

THE HISTORY OF MARDI GRAS IN GALVESTON

Mardi Gras was first held in 1711 in Mobile, Alabama as a national gala imported from France. Only later, in 1873, did this historical event appear in New Orleans. The classical colors of Mardi Gras have noteworthy meanings. Gold signifies power or purity of purpose. Purple portrays royalty or justice. Green is a reminder of love, friendship or faith.

Mardi Gras is a movable date which may fall as early as February 3rd or as late as March 9th. Galveston's long heritage of celebrating Mardi Gras dates back to 1867, when a 350-pound justice of the peace presided over dramatic entertainment and a masked ball. By 1871, it had grown to a citywide carnival, with day and night parades, lavish costumes and an annual theme. The elite exclusive masked balls; while gambling houses, restaurants and saloons stayed open all night for the rest of the community.

As a victim to rising costs and devastating 1900 Storm, Mardi Gras was suspended until 1910, when a group called the Kotton Karnival Kids revived it. Their efforts proved successful and the celebrations continued until they were halted by World War II. The festivities resumed in 1949 for four years then it died out again. THE MODERN TRADITION OF Mardi Gras began in 1985 with a revived parade and ball to celebrate the opening of the Tremont House by George and Cynthia Mitchell. Today's celebrations are intricate with several masked balls, parades and parties highlighting the grand splendor of Mardi Gras and the history that it represents.