

# THE PERSONALITIES OF NEW ORLEANS

EVERY city has a dominant characteristic that may be found in its industries, its commercial attainments, its historic associations, its cultural achievements, its intellectual pursuits, or in some other distinguishing feature. This dominant characteristic gives individuality to the city possessing it and this individuality, when marked, gives the city its personality.

What is the dominant characteristic that gives New Orleans its personality?

Is it the port? No. The port is not the one distinctive feature of the city.

Is it the Vieux Carre? Ah! The Vieux Carre is a lovely old section with unique and mysterious charm, but still it is not the sole attribute that identifies the city.

Is it Mardi Gras? A colorful and unique celebration, to be sure, but not the one symbol of the city's individuality.

Is it its balmy climate, its year-round recreation facilities, its lovely parks, its tropical foliage, or its beautiful homes? Hardly, for none of these, in itself, carries with it the label, "I am the personality of New Orleans."

What, then, constitutes the personality of New Orleans? None of these just mentioned; yet all of them and more. Yes, you can dis-

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**A. O. C. S. Spring Convention**  
The membership of the society will, no doubt, be glad to learn that the annual convention will be held at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans on May 28th and 29th.

Mr. J. J. Ganucheau, Southern Cotton Oil Company, Gretna, Louisiana, is in charge of local arrangements, and any inquiries with regard to the convention can be addressed to him.

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cover the dominant characteristic of New Orleans only when you gather together the Vieux Carre, its buildings, port, parks, food, Mardi Gras and many other distinguishing features. If all of these could be gathered into one large stimulus, then New Orleans would appear as the city superb, as the city not with a personality, but with many charming personalities. Looking at New Orleans from this point of view, your imaginations and your ambitions would be stirred by the names and the deeds of Bienville, Lafitte, Jackson, Beauregard, Tulane, Audubon and the many others whose achievements in the fields of education, science, art, commerce and war have contributed to the greatness that is New Orleans'.

Their achievements, their romances and their adventures still

endure and can be traced and felt today in the historical scenes in which they were enacted. They stretch from one iron-wrought French balcony in the Vieux Carre to another. They linger in every Spanish courtyard; and are also to be found in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of modern New Orleans.

Aside from the dominant characteristic that gives a city its personality, one city is pretty much like another. But no other city is like New Orleans.

Every city has beautiful homes. So has the city of New Orleans. But in no other city are there homes like those to be found to this day in the New Orleans Vieux Carre. These singular old homes, built a century or more ago, are distinguished by their peculiar old French and Spanish architecture, by wide iron-trellised balconies, by sweeping fan windows, by lovely patios, by myriad shaped roofs and chimneys, by serpentine stairways and by many other delightful peculiarities that are conducive to restful comfort and exotic beauty.

Among the many colorful old homes, scores and scores of them, that remain in the New Orleans Vieux Carre to this day to tell their intriguing stories of the past, are the home where E. H. Sothorn, the actor, was born; the town-house of Etienne de Bore, pioneer manufacturer of granulated sugar; the home of Paul Morphy, world-famous chess champion; and the homes of Robert Edeson, actor of note; Adeline Patti, the golden voiced singer; P. G. T. Beauregard, the Confederate general; and of Girod that was built by this wealthy New Orleans merchant as a reputed refuge for Napoleon upon his expected escape from St. Helena.

But in addition, no other city has in abundance the spacious, fascinating old ante-bellum homes like those to be found in New Orleans, distinguished by cypress construction, high frescoed ceilings, costly chandeliers, marble mantles, numerous rooms, wide porches and surrounded by a huge yard full of blooming plants and towering trees.

These homes can be found in the Garden District of New Orleans, many of them still occupied by the descendants of the original owners who would part with them only as their last earthly possession. One holds interest because it was built in 1764 without nails. Another was



Courtesy, New Orleans Association of Commerce.

*Canal Street, New Orleans, with modern New Orleans on the left and Ancient New Orleans on the right. One of the World's Famous Thoroughfares. Rebuilt in Terrazzo Marble at a cost of \$3,500,000; extending from Eads Plaza on the Mississippi River, 5½ miles to the Lakefront Park on Lake Pontchartrain; 171 feet wide.*

built in the early 50's and was the place where Jefferson Davis died and where his daughter made her debut. Many, many others have colorful old stories to tell.

Every city has beautiful parks. New Orleans is no exception. But New Orleans parks have in addition certain traits that make them singularly charming. One of these parks is almost as old as the 217-year-old city itself. The Place D'Armes, now known as Jackson Square, was laid out in 1720 by Bienville. Originally it was the parade grounds of the soldiers of the French and of the Spanish garrisons. The citizens would assemble there to review the drills and they continued to assemble after the drills were discontinued.

In and around this old park most of the important events in the city's early life took place. The flag of Spain displaced that of France. In November, 1803, the flag of France displaced that of Spain, and in December of the same year the Stars and Stripes went up to stay. There in 1815 a triumphal arch was built and Andrew Jackson was crowned with laurel by a girl representing Louisiana's grateful acknowledgment of his defense of the city and the state and of his overwhelming victory in the Battle of New Orleans, the second most important military event in the history of this country. What memorable events this old square has witnessed!

Colorful, too, is the lineage of New Orleans' largest and most beautiful parks. Both City Park and Audubon Park rose on ground that once was famous plantations. There are 26 varieties of palms in New Orleans parks including an avenue of Washington palms that includes more than 150 trees.

Streets are pretty much alike in all cities. But there are some in New Orleans that have no parallel in any other city. Take Canal Street for instance. It is 171 feet wide and that makes it America's widest business thoroughfare.

Opportunities for recreation are pretty much alike in all cities. But there is a difference in New Orleans. The New Orleans weather has something to do with it. Cold months are cool months in New Orleans and hot months are warm months. New Orleans does not know either of the climatic extremes and has no seasons for sports. It has one season that extends throughout the twelve months of the year. Golf greens are always green; outdoor baseball is played even in January and February.



Courtesy, New Orleans Association of Commerce.

*In Old New Orleans, by the Banks of Bayou Metairie in City Park. Scenes of Sylvan Solitude Like This Abound in the 1382 Acres of City Park in Old New Orleans, wherein have been Preserved the Natural Beauty of the Louisiana Bayou Country Originally Described by Longfellow in "Evangeline," with the Cypress Islands, Beards of Spanish Moss, Palmetto and Wild Flowers. Originally laid out in 1898; Part of the Old Allard Plantation; Given to New Orleans by John McDonogh. This Park is the Sixth Largest City Park in the United States.*

New Orleans, in addition, is the only city in this country that has within its own city limits a real fishing and hunting ground. Orleanians can fish in their back yards, so to

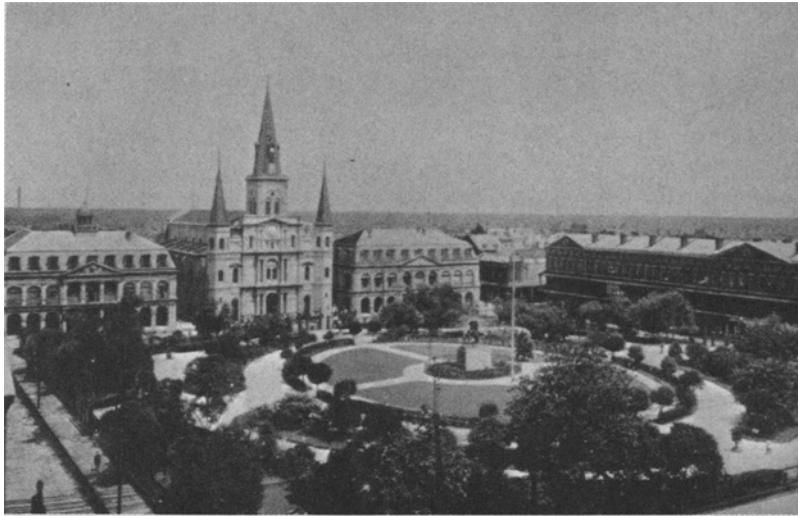
speak, and catch the finest of fresh water or salt water fish.

Mardi Gras has religious significance in that it is a time of feasting and merriment before the peniten-



Courtesy, New Orleans Association of Commerce.

*The Versailles Oaks (Also Known as "The Cathedral of Oaks"). These Majestic Trees—34 of them—located on the Mississippi River, just below New Orleans, at the Scene of the Battle of New Orleans where, on the Plains of Chalmette, Andrew Jackson on January 8, 1815, put a decisive end to the war of 1812 by overwhelmingly defeating General Pakenham and his heroes of Waterloo.*



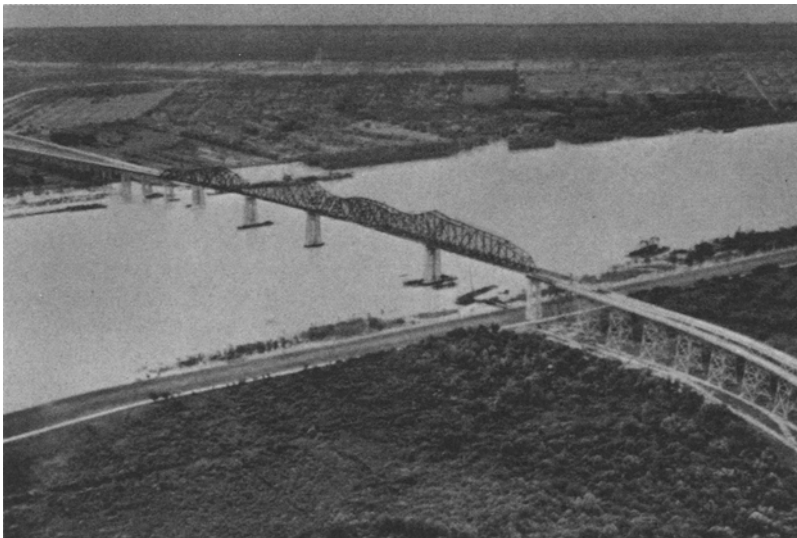
Courtesy, New Orleans Association of Commerce.

*Heart of Old New Orleans. The Place d'Armes, where the Mississippi Valley Development had its Beginning in 1718, when New Orleans was Laid Out by Bienville. Buildings: (left to right), Cabildo, erected in 1795 and the Scene of the Transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France and from France to the United States in 1803; St. Louis Cathedral, built in 1794 on the site of Louisiana's first Church; Presbytery, used originally by the Cathedral priests; Pontalba Apartment, one of the two rotos of brick apartment style buildings, oldest in this country, erected by the Baroness Pontalba. In the foreground is Jackson Square where, in 1769, the flag of Spain displaced that of France, the flag of France displaced that of Spain and the American flag displaced that of France in 1803.*

tial and ascetic period of Lent. It is strictly a native celebration, put on primarily for the benefit of the people of the city. (Ask any debutante!) But unselfishly enough, and with characteristic Southern hospitality, New Orleans invites the rest of the country, and the rest of the world in fact, to come join in the fun. Many tens of thousands accept

this invitation each year. They return home marveling at the scope, the grandeur, the mysteriousness and the uniqueness of this most famous celebration.

Everyone must eat to live. Orleanians eat to live better. Like restaurants in other cities, New Orleans restaurants serve steak and potatoes, ham and eggs, chicken and



Courtesy, New Orleans Association of Commerce.

*The New Huey P. Long Bridge Across the Mississippi River. When this \$13,000,000 structure was completed in December, 1935, the Father of Waters got his 29th and finest bridge. It is located a mile and a half above New Orleans at Nine Mile Point; a Combination Railroad, Vehicular and Pedestrian Crossing, Toll Free.*

rice and the other staples, but cooking in New Orleans is a subtle art that has been inherited by one Creole chef from another. Think of a soup made of crawfish boiled in white wine and then pounded into a pulp with an addition of cream, aromatic herbs and vegetables. Imagine a succulent pompano cooked in a paper bag in order to retain the full flavor; or a chicken marinated in red wine in just the right way to impart a most distinctive flavor; or bouilla-baisse, about which Thackeray penned many a word. These and many other delicious creations of the master chefs of New Orleans, accompanied by alcoholic concoctions that had their origin in New Orleans long before prohibition, give the restaurants of the city a personality of their own and set New Orleans apart from all other cities in the matter of food.

"What this restaurant can do to oysters and fish and various other things that make up a meal is what the cooks must do to them in Heaven," Irvin Cobb declared after a New Orleans meal.

So there are a few of the charms and curios plucked at random from the large treasury chest of New Orleans attractions and advantages. One could range at large and without restraint, for example, on the unique burial customs of New Orleans, the city that does not bury its dead. New Orleans glorifies its dead by placing the bodies in costly marble and granite tombs. Once upon a time burials of this kind were perhaps a necessity but not any more with the world's greatest drainage system that the city has installed. But above-ground "burials" continue in accordance with the long-established custom.

Words could also be used freely in telling of the distinctiveness of the New Orleans water supply, of how the city takes the water of the muddy Mississippi and makes it crystal clear and immaculately pure. Page after page could be written about Shushan Airport on beautiful Lake Pontchartrain, the world's finest airport; or about the Bonnet Varre Spillway, which allays all fears of a river flood; or about the new \$13,000,000 Huey P. Long bridge across the Mississippi river; or about the country's oldest orange groves just below New Orleans.

Surely enough has been said already to show that New Orleans is distinctly different from all other cities; that it has multiple personalities, each with its own charm and appeal; that its title "America's Most Interesting City," is well applied.