

NEW ORLEANS

300
1718 - 2018

TRICENTENNIAL

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



WHAT HAPPENED

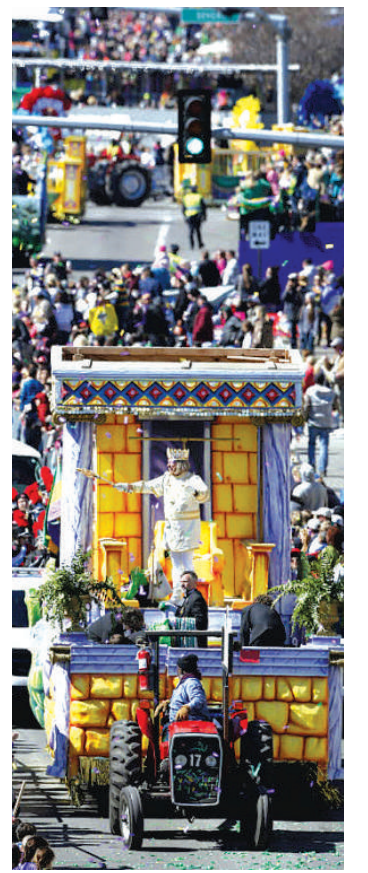
Mardi Gras was first celebrated in America on March 3, 1699, at the mouth of the Mississippi River.



Fat Tuesday has always been a mixture of street and ballroom celebrations.



Balls began as early as 1743 in New Orleans, and the first Mardi Gras "parades" happened as revelers made their way on the streets to their masked balls. The Fat Tuesday celebrations were occasionally out of control, and in 1850, the Creole newspaper *The Bee* said of the celebration, "We are not sorry to see that this miserable annual exhibit is rapidly becoming extinct. It originated in a barbarous age and is worthy of only such." But the celebrations continued, and more citizens took to the streets on Fat Tuesday as parades became popular in the late 1800s. Neighborhood celebrations would birth parades like Carrollton and Mid-City. Today, organized marching groups, like Pete Fountain's Half-Fast Walking Club and unorganized groups, including themed groups of families and friends, make their way across town on Fat Tuesday, often stopping to catch Rex and Zulu, or head to the French Quarter and the Marigny where outrageous and inventive costumes reign. The day, and the Carnival season, is capped by a meeting of the courts of Rex and Comus, and by the annual sweep of Bourbon Street at midnight.



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On Sept. 20, 1916, 22 members of Zulu signed incorporation documents.



An early Zulu parade in 1925, with floats similar to the first 1915 floats on a wagon, decorated with palmetto leaves and moss.



For years, Zulu arrived into the city on the New Basin Canal by tugboat, as shown here in 1936. The tradition disappeared after the canal was filled in, but it was revived in the early 1990s when the Zulu king began arriving on the riverfront.

The history of **Zulu** is a history of firsts.

First African-American krewes to parade.

First to have signature throws.

First to have a celebrity monarch.

First to integrate.

A group of African-American men, associated with benevolent aid societies, paraded as early as 1901 as the Tramps. But in 1909, after seeing a musical comedy that included a skit about a Zulu tribe, they were inspired to create a Zulu parade. William Story, the first Zulu king, wore a lard can as a crown and used a banana stalk as a scepter. Coconuts would be their signature throw. In 1916, the group officially incorporated as the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. They invited Louis Armstrong to be their king in 1949. People mobbed the parade to see Armstrong, and *Time* magazine featured Armstrong as Zulu king on its cover that year. In 1968, the group, for the first time, received a permit to parade on St. Charles Avenue and Canal Street. In 1978, Zulu opened its current headquarters on North Broad Street. Ten members of Zulu died after Hurricane Katrina, and the storm flooded the Zulu headquarters. On Mardi Gras 2006, Zulu was the only group allowed to parade outside of the prescribed parade route after it threatened to cancel its parade if it wasn't allowed to parade through predominantly African-American neighborhoods.



Zulu Big Shot Conny 'Frog' Horton waves a coconut as Zulu rolls through New Orleans in 2017.



McKinley High School student Milliceyn Jackson paints a Zulu coconut in 2017. Zulu began handing out still hairy coconuts in 1910, and they were later scraped and painted.