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## New Orleans – February 2015

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## Walking to New Orleans.

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January 30, 2015

Bear and I are going to Louisiana, again. Last time we walked there, this time we are going to fly.



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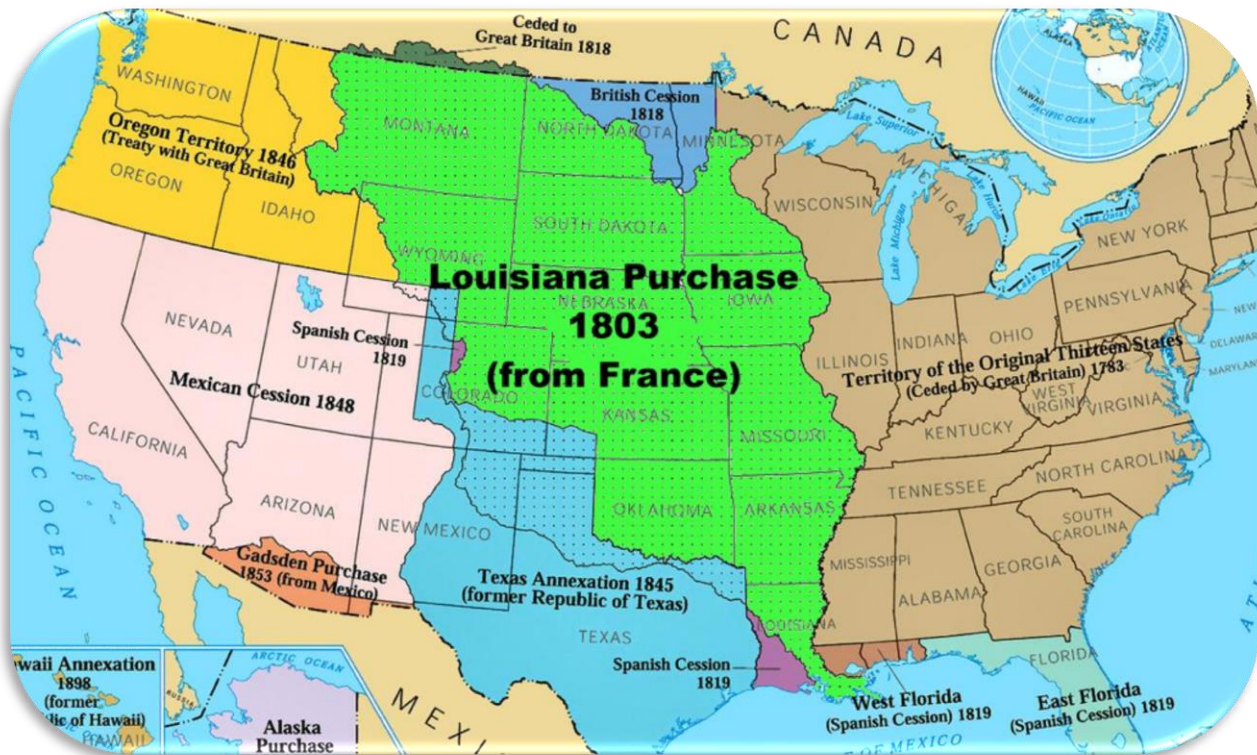
## The Louisiana Purchase

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January 30, 2015 – Calgary Airport

Every drop of rain that falls in Canada flows west, north, or east - except for a tiny sliver of land along the Montana / Saskatchewan border. When it rains in southernmost Saskatchewan (which it rarely does) any moisture not absorbed by the thirsty soil forms rivulets, which dribble into coulees and creeks flowing south into the Missouri river system, which eventually joins the Mississippi. It is conceivable that a raindrop, running off Charlie and Jack Shepherd's<sup>1</sup> resting place near Consul, Saskatchewan, could find its way to Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Consul cemetery and the land around it was once part of the Louisiana Territory. When the United States purchased the territory from France in 1803, it included all land in the west Mississippi basin, from New Orleans, through the U.S. Midwest, to the Cypress Hills in what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta.



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<sup>1</sup> Terri's Dad and Uncle, respectively.

When Bear and I visited the Shepherd homestead last summer, we were walking in the northern extremity of historical Louisiana. Today we will fly to New Orleans to check out the southern portion.

*This time I'm walkin' to New Orleans  
I'm walkin' to New Orleans  
I'm gonna need two pair-a shoes  
When I get through walkin' these blues  
When I get back to New Orleans*

Fats Domino – Walking to New Orleans





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## Zydeco Skillet Lickers

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January 30, 2014,  
Calgary Airport

Admittedly, it is a bit of a stretch to say that; having walked in southwestern Saskatchewan, we have something in common with the people of New Orleans. I do feel a personal affinity for Louisiana, but the connection is more musical than geographical.

When I was growing up, much of the music we listened to on the radio had Louisiana influences. We heard Creedence Clearwater Revival belt out *Born on the Bayou*, Bobby Bare sang a ballad about swamp witch *Marie Laveau* and John Fogarty revived an old Hank Williams tune and crooned about “*Jambalaya, crawfish pie and filet gumbo*”. When Don McLean drove his “Chevy to the Levee” in *American Pie*, I was right there with him.

So, when I think of New Orleans, a collage of music-induced images, of bayous and alligators, the French quarter, creole, shrimp boats and Cajun cooking resonates in the swampy gumbo of my mind.



In the weeks leading up to our trip, I dug up some old albums and did a little research on Louisiana music. Somewhere along the line I re-discovered Zydeco. I found a You-Tube video clip I can't get out of my head.

I love this video! – There is so much going on it is mind-boggling. The lead singer is a black man with a Spanish surname wearing a cowboy hat, singing in mixed French/English creole, playing an accordion, with a caterpillar on his upper lip. If that doesn't get your attention, check out the guy with the washboard (vest frottoir) strapped to his chest - he is as serious as the first cello with the Boston Philharmonic! And the bass player over Boozoo Chavez's left shoulder has the most aggressive mullet I have ever seen. They are all playing and singing a catchy Zydeco tune, about having a paper in your shoe, to an eclectic group of mixed-race dancers.

Awesome!<sup>2</sup>

Zydeco is a blend of Creole, Cajun, African American blues and jazz. The name “zydeco” derives from the French phrase *Les haricots ne sont pas salés*, which, when spoken in the Louisiana Creole French, sounds as "leh-**zy-dee-co** nuh sohn pah salay". This literally translates as "the snap beans aren't salty" but idiomatically as "I'm so poor, I can't afford salt meat for the beans;" which has a bluesy ring to it.<sup>3</sup>

The clip we watched is about having to put paper or cardboard in your shoe when the soles are worn out. Being poor, to the point of not having enough money to buy salt pork for your beans or fix your shoes is regrettable, but it makes for wondrous song-writing and heartfelt music.

When we get to New Orleans, we are hoping to track down some of the southern music we listened to as kids and see first-hand the images that music conjured.



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<sup>2</sup> [https://youtu.be/TJrxhHUzB\\_c](https://youtu.be/TJrxhHUzB_c) The video described above has been deleted from YouTube - click this link for an audio version of Boozoo Chavez performing *I Gotta Paper in my Shoe*

<sup>3</sup> The earliest recorded use of the term Zydeco may have been the country and western musical group called Zydeco Skillet Lickers who recorded the song *It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo* in 1929.

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## Joie d'vivre

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January 30, 2015

Louisiana and Canada share more than just a slice of common geography. In the 1700's, French speaking Acadians emigrated en masse from Quebec and the Canadian Maritimes to southern Louisiana. The "Cajuns" took their language, Roman Catholic religion, cuisine and music to Louisiana and created a dynamic sub-culture. About half a million French-Canadian descendants exert a powerful cultural influence in New Orleans today - Cajuns are responsible for a lively music genre and for Mardi Gras.



In this Cajun music clip, DL Menard reminds me of a dozen people of French-Canadian ancestry I have known (Uncle Henri L'Heureux, Armand Denis, Louis Dorne and others). They all have a common, mischievous, joie d'vivre quality inherent of Francophone. I also love the sheep in the background and the young girls dancing in the dirt<sup>4</sup>.

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<https://youtu.be/nf0he709d1k> (Click to watch DL Menard perform *La Porte Arrière - The Back Door*)



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## First impressions of New Orleans

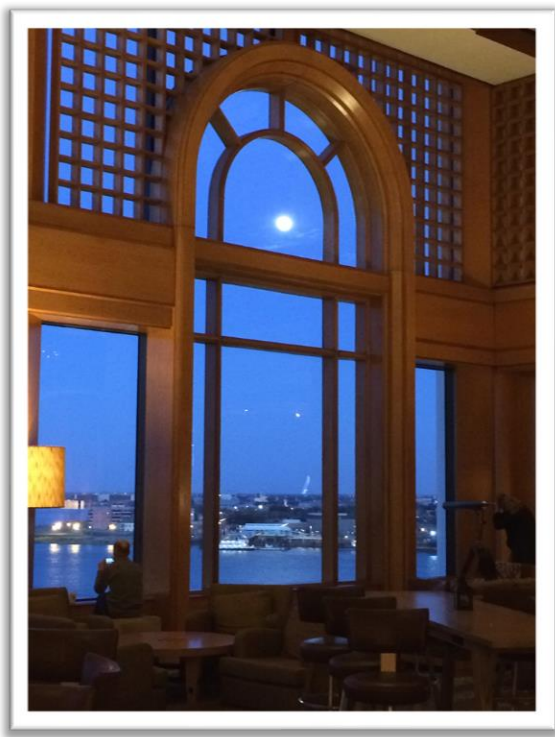
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Friday January 30, 2015

It is old – a combination of “European” old and “it has seen better days” old.

It is not Mardi Gras – but it is. At 5:00PM half the town is drunk, wandering the streets and wearing beads.

The French quarter is a pedestrian place, there are cars, but why would you bother?





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## Orientation

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Friday January 30, 2015

You are going to have to cut me some slack here; I have been up since 4:00AM, travelling all day, I haven't eaten properly, I am getting old and I am really not that bright in the first place, but this actually happened:

We went for a walk in the French quarter as soon as we had checked in. We were trying to get oriented by comparing our map to the street signs. Because this area is mostly a pedestrian place, the names of the streets are imbedded in the sidewalks on metal plates at each intersection. The New Orleans public works department also uses metal plates in the sidewalk to identify their utilities.

Like I said, you are going to have to cut me some slack but, for one brief instant, I thought I was standing at the corner of Water Street and Drain Avenue.



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## The Speed of Sound

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Saturday January 31, 2015

I have always wanted to see the Mississippi River. Ever since I read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, about 50 years ago, it has occupied an almost mythical place in my head. Today, we have a beautiful view of the mighty Mississippi from our hotel window.

I remember reading a page in the book where Huck and Jim are laying on the bank of the river watching a woodcutter chop firewood on the other side. The air is still, and the river is wide; the sound of each chop doesn't reach them until the man has lifted his axe for the next swing.



I have no idea why that little bit of Mark Twain stuck with me all these years. It might have something to do with a lazy summer attitude; of having nothing to do but lay on a riverbank and watch boats float by. The freedom of laying on a riverbank or floating down the river on a raft without a care in the world is something to strive for; which is exactly what I

intend to do with the next few hours of my life.

It is a bit too breezy and cool to lay on the riverbank, but there is a fat comfy chair in our room, and a footstool that needs my attention. I don't have a runaway slave to share it with, but I do have a Bear.



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## St. Louis Cemetery # 1

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Saturday January 31, 2015

I was fascinated to learn that the witch *Marie Laveau*, Bobby Bare sang about when we were kids, was a real person. She didn't: *Live in a swamp in a hollow log, with a one-eyed snake and a three-legged dog*, as Bobby said she did, but Marie was alive and well in New Orleans in 1815. Two hundred years ago, right here in the French quarter, we could have employed the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans to put a hex on a cab driver who attempted to run us over on Canal Street.



Disbelief in magic is not progress.

St. Louis Cemetery #1 is walking distance from the French Quarter. Located on historic Basin Street, it is the burial place of Marie Laveau. Believers and non-believers alike make pilgrimages to her tomb to make offerings to her spirit in return for what they hope will be blessings. The many "X's" scrawled on the tomb attest to the power she is believed to wield, even long after her death. I marked three X's on Marie's tomb, turned around three times, knocked on the tomb and shouted my wish.

If I wake up tomorrow morning able to sing like Jerry Lee Lewis, I will go back and give Marie an offering.



*Eeyooooowwww!*  
*Another man done gone.*

*Marie Laveau - Bobby Bare*



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## Pushing Down Daisies

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Saturday January 31, 2015

When people die in New Orleans they bury them six feet *over*, pushing *down* daisies.



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## A Charming Mix of Debauchery

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Saturday January 31, 2015

*“It is no easy matter to go to heaven by way of New Orleans”* – Reverend J. Chandler Gregg

New Orleans has the dubious distinction of being on multiple Top Ten Lists – *Dirtiest City in America* several years running, *Highest Violent Crime Rate* and *Most Murders per Capita*, among them.

Historically, New Orleans has been known for; Brothels, Bootlegging, Pirates, Privateers and Political Corruption, Duels with Pistols and Épées, Mafia Operations, Gambling, Saloons, Drugs and ubiquitous Public Drunkenness.

I have no idea how New Orleans pulls it off, but it is a charming place *because* of its multi-faceted debauchery.

*We dance even if there is no radio, we drink at funerals, we talk too much and laugh too loud and live too large, and frankly, we’re suspicious of others who don’t.*

– Chris Rose

You can't even count on Dr. Seuss or Bear to maintain decorum in New Orleans:



Abduction of the Sabine Woman.



The Sabine Woman

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## Kentucky Fried Alligator

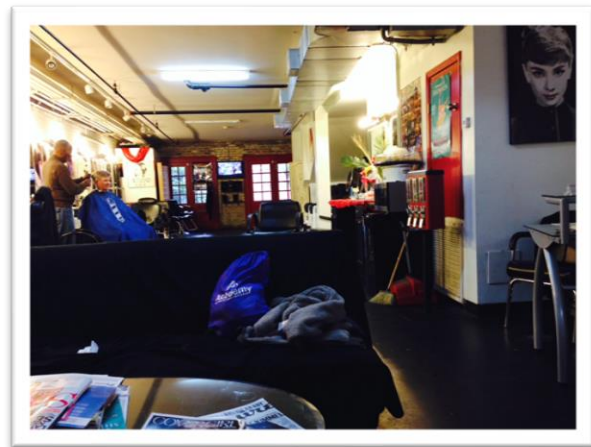
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Sunday February 1, 2015

I usually try to get a haircut while I am on holiday. Barbers are the best tour guides – they always know what is going on in a community and, other than shorter hair, they aren't trying to sell you something.

We saw a blood and bandages pole on a shop, just off Bourbon Street and popped in. The place was empty on a Sunday morning, other than Charlie the barber and his friend Richie. Bear was with me; she took a well-worn seat in the lobby and I climbed onto an ancient barber chair for an hour of THE best entertainment in Louisiana.

Charlie and Richie both talked non-stop while Charlie clipped and snipped and shaved. They told us about the “goins-on” in the Quarter, where the best music is playing, where to eat and how to get around. They interpreted Cajun lingo, regaled us with stories of New Orleans’ legends and crooks, retold past football glory and kept us in stitches the whole time.



“Are you goin’ tol this story Richie, or am I?”  
“That’s good, you don’ tol it right anyhow.”

At one point Charlie started in on alligator, how the meat tastes so good, you can get it at all the fine restaurants, if you want a purse or a pair of boots - alligator is the way to go, alligator jerky and alligator po-boy sandwiches and on and on. I had to interrupt him to ask – “If alligator meat is so good, why don't you see Kentucky Fried Alligator signs on every corner”?



Richie then launched into a long-winded explanation about alligators being way too mean and nasty and hard to catch – unlike chickens, and that is why there are more KFC stores and not so many KFA.

We were all laughing so hard I was concerned about losing an ear to Charlie's blade.

I walked out of Charlie's Barber Shop with potentially the worst haircut in history, but a very happy customer.



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## Who Dat?

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Super Bowl Sunday February 1, 2015

Remember when you were a kid, hanging out with your friends; somebody would say something that struck you funny and, for the next few days, the word or phrase would pop up continuously and crack everybody up, over and over. Sometimes the amusement could last for weeks.

New Orleans has had one of those gaffs going on since 1898, and it continues to grow.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Negro minstrel shows were a common entertainment. In one of those shows somebody would say "Who dat?" which was answered by "Who dat say who dat?"

The phrase showed up in Vaudeville acts and jazz songs in the 1920's and 30's with band members and the audience exchanging "Who Dat's".

During World War II, pilots would break radio silence with "Who Dat?" followed by "Who Dat, say who dat?" and "Who dat say who dat when ah say who dat?" After a few rounds of this, the squadron commander would grab his microphone and yell, "Cut it out, you guys!" A few moments of silence. Then... "Who dat?"

Hilarious!

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the phrase became the official chant of the New Orleans Saints. In 2010, when the Saints advanced to the Super Bowl, Bourbon Street was alive with the chant "Who Dat, Who Dat, Who Dat in the Super Bowl!"

Not even lawyers can screw up Who Dat. The NFL and t-shirt manufacturers sued each other for two years over exclusive use of the phrase. In 2012 a decision was reached with both sides agreeing that "The net effect of the settlement is that nobody owns Who Dat".

Who Dat watchin' da Super Bowl!



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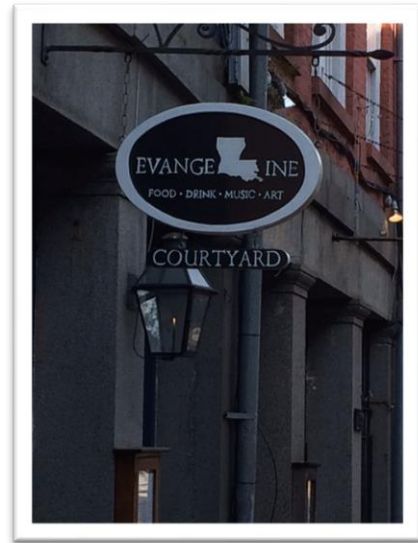
## Evangeline

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Monday February 2, 2015

*Evangeline* is an epic poem written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1847. It tells the story of Evangeline, betrothed to her beloved Gabriel. The couple is separated during the time of the Expulsion of the Acadians from New Brunswick by the British. The poem then follows Evangeline across the landscapes of America as far as Louisiana, as she spends years in a search for him, at times being near to Gabriel without realizing he was nearby. Finally, she settles in Philadelphia and, as an old woman, works as a Sister of Mercy among the poor. While tending the dying during an epidemic she finds Gabriel among the sick, and he dies in her arms.

The poem is far more romantic than the restaurant.



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## Delirium

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Monday February 2, 2015



There are more stories, legends, intrigue, and ghosts in this corner shop than I have pages to write them on. Click the link below for more about absinthe – the drink of choice of pirates, poets, politicians, and mass murderers.<sup>5</sup>



*Where she walks, no flowers bloom  
He's the one I see right through  
She's the **absinthe** on my lips  
The splinter in my fingertips*

*"Birds of Feather" – The Civil Wars<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> . <http://www.ruebourbon.com/oldabsinthehouse/history.html>

<sup>6</sup> Click to hear "Birds of Feather" – The Civil Wars. <http://youtu.be/vgb05OvtHBw>



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## Just Sayin'

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Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Mardi Gras, translated literally, *Fat Tuesday*, is a traditional Roman Catholic celebration held on the last day before Lent. Fat Tuesday was a day to overindulge, to eat rich, fatty foods in preparation for the long penitential fast.

New Orleans takes excess to a near mystical level. We are a week too early to officially catch Mardi Gras, but the town already oozes overindulgence.



In Arcola, SK we had a celebration similar to Mardi Gras; Shrove Tuesday or “Pancake Day”. On that one day a year my elderly (and fiercely Protestant) Aunt Nellie would invite us to her house for pancakes at lunchtime. There was no parade, no feathered dancers or beads and certainly no drunken naked people involved; and, the only black person in attendance was Aunt Jemima - on the syrup bottle!



*Aunt Nellie - third from left.*



*Not Aunt Nellie - third from left*

I think Catholics may have more fun..... I’m just sayin’ .....

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## *Morti Gras*

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Tuesday February 3, 2015

The people of New Orleans love a parade. The mother of all parades, Mardi Gras, happens each February, but there's also Lundi Gras – in case you can't wait for Tuesday, Second Line Parades where somebody applies for a small parade permit and everybody in town follows them around, Mother's Day Parade, Halloween Parade and Parades to celebrate various sexual orientations, there's the Parade of the Young Veterans, and on and on.



Not even death can stop a parade in NO, in fact it incites one. When a notable citizen dies the people of New Orleans break out a brass band, hoist the dearly-departed's coffin onto their shoulders and cart him/her through the streets.<sup>7</sup>

You have to love a town where people check the obituaries to gauge where the best entertainment is to be found.



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<sup>7</sup> Click to watch the funeral procession for jazz musician, Doc Watson - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InqnQ8vU3DU>

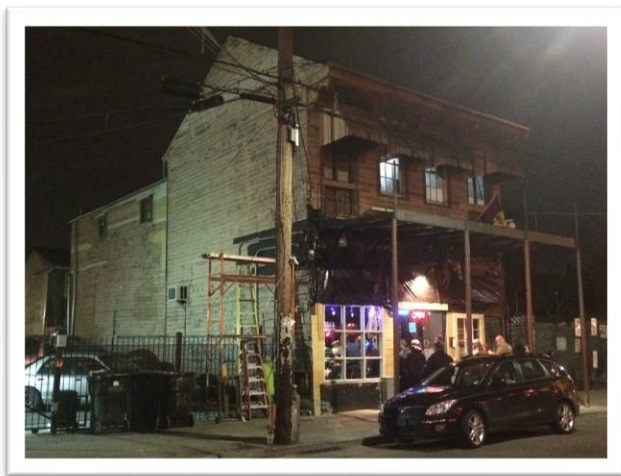
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## It All Comes Out in the Wash

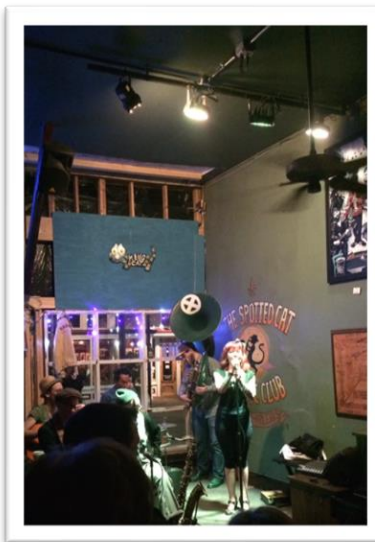
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Tuesday February 3, 2015

Music is a big reason to see New Orleans. Charlie the barber had recommended The Spotted Cat, on Frenchman Street, so we followed his advice, dressed up and sashayed on down there on Tuesday night. Turns out Charlie must have told everybody in town where to go because the place was packed well before 8PM. We got stuck behind a post so we couldn't see much of Meschiya Lake and the Little Big Horns, but their music filled the place.



I never once complained about the big post in the middle of the room; it was surely the only thing keeping the entire dilapidated building from imploding. We watched a couple of sets then wandered down the street to see another artist at Check Point Charlie.



Jamie Lynn Vessels was talented but Check Point Charlie was about as low as I care to go, at the “venue” level. But then, what do you expect from a music club that bills itself as a “Bar, Grill, Gamework and *Laundromat*”?!

The laundromat section must not be very popular; we were the only patrons at Check Point Charlie with clean clothes.





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## Whoop-up!

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Wednesday February 4, 2015

I have a Winchester Model 1894 rifle hanging above the desk in my office at home. This repeating firearm is called: “The Rifle that Won the West” or, if you were on the other end of it, “That damned Yankee rifle they load on Sunday and shoot all week<sup>8</sup>”.

My Winchester was manufactured in New Haven, Connecticut.



If you were living in Fort Calgary in 1865 and you needed one of these rifles to hunt buffalo, or protect your whisky from thieves, you ordered it from the I.G. Baker Company of Fort Benton, Montana. I.G. Baker was a steamship company, with wagon train and retail mercantile divisions, established to supply outposts in north-central US and the Canadian frontier.

Before railroads were built in the west, the only way to get trade goods into the Canadian North West was to follow Charlie Shepherd’s raindrop, in reverse. Goods were shipped on steamboats from New Orleans, up the Mississippi and across the Missouri. The Missouri River gets too shallow for steamboats at Fort Benton, Montana. At that point your rifle and ammunition would have been off-loaded from a steamer onto an I. G. Baker wagon train. Mules or horses pulled wagonloads of goods north from Fort Benton, along the Whoop-up Trail, across the Medicine Line<sup>9</sup> to Fort Whoop-up (now Lethbridge), then on to Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary.

It would have been a very exciting day when your Winchester rifle arrived in Calgary, all the way from New Orleans.

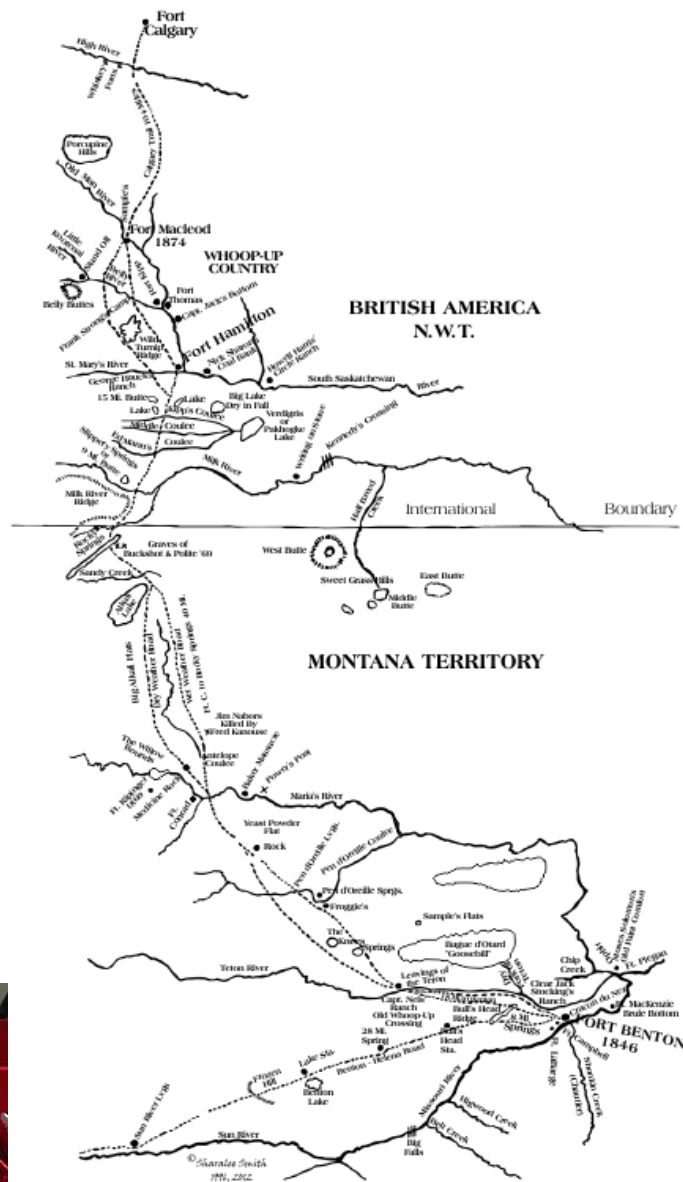
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<sup>8</sup> The Winchester holds 17 cartridges.

<sup>9</sup> Canada / USA border

Bear and I have followed the old Whoop-up trail, from Calgary to Fort Benton many times. We stay at the ancient (but still grand) Grand Union Hotel, on the west bank of the Missouri River. There is a levee near the hotel where the old steamers would have docked; I have often imagined what life must have been like, traveling the rivers between New Orleans and Fort Benton.

Today we experienced the first leg of that journey, aboard the Steamboat Natchez.



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## Nom de plume.

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Wednesday February 4, 2015

Mississippi riverboats are flat-bottomed vessels capable of floating in about 5 feet of water, making them ideal for inland water transport. The boats draw so little water someone once said that they were “designed to operate on a heavy dew”.



In 1865, Samuel Langham Clemens was a riverboat pilot working between New Orleans and St Louis. Before embarking from the dock, pilot Clemens would ask his Leadsman to check the depth of the water. The Leadsman would lower a weighted rope with knots marking each fathom (6 feet). When the rope reached two fathoms the Leadsman would announce that the vessel was “Mark Twain” (two marks). Samuel, an aspiring writer, later adopted the phrase as his pen name.

Travel on the Mississippi inspired Mark Twain to write the great American novels, *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Our short trip, ten miles downriver and back, was a bit “touristy” but the Natchez is the real deal. We sat on deck chairs and watched river life stream by as the massive steam-propelled paddle did



its work at the back of the boat. We were quite a distance from shore, but I am almost certain I saw a scruffy young man and a runaway slave, poling a raft around a shallow bend in the river.



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## The Elephant in the Room

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Thursday February 5, 2015

*“I dead in attic”* – notice scrawled on the side of a house by rescue workers in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina<sup>10</sup>.

Two years ago, southern Alberta experienced the worst flood in Canadian history - the town of High River was devastated; Canmore, the Siksika nation, Calgary and other municipalities on the Bow, Elbow and Sheep River flood plains, sustained indescribable damage. Homes and businesses were lost, 100,000 people were displaced and four lost their lives.

The Canadian and Alberta governments have spent more than \$5 billion to repair the damage; it has been two years and recovery is still underway.

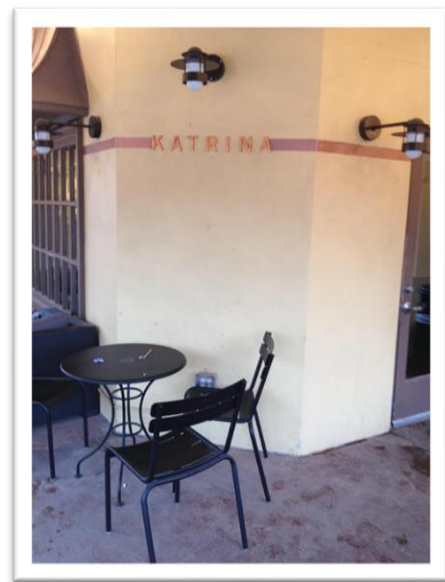
Bear and I drove to High River and waded through muck and debris to check on her sister and brother-in-law the day after the flood. I had never experienced such devastation. Houses destroyed, a rail line twisted like a corkscrew, basements full of water. The entire social and economic life of the region had been drummed into submission, as nature wreaked havoc.

I mention these Alberta flood statistics to put Hurricane Katrina into perspective.

Hurricane Katrina visited Louisiana on August 28, 2005 and stayed for two days. By the time she left, \$108 billion damage had been done over 90,000 square miles<sup>11</sup>. About 1.5 million people were forced out of their homes and 1836 were dead.

I had to put that information in my pipe and smoke it for a while to let the scope of the Katrina disaster sink in.

In his book *“I Dead in Attic – After Katrina”* Chris Rose wrote that; in the months and years following Katrina, every thought and action in New Orleans was overshadowed by what had transpired during the storm. Ten years later that elephant has not left the room.



The people of New Orleans, the ones who survived Katrina, are still living with the beast, they see it, hear it and smell it; they still feel the animal's pain.

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<sup>10</sup> Also, the title of a Pulitzer Prize winning book by Chris Rose, about the aftermath of Katrina.

<sup>11</sup> 90,000 square miles is about the size of Great Britain.

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## Lasting Impressions – Mixed Reviews

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New Orleans Airport- February 6, 2015

- ❖ August 28, 2005 was New Orleans' watershed moment, literally and figuratively. Katrina still affects New Orleans in a profound way, so it is puzzling that the city is being rebuilt where it is, 20 feet below sea level at some points. You don't have to be an engineer to understand that this is a very bad idea. One day, after the next hurricane, when somebody attempts to drive their Chevy to the levee, the levee and half of New Orleans, could be gone.
- ❖ The Mississippi is as mighty as legend tells it. Barges, tugs, and luxury liners share the river with our antique paddle wheeler, with room to spare. All these vessels float in the heart of American commerce, on a muddy grey artery, pumping trade goods into the veins of half a continent. The Mississippi river is truly majestic.
- ❖ I try not to be a prude but there are times when New Orleans tests the boundaries of respectability, by any measure. There was a family standing behind us at the Krewe de Vieux parade Saturday night. The little boy and girl were only belt-buckle tall and couldn't see anything, so I asked if they wanted to move in front of us. The parents were very polite; they thanked us as they took our spot in the front row. When the parade finally came into view, I had to wonder about my decision to let a couple of six- or seven-year-olds have a full-frontal view of the spectacle. The parade marshal was a six-foot penis in a vital stance, and the second float was a full-on mechanical demonstration of what that instrument can do, when confronted with a pair of outstretched female legs. Every male in the parade either carried or wore a phallic symbol – penis noses, penis hats and the women were, let's say, compliant. They all appeared to be ordinary citizens, so it bewilders me why they choose to parade in front of children, like a bunch of dinks.



- ❖ We didn't rent a car this trip, so we were confined to Orleans parish and the French Quarter. There is history in abundance in these few square blocks, so I got my fix, but the place really is a dump. The night before we arrived an Irish tourist was shot when he resisted giving up \$200 he had just withdrawn from an ATM.
- ❖ Buskers and beggars inhabit every big city, but they are more aggressive in New Orleans than any place I have visited. I helped the ones I thought needed help but, my theory is, if

you are well enough to make crude comments to Bear or grab my arm, you are well enough to work – offence taken, no handouts required.

- ❖ The music mix in New Orleans is astounding but, to experience it live, you must cross paths with drug addicts and crazy people, late at night. We didn't chicken out, but it was tempting to just buy the CD. Recorded music loses something, but you know for sure you will live to listen to it.
- ❖ The people of New Orleans mimic their food – or is it the other way round - a spicy mix of ethnic ingredients, which blend well, but some fusions can cause heartburn and a lingering aftertaste.
- ❖ Most of the people who live in New Orleans were very kind and accommodating. The few who weren't were eclipsed in rudeness only by some tourists. What is it about people on holiday; just because you *can* walk down the street with a drink in your hand and your shirt off, doesn't mean you have to.



To sum it up in a word, New Orleans is *unique*. Unique among American cities and the world over.

Chris Rose, journalist and long-time resident said it best: “*You can live in any city in America but New Orleans is the only city that lives in you*”.



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## Floor Sweepings - Notes that never made it.

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“Ah Garontee”

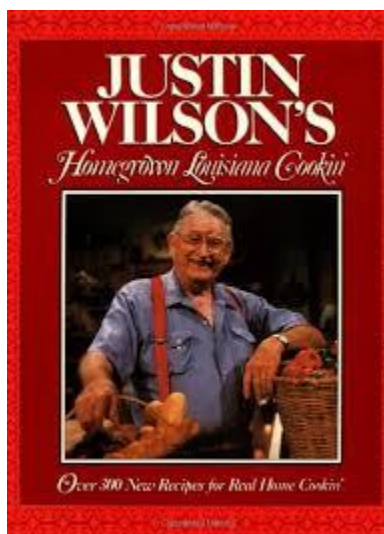
February x, 2015

Growing up in Saskatchewan in the 1950's and 60's, we lived in a One Channel Universe. If it wasn't on CKTV Yorkton, it didn't exist. This never really bothered us, how can you miss something you never had, right? We watched *Hockey Night in Canada*, *Gunsmoke*, *Bonanza* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* – and we watched *New Orleans Cajun*.

Justin Wilson was a Cajun cook/comedian who showed up on TV about the time we got home from school. If there were no chores to do, Brad and I would watch *New Orleans Cajun* - Justin Wilson entertained us and taught us about cooking and all things Cajun.

I am not sure I even knew where Louisiana was back then but “Ah Garontee” we enjoyed that program as we ate our after-school snack.

<http://youtu.be/eK4umRMJlrs>



*New Orleans makes it possible to go to Europe without leaving the United States* – Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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## Nawlins / English Translator

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Feb xx, 2015

Axe: *Inquire*. (Can I axe you a question?)

Fixin: *about to*. (*Ah'm fixin to thro' out the trash*)

Ah Garontee: *I assure you*. (Y'all gonna enjoy dat Gumbo, ah Guarontee)

Howzyomama'an'dem? *How is your family?*

Lagniappe (pronounced "lan-ya"): *Something Extra*. (like the 13<sup>th</sup> doughnut a merchant gives a customer)

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## Closure

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February x, 2015

Ten years after Katrina, Wikipedia says that the final death toll was 1836 *and* 132 *missing*. The 1836 is a great tragedy, but we hear about people dying in natural (and unnatural) disasters every day. What affects me more than the number of confirmed dead is the "132 missing".

Nobody knows what happened to these people. A decade on, it is reasonable to assume that they aren't on an extended walkabout or ran off with a secret lover and never returned, they are just *gone*.

As horrible as it is, I think it would be easier to accept that one of your friends or relatives had drown in his attic than to know nothing of what became of them.

Statistics can be so cruel.



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## Ain't that a Shame?

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Wednesday February 4, 2015

I have no musical talent, in fact I have to concentrate real hard to play the radio, but I love to listen to people who do.

Louis Armstrong (*Hello Dolly*), Antoine (Fats) Domino (*Ain't that a Shame*), Mahalia Jackson (*Movin' on up a little Higher*), Professor Longhair (*In the Night*), Marsalis Family, Jelly Roll Morton (*Black Bottom Blues*), Lucinda Williams (*My Sweet Lafayette*), Leadbelly (*Midnight Special*), Jerry Lee Lewis (*Great Balls of Fire, Whole Lotta Shakin Going On*), Web Pierce (*Why Baby Why*)

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## Trash Wednesday

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Wednesday February 4, 2015

Ash Wednesday follows Fat Tuesday. I don't know for sure but I expect that, yet another parade is held in New Orleans on *Trash Wednesday*. I envision that a Krewe of Sanitary Engineers wearing bright orange suits, carrying brooms and toilet plungers as sceptres, line the streets picking up broken beads and the detritus of Fat Tuesday.

I don't envision any exposed breasts at this event - but this is New Orleans, you can never be sure.

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## Krewes

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February x, 2015

Parades don't happen by accident. Elaborate costumes and floats are the work of dozens of "Krewes". Where the rest of America has service clubs, like the Rotary or the Lions, NO has Krewes. They are generally organized along racial, gender and age lines and have marvellous



names like the [Mistic Krewe of Comus](#), the [Krewe of Proteus](#), the [Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club](#), and the [Knights of Momus](#).

Krewe of Bacchus and rival Krewe of Chewbacchus have more than 1000 members each. In 1968 the renegade Krewe of Bacchus (God of wine) broke with tradition and now holds their own parade on the Sunday before Mardi Gras.



Everybody in NO wants to be part of the action. I watched a TV newscast on WWLTV 4 which reported that NOPD was suspending time-off requests during major parades because of a shortage of duty officers.

Sisters of the Mystic Krewe of Nyx, an all-female Krewe, many of whom are police officers, are not happy with the decision:

"We understand the situation, but in our case these sisters -- our sisters -- spend a lot of time and money to be a part of this organization," said Gigi Saak with Mystic Krewe of Nyx. "To be a little part of Mardi Gras just like the citizens we serve and protect. We are simply asking Superintendent Harrison to reconsider."



The only city in America with a bathtub ring. (Not meant to be funny).

