisiana.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Baptiste_Le_Moyne,_Sieur_de_Bienville

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Le_Moyne_d%27Iberville

12. St. Louis Cathedral (1718) Within a year of the city’s founding a church was erected on this site. The cornerstone for the current cathedral was laid in 1789 after the Good Friday Fire in 1788 destroyed the first church. It became a cathedral in 1793, and is the oldest cathedral in the United States.

<http://www.stlouiscathedral.org>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Louis_Cathedral_\(New_Orleans\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Louis_Cathedral_(New_Orleans))

13. Adrien de Pauger (1721) A French engineer and cartographer, de Pauger worked with Bienville to design a plan for the new capital of French Louisiana, a plan still largely preserved in today’s Vieux Carre’. He also designed New Orleans’ first parish church on the site of St. Louis Cathedral.

http://www.richcampanella.com/assets/pdf/article_Campanella_Preservation-in-Print_2014_May_Pauger%20Savvy%20Move.pdf

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrien_de_Pauger

14. Ursuline Nuns (1727) Fourteen Ursuline nuns arrived in New Orleans in July, 1727, after a five month voyage from France. They founded schools, hospitals and an orphanage, and Ursuline Academy continues to fulfill their special mission to educate young women.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Ursulines_in_New_Orleans

<http://countryroadsmagazine.com/art-and-culture/history/the-unsinkable-ursulines/>

15. The Royal Barge Reminiscent of a grand Viking ship, and complete with Royal Gryphon, the Royal Barge is one of Rex's iconic permanent floats. This float is the last remnant of the Royal Navy, once a feature of each Rex Parade.

16. Les Filles de la cassette (1728) Recruited from convents and orphanages, these young women came to French Louisiana to marry eligible young men. They carried their possessions in small chests or casquettes, "cassettes" in French, and stayed with the Ursuline nuns until they were married.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casquette_girl

<http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/filles-la-cassette>

17. Yellow Fever This dreadful mosquito-borne disease has been part of New Orleans' history since its founding, with outbreaks nearly every Summer. Between 1815 and 1905 over 41,000 citizens died, nearly 8,000 in the 1853 epidemic alone.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_yellow_fever

http://www.lafayettcemetary.org/yellowfever1853_page1

18. Don Alejandro "Bloody" O'Reilly (1769) An Irishman who rose to power in the Spanish army, O'Reilly was the second Spanish Governor of Louisiana. He was known as "Bloody O'Reilly" because he executed leaders of the 1768 rebellion against Spanish rule in New Orleans.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alejandro_O%27Reilly

<http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/oreilly-alejandro>

19. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Associated with the Ursuline nuns, and thus with the earliest years of the city, the "Patroness of New Orleans" is credited with many miracles, including the preservation of the Ursuline Convent during the 1788 fire and victory in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Prompt_Succor

<http://www.shrineofourladyofpromptsuccor.com/about>

20. Jean Lafitte (1780) The Lafitte brothers, Jean and Pierre, were pirates and smugglers who maintained a base in Barataria Bay and a warehouse in New Orleans. In return for a promise of a full pardon, Lafitte and his men helped Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans from the British.

<http://www.shrineofourladyofpromptsuccor.com/about>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Laffite>

21. John James Audubon (1785) Audubon was a naturalist and artist who did some of his most important work in Louisiana. Though born in Haiti, he often identified himself as a native of Louisiana, and described it as his “favorite portion of the Union.”

<http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/john-james-audubon>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_James_Audubon

22. Good Friday Fire (1788) Sometimes called “The Great New Orleans Fire,” this conflagration destroyed 856 of the 1,100 structures in the city. Because it was Good Friday, parish priests refused to allow church bells to be rung to sound the alarm.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_New_Orleans_Fire_\(1788\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_New_Orleans_Fire_(1788))

<http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu%3A253867/>

23. Marie Laveau (1794) Of African, Native American and French descent, Marie Catherine Laveau became famous as a practitioner of Voodoo, selling charms and magical powders and telling fortunes. Her daughter, also named Marie, followed in her mother’s footsteps.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Laveau

<http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2012/07/marie-laveau.html>

24. Baroness de Pontalba (1795) Born in New Orleans, Micaela Leonarda Antonia Almonester y Rojas inherited a fortune when her father died. She became a successful businesswoman and oversaw the design and construction of the Pontalba buildings. Her father-in-law, Baron Pontalba, frustrated that he could not gain control of her fortune, tried to kill her, but she survived the attack.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micaela_Almonester,_Baroness_de_Pontalba

<https://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/micaela-almonester-baroness-pontalba>

25. Louisiana Purchase (1803) Originally America only sought to acquire the city and port of New Orleans, but Napoleon faced major political and financial challenges and offered to sell all of the Louisiana Territory for just pennies an acre, doubling the size of the new country.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase

<http://www.history.com/topics/louisiana-purchase>

26. S.S. New Orleans (1811) The advent of steamboats transformed the Port of New Orleans. No longer dependent on sails to move up the Mississippi River, commerce thrived. The *New Orleans* was the first steamboat on the Mississippi River, providing service between New Orleans and Natchez.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steamboats_of_the_Mississippi

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Orleans_\(steamboat\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Orleans_(steamboat))

27. Henriette DeLille (1813) Henriette was a free woman of color who was expected to enter into a common-law marriage with a wealthy white man, as had her mother. Instead, she became a nun and founded the order of the Sisters of the Holy Family, devoted to caring for the sick and educating children.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henriette_DeLille

<http://catholicism.org/mother-delille-new-orleans-native-is-declared-venerable.html>

28. Andrew Jackson (1815) By the time Gen. Jackson arrived in New Orleans to lead its defense against the invading British Army he was a seasoned military leader. Under his leadership New Orleans' ragtag defenders were able to defeat the much larger British force.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Jackson

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_New_Orleans

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