HOLIDAY_Mardi gras_TASK ONLY_ONLINE.doc, edited & abbreviated by S. Meyer, facts unchecked

https://www.mardigrasneworleans.com/history/, downloaded 29 Nov 2019

The origins of Mardi Gras can be traced to medieval Europe, passing through Rome and Venice in the 17th and 18th centuries to the French House of the Bourbons. From here, the traditional revelry of "Boeuf Gras," or fatted calf, followed France to her colonies.

On March 2, 1699, French-Canadian explorer Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville landed 60 miles directly south of New Orleans, and named it "Pointe du Mardi Gras" when his men realized it was the eve of the festive holiday. Bienville also established "Fort Louis de la Louisiane" (which is now Mobile) in 1702; the tiny French settlement celebrated America's very first Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) one year later.

In 1704, Mobile established a secret society (Masque de la Mobile), similar to those of our current Mardi Gras *krewes*, or privately organized, restrictive, and sometimes secret groups of participants. It lasted until 1709. The formation of many other societies followed, and many introduced their own festivities to the celebrations, such as parading on Fat Tuesday with an actual bull draped in white, signaling the coming Lenten meat fast, or – by the mid 19th century – elaborate paper mâché floats, which also sometimes poked sharp fun at local politicians (a good reason to keep *krewe* membership secret!).

New Orleans was established in 1718 by the same Bienville, and by the 1730s, Mardi Gras was celebrated openly there, too, but not as we do, today. In the early 1740s, Louisiana's governor, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, established elegant society balls, which became the model for the New Orleans Mardi Gras balls of today. By the late 1830s, street processions of maskers with carriages and horseback riders to celebrate Mardi Gras paraded through New Orleans' streets. Dazzling gaslight torches, or "flambeaux," lit the way for the *krewe*'s members, and lent each event an exciting air of romance and festivity. The famous Mardi Gras "throws" – or cheap jewelry flung at those watching the parade participants go by – were done for the first time in 1870 by the newly formed *Krewe*, the Twelfth Night Revelers.

Newspapers began to announce Mardi Gras events in advance, and they even printed "Carnival Edition" lithographs of the parades' fantastic float designs (after they rolled, of course - themes and floats were always carefully guarded before the procession). At first, these reproductions were small, and details could not be seen clearly. But beginning in 1886 with Proteus' parade "Visions of Other Worlds," these chromolithographs were produced in full, saturated color, doing justice to the float and costume designs of Carlotta Bonnecase, Charles Briton and B.A. Wikstrom. Each of these designers' work was brought to life – in France! – by the talented Parisian paper mâché artist Georges Soulie', who for 40 years was responsible for creating all of Carnival's floats and processional outfits, but beginning in 1873 they were produced in New Orleans, itself.

In 1872, a group of businessmen invented a King of the Carnival, Rex, to preside over the first daytime parade. To honor the visiting Russian Grand Duke Alexis Romanoff, the businessmen introduced Romanoff's family colors of purple, green and gold as the Carnival's official colors. This was also the Mardi Gras season that the Carnival's improbable anthem, "If Ever I Cease to Love," was cemented, due in part to the Duke's fondness for the tune. In 1875, Governor Warmoth signed the "Mardi Gras Act," making Fat Tuesday a legal holiday in Louisiana. It still is, and attracts tourists from all over!

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GIST: Ms Meyer loves to party, and she's heard of a festival somewhere in the U.S. that sounds interesting. She's not so sure about it, though, so JOT down these terms, then SKIM READ this article, and COUNT and WRITE DOWN how many times you see these terms, then use the pulldown menus to CHOOSE the right ANSWERS. They'll give you some idea of the particulars of the festival so you can tell her. Watch out, though! Her new friends don't want to go, so they have introduced at least one term that isn't in the text! MAXIMUM TIME (including choosing): 7 min.

Alabama ..... 17th ..... France ..... New Orleans .....

DETAILED: Super, she's got the when's and where's down pat, but now she wants to understand the why's and how's, so SCAN READ these questions TWICE, then SCAN READ the article twice WITHOUT looking at the questions, then TICK these TRUE (**T**) | FALSE (**F**) questions WITHOUT looking at the text. Oh, and, of course, Ms Meyer's new friends stuck in at least one Mardi Gras trick! MAX TIME (including answering): 20min

1. Mardi Gras "throws" are tossed to the watchers by those participating in the parade. T ..... | F .....
2. Color illustrations of the floats are distributed before the parades so that people can watch for their favorite ones. T ..... | F .....
3. Mardi Gras' roots are found in Europe. T ..... | F .....
4. Mardi Gras *krewes* are crews that used to build the parade floats in the 18th century, and the term was kept for participating groups, today. T ..... | F .....
5. New Orleans was founded by a French-Canadian man. T ..... | F .....
6. Mardi Gras floats sometimes make fun of politicians. T ..... | F .....
7. Within a couple of years of the first French settlements in the area, Mardi Gras was already being celebrated, there. T ..... | F .....
8. The carnival's colors – later official – came from the visit of a Russian royal. T ..... | F .....

IMAGES: All images are Clipart from the Microsoft Word program used to make this document.