

NEW ORLEANS

300

1718 - 2018

TRICENTENNIAL

From *Bienville* to *Bourbon Street* to *bounce*. 300 moments that make New Orleans unique.



WHAT HAPPENED
Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville became governor of the Louisiana territory in 1716.

Like many Louisiana politicians, **Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville’s legacy** is complicated.



An 18th-century portrait of Bienville by an anonymous painter

With his older brother, Pierre Le Moyne de Iberville, Bienville sailed to find the mouth of Mississippi River, which they did on March 2, 1699. Iberville returned to France, and Bienville became second in command of the French explorers who remained. During this time, Bienville famously thwarted an English attempt to occupy the lower Mississippi River at what is now English Turn. He led the colonization of Louisiana at the age of 21 and helped keep relationships with the Native Americans peaceful by learning their language. Yet Bienville was repeatedly passed over for greater roles in the territory because of charges against him and his brother brought by, among others, explorer René-Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle. The charges were never substantiated, but Bienville’s name was dragged through the mud by rivals. Bienville was finally named a temporary governor in 1716, and then was put in charge of the colony permanently by John Law’s company in 1718. That spring, he recommended a company post be created on the banks of the Mississippi River that would be called New Orleans. Bienville was ordered back to France in 1724, still some-



what disgraced by political foes. But he was recalled to the colony in 1733 after an Indian uprising. Bienville was governor for another decade. Complaining of poor health, Bienville asked to return to France and did so in 1742. He lived for another 25 years, dying in 1767 at age 88. It wasn’t until 1955 that New Orleans recognized Bienville with a statue.



A French scene of trade between Frenchmen and Native Americans at the mouth of the Mississippi River distributed by agents of John Law to promote investment in the company of the West and emigration to the Louisiana colony.

An early 19th-century statuette of Bienville, sitting on a cannon near an anchor and rope.

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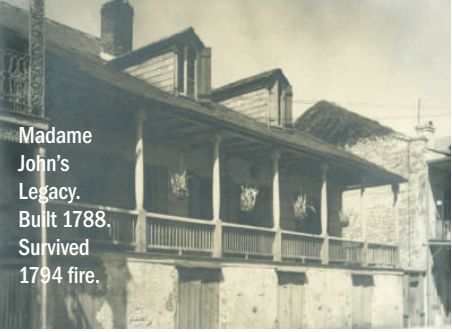


WHAT HAPPENED
A fire destroyed 80 percent of the French Quarter on Good Friday in 1788.

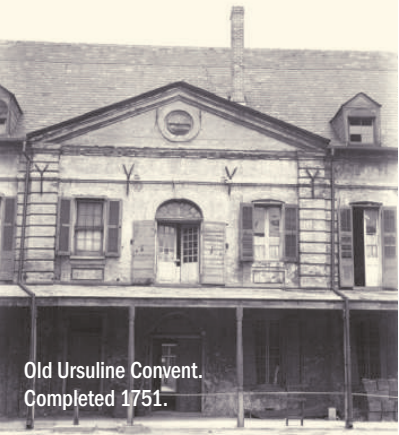
FIRE SURVIVORS:



Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop. Built 1720s
HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION



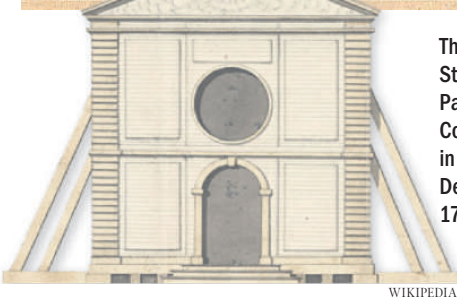
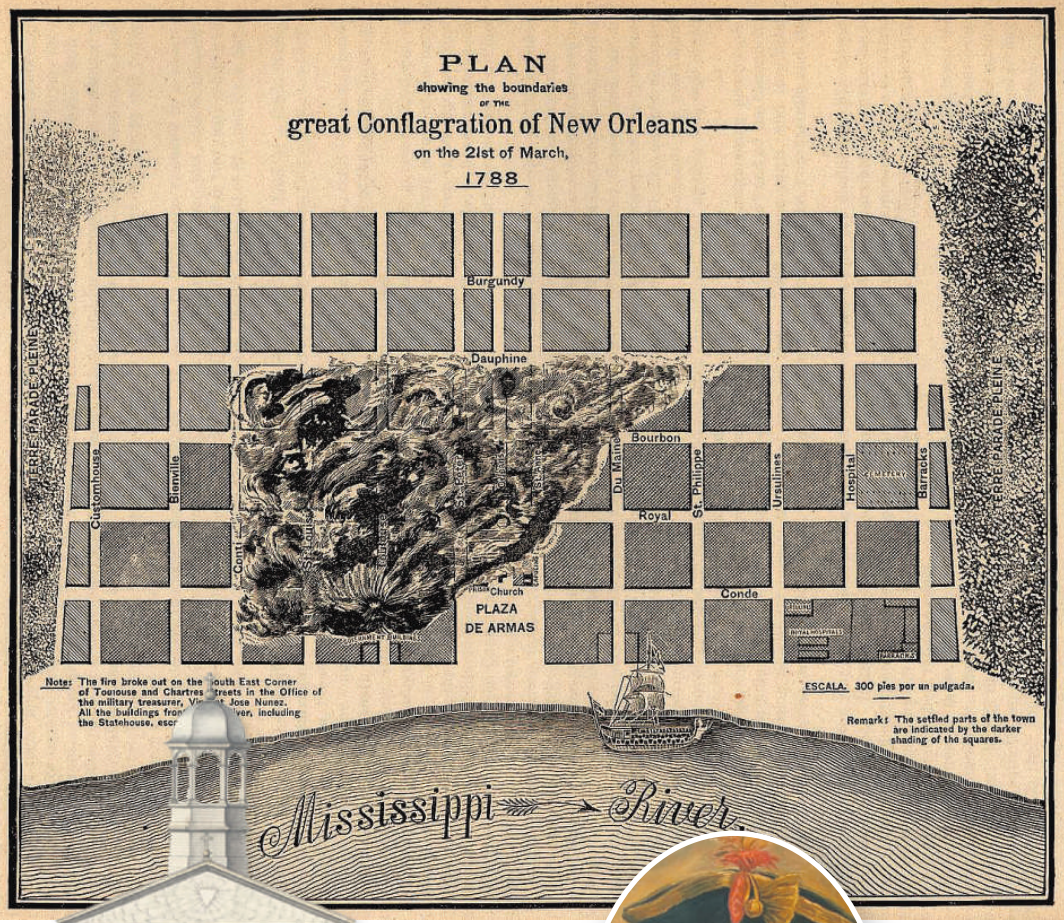
Madame John's Legacy. Built 1788. Survived 1794 fire.
HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION



Old Ursuline Convent. Completed 1751.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Much of the French Quarter as it we know it today came out of disaster – **the Good Friday fire of 1788.**

The fire started at a home on the corner of Chartres and Toulouse streets, less than a block from Jackson Square. Winds swept the fire through the Vieux Carré, and destroyed 80 percent, or 856 of the city’s original French colonial structures, including the original St. Louis Cathedral. Spanish Gov. Esteban Rodriguez Miro said after the fire, “The tears, the heartbreaking sobs and the pallid faces of the wretched people mirrored the dire fatality that had overcome a city, now in ruins, transformed within the space of five hours into an arid and fearful, desert. Such was the sad ending of a work of death, the result of seventy years of industry.” But Miro’s quick thinking ensured there was enough food and shelter for the city’s homeless. In the wake of the blaze, the city was quickly rebuilt with new building codes that required among other things, brick structures. Those Spanish structures, with courtyards and wrought iron balconies, define today’s French Quarter. A new cathedral, Cabildo and Presbytere were commissioned. Within a month after the fire, Don Beltran Gravier and his wife subdivided their plantation for new suburb, which would become the American Sector and eventually today’s business district. History records that only one person died in the blaze. Another fire, six years later in 1794, destroyed 212 buildings in the quarter.



The original St. Louis Parish Church; Completed in 1727. Destroyed in 1788.
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Spanish Gov. Esteban Rodriguez Miro ensured the citizens were cared for and the was city rebuilt.
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