

NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions

By Ned Hémard

Great Moments in New Orleans History

Bienville was our founding *père*,
His leadership beyond compare.

"The river's crescent, I declare,
I think I'll build my city there."

For other feats he was renowned,
Like Englishmen he turned around.

And John Law's clever finance scheme
So helped to build Bienville's dream.

The Spanish came, let's not forget
Their man in charge, Carondelet.

Though some may view him as banal,
Who doesn't dig his cool canal?

The French were owners once again,
but wars in Europe raged back then.

Napoleon, to stall his fall,
While in his bath, he sold it all.

The city's purchase soon creates
A part or all of fifteen states.

In 1814, Jackson came
To put the British force to shame.

With help from pirate Jean Lafitte,
He saw to Pakenham's defeat.

Judah Touro volunteered,

Wounded badly it appeared.

His life was saved, his fortune grew,
A life of giving he'd pursue.

The Union Army, they came too,
With Old Beast Butler dressed in blue,

Marching in with his platoons,
"Everybody hide your spoons!"

Mardi Gras, you'd be surprised,
Was once a bit disorganized.

Comus formed parades to view,
Thematic floats and flambeaux, too.

The Mistick Krewe, the Comus cup,
And then a Russian Duke showed up.

A "Bluebeard" babe who sang on stage,
Her "Cease to Love" was all the rage.

The Duke it seems was moved by sex,
Which brought about the birth of Rex.

The Fair in 1884,
A band from Mexico came far.

Some members stayed or left their horn;
It wasn't long till Jazz was born:

Afro drumming, blues mixed in,
Caribbean beats within.

In Storyville played Jelly Roll,
And Satchmo blew his horn with soul.

He furthered Jazz and made it swing,
And even reigned as Zulu King.

Heard those words Mayor Maestri sez?
"How dem ersters?" Mister Prez,

And then the time Mayor Vic announces,
"That's the way the cookie bounces."

The city's had its share of pain
From fever, war to hurricane.

Despite all these, this battered queen,
Has splendid music and cuisine:

There's Jambalaya, second lines,
Oysters Foch *à la* Antoine's,

Ernie K-Doe's "Te-Ta-Tas",
Pompano at Galatoire's,

Gumbo, jumbo shrimp galore,
Po-boys, sno-balls, so much more,

Peychaud's Bitters, Red beans, rice,
Sazeracs served over ice,

Irma singing songs so blue,
The Meters, "They All Axed For You,"

Muffalettas piled with meat,
Brocato's for that something sweet,

The Bon Ton, it's on Magazine,
Speckled trout served amandine,

Kermit Ruffins, soft-shell crabs,
Daiquiris in pedi-cabs,

Crawfish, Rebirth, *banh mi*, too,
Beaucoup dishes made with *roux*,

Emeril, Spicer, Link and Besh,
With restaurants like Borgne and Pêche.

There's many other things of note:
Like Morgus and the Higgins boat,

Oak trees draped with Spanish Moss,
The flavor of Tabasco sauce,

The cocktail, "Streetcar Named Desire,"
Char-grilled oysters on the fire,

Big chiefs in their fine array,
Jazz Fest and "Hey Pocky Way,"

Garden District, king cake, Barq's,
Neutral grounds and verdant parks,

Ignatius Reilly, Tremé bands,
Trombone Shorty understands.

The acting skills of Bryan Batt,
Not everyone says "Where Y'at?"

And we really lost control
The night we won the Super Bowl.

The victory wasn't won with ease,
But Saints fans know it was a Brees.

This year, though the Saints are done,
The city has another son.

The Super Bowl yet to be won,
Will Peyton Manning be the one?

There're the highlights, just a few,
Which ones mean the most to you?

NED HÉMARD

New Orleans Nostalgia
"Great Moments in New Orleans History"
Ned Hémard
Copyright 2014