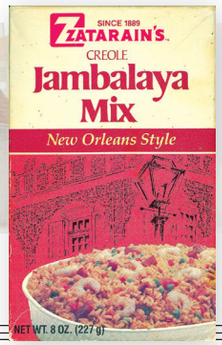
NEW ORLEANS

300

1718 ~ 2018

TRICENTENNIAL

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

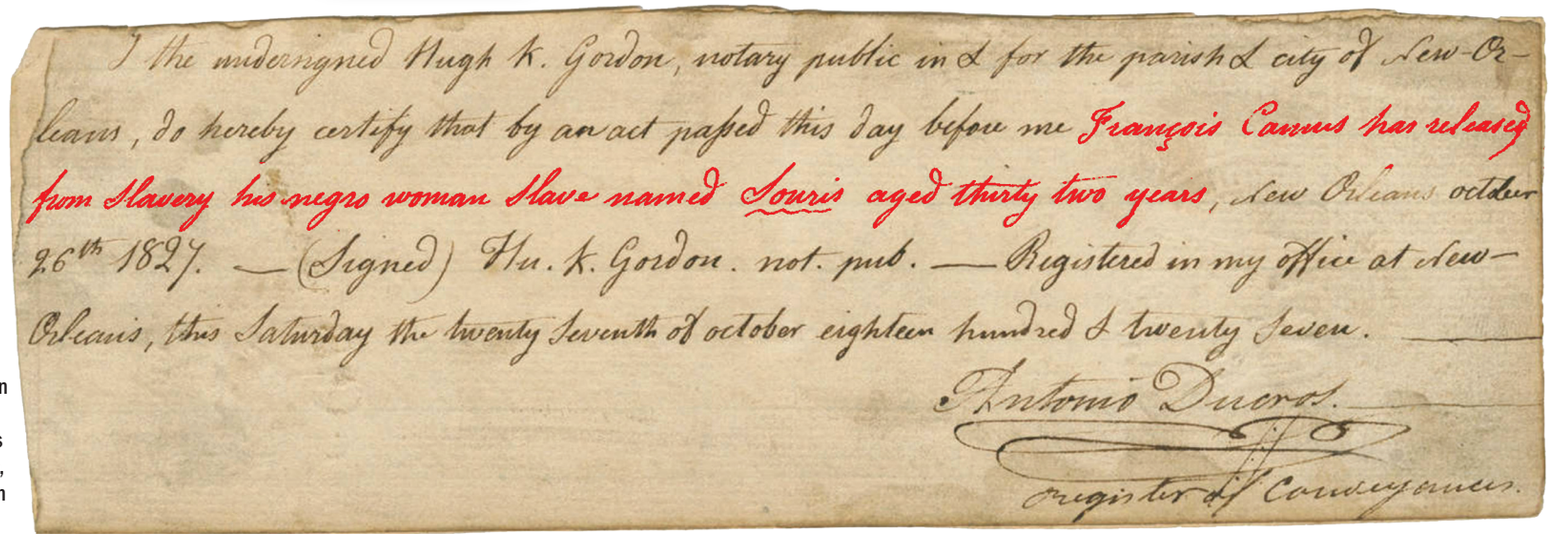


WHAT HAPPENED

The first record of a free person of color in the Louisiana Territory dates to 1722.

A free woman of color with her quadroon daughter in the late 18th century

LSU SPECIAL COLLECTION'S LIBRARY IMAGES



I the undersigned Hugh K. Gordon, notary public in & for the parish & city of New-Orleans, do hereby certify that by an act passed this day before me François Camus has released from Slavery his negro woman Slave named Souris aged thirty two years, New Orleans october 26th 1827. — (Signed) Hu. K. Gordon. not. pub. — Registered in my office at New-Orleans, this Saturday the twenty Seventh of october eighteen hundred & twenty Seven.

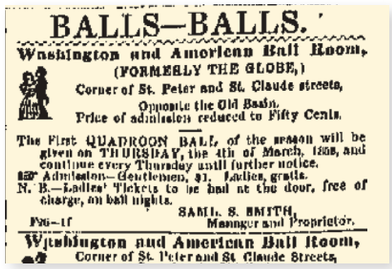
Antonio Ducros.

Register of Conveyances.

An act of emancipation by François Camus of his female slave, Souris, 32, in 1827.

Free people of color, or *gens de couleur libres*, lived in Louisiana from its very founding.

According to court records, a free man of color lived in the colony in 1722. Another free man of color, Jean Congo, is listed in the 1726 census as a toll collector and keeper of the High Road along Bayou St. John. The first free people of color were typically the illegitimate children of white slave owners who freed them. But the group also included slaves who had escaped. When Spain took over the territory, slaves were allowed to buy their freedom and the freedom of other slaves. Some free women of color served as mistresses to white men who would provide them a house and property under a system of placage. By 1803, when Louisiana became part of the United States, about 1,300 free people of color lived in New Orleans. Several free people of color emigrated to Louisiana from Haiti after the Haitian Revolution, and by the time of the first U.S. census in 1810, there were 7,585 free people of color out of a total population of 76,556 people in the Orleans Territory. The free persons of color distinguished themselves in art and business as the population of free people of color grew to about 25,000 by 1840. Most of the free men of color were employed as doctors, clerks, teachers and in skilled trades. Before, during and after the Civil War — in which 1,500 free men of color fought for the Confederacy — the liberal and tolerant attitude toward the free people of color changed. Some free people of color moved away rather than be treated poorly alongside newly freed slaves. But the influence of *gens de couleur libres* lives on in the city's art, music and architecture.



BALLS—BALLS.

Washington and American Ball Room,
(FORMERLY THE GLOBE,)
Corner of St. Peter and St. Claude streets,
Opposite the Old Basin.
Price of admission reduced to Fifty Cents.

The First QUADROON BALL of the season will be given on THURSDAY, the 4th of March, 1858, and continue every Thursday until further notice.
Admission—Gentlemen, $1. Ladies, gratis.
N. B.—Ladies' Tickets to be had at the door, free of charge, on ball nights.

SAML. S. SMITH,
Manager and Proprietor.

Washington and American Ball Room,
Corner of St. Peter and St. Claude Streets,

An advertisement for a Quadroon Ball, in which free women of color mixed with white men.

Dominique Mercier, a free person of color, started a shoe business at the corner of Dauphine and Bienville streets, a business that opened before the Civil War and expanded and grew to a large men's clothier after the war.

Julien Hudson, born to an English ship chandler and a free quadroon, was the first professional African-American portraitist in the South, and the second in the United States. He studied in Paris and died in 1844.

Henriette Delille organized other free women of color and created the Roman Catholic order of the Sisters of the Holy Family to educate and provide for people of color and slaves.