

Fair Grounds Historical Timeline

Antebellum Days

Sept. 25, 1852 – Union Course, which today is the site of Fair Grounds Race Course, is laid out and opens its first race meeting. Access to the 400-acre site is at the junction of Bayou and Gentilly Roads. The first race ever run on the new track – a decade older than the main track at Saratoga – is for pacers, all of whom coincidentally are gray geldings.

April 1, 1853 – The Union Course (Fair Grounds) stages its first meeting for Thoroughbreds, a five-day event initiated by members of the Metairie Jockey Club. The first race ever for Thoroughbreds over the track was won by a filly owned by Mississippi horseman William J. Minor. She took the event in straight two-mile heats.

April 1, 1854 – Lexington and Lecomte meet for the first time in the Great Post State Stakes at Metairie.

April 8, 1854 – Lecomte defeats Lexington in a famous rematch at Metairie.

1857 – The Union Course closes, unable to compete with the Metairie Course.

1859 – The Union Course becomes the Creole Course under the auspices of the Metairie Trotting and Pacing Club and holds races for trotters and pacers. The club hosts such notable stars as Flora Temple, also known as the “Bobtail Nag” in the popular tune “Camptown Races,” and the trotting sensation Ethan Allen, who was known as the “Pride of New England.”

1861 – Metairie Course concludes its final antebellum race meeting before 3,000 Confederate troops converge on the grand course and convert it to a military encampment known as Camp Walker.

The Civil War

1862 – New Orleans is occupied by Union soldiers under the rule of Generals Benjamin “The Beast” Butler and Nathaniel P. Banks. Duncan Kenner’s Ashland Plantation near Donaldsonville is raided by Union troops in July, and his Thoroughbreds are sold at auction. Among the buyers is George W. Wilkes, New York editor of the racing publication *Spirit of the Times*. Accounts of the auction state that Wilkes sent the horses north for improvement of the breed for the Turf, saddle, and for general purposes.

Reconstruction

1863 – Creole Race Course evolves into the Mechanics and Agricultural Fair Grounds, sometimes called the Louisiana Fair Grounds Course. It is leased for the duration of the war by several promoters such as the notorious Mississippi riverboat gambler George Devol. Boxing and baseball games along with bull and bear fights are attractions which accompany Thoroughbred, harness, Quarter Horse, and cavalry races. Racing during the war at Fair Grounds is as popular as ever despite the lack of quality horses, most of which have been confiscated by the Union.

1865 – With the end of war, the Metairie Jockey Club reorganizes and announces plans to resume racing. It is rebuilt and runs from 1867-1872. The club held 13 meetings, racing in the spring and winter, but only the last three meetings were profitable. A rift develops between older and younger club members, all wanting control of Metairie.

1867 – The painting entitled “Life on the Metairie” by artists Theodore Moise and Victor Pierson is completed. It is displayed to the public in the clubhouse at Fair Grounds and later raffled off.

1871 – Younger members of the Metairie Jockey Club resurrect the Louisiana Jockey Club, and plan to conduct spring and fall meetings at Fair Grounds. The track is renovated and Gustav Breaux is elected president. Directors include Charles Howard, director of the Louisiana Lottery, and John A. Morris, whose father Francis was an owner with Leonard Jerome of Jerome Park in New York. The younger Morris eventually opened Morris Park in New York. Meanwhile, plans to turn the old Metairie Course into a cemetery come to fruition as stock in the new entity is sold.

A New Beginning

April 13, 1872 – Inaugural day of racing of the Louisiana Jockey Club at Fair Grounds. E. Harrison’s Templo wins the first race, a two-mile hurdle with eight jumps in 3:58 $\frac{1}{4}$. The first stakes race, the Grand Inaugural Post Stakes, is won by M.H. Sanford’s Monarchist, a son of the great Lexington, in straight two-mile heats. General George Custer’s Frogtown runs second in a pair of two-mile heats to T.G. Moore’s filly Hollywood. Grand Duke Alexis of Russia attends the races. The fall meeting is beset by a horse epizootic. Prominent owner William Cottrill of Mobile, Ala., dominates most of the meetings from 1872 into the 1880s. The Alabama Stakes at Saratoga, inaugurated in 1872, is named in his honor.

1873 – A “post parade” is witnessed at Fair Grounds for the first time. Starter (Captain) William Conner (former member of the Metairie Jockey Club), a journalist and manager of tragedians, called the horses to walk, after the French style, up and down the homestretch, in procession. This new system would have succeeded admirably had it been carried out in proper spirit by the jockeys, said a newspaper account of the day. Pari-mutuel wagering was introduced as an

option to horseplayers and by 1900, Fair Grounds was the only track in the country that had accepted and continued the system.

1877 – Reconstruction ends; federal occupation of New Orleans ceases on April 24.

1879 – The Louisiana Jockey Club, which had experienced financial woes since its inception, disbands, putting racing in jeopardy in New Orleans.

1880 – The New Louisiana Jockey Club is formed and headed by former Metairie members Col. Robert Simmons and G.W. Nott. A campaign is implemented to raise \$75,000 to buy Fair Grounds. A newspaper account of the day stated: “The Fair Grounds, with its racecourse and clubhouse, form an estate which should be preserved. It would be a public calamity were this property to pass into private hands and be divided up.” Racing commences again on March 30 and former president Ulysses S. Grant attends the spring meeting.

1882 – Electric lights are used for the first time in the grandstand. A regular steeplechase course is installed.

1886 – Duncan Kenner is named president of the New Louisiana Jockey Club at Fair Grounds. New Orleans sportsman Leon Lamothe leases the track for a four-day winter meeting beginning on December 18.

1887 – Management of Fair Grounds is taken over by the partnership of Caldwell & Lamothe. J.F. Caldwell, said to be the greatest starter in the world, took over the job of handling the fields at the post. John Campbell opens a school for the general education of jockeys at Fair Grounds.

1889 – Jockey Tod Sloan, weighing 91 pounds, rides in his first race on January 11 and finally breaks his maiden on March 6. Fred Taral is among the 24-member jockey colony as well.

1893 – First 100-day meet. Racing charts appear in local newspapers for the first time. Pat Garret, the man who killed Billy the Kid, races a stable at the meeting.

1894 – The Crescent City Derby, forerunner of the Louisiana Derby, is inaugurated and won by T.H. Stevens’ heavily favored Buckwa. Ridden by Roy Williams, the gelded son of Buckra won the one-mile event by two lengths over five other 3-year-olds.

1895 – Jockey Ed “Snapper” Garrison rides Hi Henry to victory in the Ladies Day feature on March 15 of the spring meeting. Buckwa wins the 11/16-mile Thanksgiving Handicap on Nov. 28 during the fall meeting. For Christmas, the track presents jockeys with gold cuff links studded with diamonds and rubies.

1896 – A new starting device perfected by H.H. “Curley” Brown was tried out. Elastic netting about two feet wide and suspended on uprights on both sides of the track formed a barrier across the track about level with the jockeys’ eyes. When the horses were properly lined up, the starter would pull a leer which operated springs, causing the net to fly up. John Madden was among leading owners for the 1896-97 season with \$2,984 in earnings.

1898 – Fair Grounds is converted to Army Camp Foster during the summer for Spanish-American War maneuvers. Winnie O’Conner, schooled by Father Bill Daly and destined to become one of the Turf’s greatest riders on two continents, rides his first race on Dec. 5. Danny Maher, Tommy Burns and Roscoe Troxler are among those in the Fair Grounds jockey colony for the winter meeting, along with a jockey named Coombs who was indefinitely suspended for pistol practice in the jocks’ room.

1899 – A new steeplechase course is laid out complete with water jumps.

A New Century

1900 – George Smith, a.k.a. “Pittsburgh Phil”, Riley Grannan, Mose Gunst, and John “Bet A Million” Gates were among the plungers making their presence felt in the betting rings.

1902 – Frank James, brother of Jesse, is appointed betting commissioner for Samuel Hildreth, owner of the largest racing stable at the track. Lucien Lyne and Jimmy Winkfield are among the jockey colony. Steeplechasing permanently ends and the steeplechase course is obliterated. The grandstand is enlarged during the summer.

1905 – The New Orleans Jockey Club inaugurates a meeting at City Park race track on Feb. 11. On Nov. 30, opening day at Fair Grounds, City Park opens a winter meeting in direct conflict.

1906 – Noted Broadway figure “Diamond Jim” Brady is on hand to see 200-to-1 longshot North Wind win the feature on Jan. 17. Fair Grounds and City Park race simultaneously during the winter, causing a race track war.

1907 – Matt Winn is sent down from Louisville by the American Turf Association to mediate the racing conflicts in New Orleans. Acting as general manager of both Fair Grounds and City Park, he brings about agreements over racing dates and other matters. However, the public as well as horsemen tire of the influence of bookmakers. Lt. Gov. Sanders summed up public opinion: “There can be no doubt that racing as presently carried on in this community is demoralizing in its tendencies.” When betting on horses is outlawed in Missouri, the grandstand from Union Park race track in St. Louis is dismantled, shipped to Fair Grounds,

and reassembled. The 5,000-seat grandstand with a central area known as the "Palm Gardens" constitutes the largest auditorium in New Orleans.

1908 – Matt Winn returns to Kentucky and soon becomes manager of the New Louisville Jockey Club. The Locke Law brings an end to racing in New Orleans for seven years.

1915 – Racing resumes at Fair Grounds on Jan. 1, under the auspices of the Businessmen's Racing Association, who conduct a 40-day meeting. Joseph A. Murphy, a well known racing official, is general manager. No bookmaking is permitted at Fair Grounds. Useit, eventually the dam of Black Gold, sets a six-furlong record of 1:12 on Jan. 30.

1916 – The soon-to-be-great filly Pan Zareta makes her local debut on Jan. 7, winning a six-furlong sprint under 124 pounds.

1917 – Jefferson Park opens in adjoining Jefferson Parish.

1918 – Pan Zareta, winner of 76 races and now known as the "Queen of the Turf", dies of pneumonia in her stall at Fair Grounds on Jan. 19 and is buried in the infield. Jockey Earl Sande makes his major track debut, riding two long-shot winners.

1919 – Three days after the fire that burned down the grandstand, workmen have a temporary facility ready for the 54-day meeting on Jan. 1. Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney's Red Rose wins the Crescent City Junior Championship for 2-year-olds on Feb. 27. Later in the year, a permanent grandstand, which is the reassembly of the grandstand from defunct City Park race track, is erected. Damask wins the 1 1/8-mile Louisiana Derby (formerly the Crescent City Derby) at Jefferson Park, collecting the winner's share of \$4,975.

1921 – Mrs. J. Phillips' Guy, ridden by Chick Lang, wins the one-mile New Year's Handicap.

1923 – Mrs. Rosa Hoots' 2-year-old Black Gold wins at first asking in a three-furlong dash on Jan. 8.

1924 – Heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey is on hand to see Romany win the Jack Dempsey Purse on Feb. 11. Eventual champ Gene Tunney visited the track on Feb. 14 for a race named in his honor. Black Gold wins the Louisiana Derby with John Mooney in the irons.

1926 – Kentucky horseman and sportsman Col. E.R. Bradley, long associated with the New Orleans Turf as owner of the Palmetto Club, becomes new owner of Fair Grounds and orders the building of new stables and a clubhouse.

1927 – A record crowd of more than 23,000 turns out for opening day on Jan. 1.

1928 – Black Gold, the winner of four Derbies including the Louisiana Derby and Kentucky Derby, breaks down during the running of the Salome Purse on Jan. 28 and is buried in the infield. Col. Bradley sponsors the introduction of yet another mechanical starting gate.

Great Depression

1932 – With the Depression gripping the nation, purses for races worth \$1,000 are cut to \$600. Col. Bradley retires and the track is leased to a group of Chicagoans headed by J.C. Schank. Purses drop to \$500.

1934 – A syndicate headed by Robert S. Eddy Jr., Joseph Cattarinich and associates, operators of Jefferson Park, acquire Fair Grounds for \$375,000.

1936 – John F. Clark's speedy Clang records the three-furlongs track record of :34 against time on March 28. Johnny Longden rides Rushaway to win in the 1 1/8-mile Louisiana Derby in the track record time of 1:50 4-5 on March 29. The photo-finish camera makes its debut.

1938 – Johnny Longden wins his second Louisiana Derby in three years, riding Wise Fox, a son of Gallant Fox, to a photo victory on March 27.

1939 – Greentree Stable's Day Off, with Eddie Arcaro up, wins the Louisiana Derby on March 26. The winner's share is \$9,510.

1940 – The legislative act giving legal sanction to racing in Louisiana is signed into law by Gov. Sam Jones on July 18. The Louisiana State Racing Commission is established. The current ownership of Fair Grounds (Eddy and associates) sells the track to real estate developers who plan to convert it to a subdivision.

World War II

1941 – On Jan. 2, Fair Grounds goes on the auction block, but at the last moment is saved from destruction by Sylvester W. Labrot Jr who, armed with a 30-day option which was purchased by William G. Helis, puts together a group of New Orleans horsemen/businessmen that form the Fair Grounds Corporation. John S. Letellier, Anthony Pelleteri, and Herbert J. Schwartz are among the investors. The Fair Grounds Breeders and Racing Association is formed to oversee racing. When the winter meeting opens on Christmas Day, Alfred Vanderbilt, Charles T. Fisher, J.L. Sullivan, Walter Chrysler, Valdina Farms, and King Ranch are represented by stables.

1942 – Over 20,000 fans witness Calumet Farm's Whirlaway, winner of the 1941 Triple Crown, win the inaugural Louisiana Handicap on Dec. 12. His appearance

at Fair Grounds was part of a war relief effort developed by the newly formed Thoroughbred Racing Association.

1944 – C.L. Dupuy's Marriage, winner of the previous season's New Orleans Handicap, becomes the first horse to win the race back-to-back with a nose victory over Rounders on Feb. 19.

1945 – Racing ends in the middle of the meeting as a directive from the War Mobilization Department calls for all race tracks to close down by Jan. 3.

1946 – Hal Price Headley's Pellicle ships in from Florida and wins the Louisiana Derby.

1947 – The racing strip is completely rebuilt.

Atomic Age

1950 – Bill Shoemaker rides the final month of the year at Fair Grounds on the way to his first national riding title. Red Camelia wins the New Orleans Handicap.

1958 – Mrs. Joe Brown's Tenacious, one of the most popular horses to ever race at the track, wins the New Orleans Handicap and captures the event again the next year.

1960 – Tenacious, Ray Broussard up, becomes the only horse in the history of the Louisiana Handicap to win the event three times.

1966 – Help On theWay wins the inaugural Fair Grounds Oaks on Feb. 19. The added-value of the race is \$10,000.

1967 – Marion Van Berg's Mike's Red sets a track record for one mile and 40 yards on March 18, speeding the distance in 1:38 3-5.

1971 – Fair Grounds' Racing Hall of Fame is established. Jefferson Downs in Kenner opens after the old Jefferson Downs is destroyed by Hurricane Betsy.

1975 – Golden Chance Farm's Master Derby climaxes a year-long rivalry with Colonel Power and Honey Mark by defeating those two in the Louisiana Derby on March 22. Master Derby goes on to win the Preakness Stakes that May.

Oil Boom

1977-78 – John Henry makes nine starts and places twice during the meeting, earning \$2,663 before going on to Horse of the Year honors in 1981 and 1984

1981 – The Stall-Wilson turf course is installed.

1982 – Calumet Farm’s Eclipse Award winning filly Before Dawn cruises to an easy win in the Fair Grounds Oaks on March 27. A day later, in one of the most exciting Louisiana Derby finishes ever, Mrs. Joe W. Brown’s El Baba defeats eventual Preakness favorite Linkage.

1983-84 – Randy Romero of Erath, La., in winning the third of his four Fair Grounds riding titles, sets a track record for wins with 181.

1984 – Black Chip Stable’s Wild Again wins his first stakes race in the New Orleans Handicap on March 18. In November, he would win the first running of the Breeders’ Cup Classic.

1986 – Aaron Jones’ Tiffany Lass completes a successful Fair Grounds campaign under the tutelage of veteran trainer Angel Barrera by winning the Oaks on March 22. Tiffany Lass receives the Eclipse Award as the nation’s top 3-year-old filly of 1986.

1988 – Roussel and Lamarque’s Risen Star gallops to victory in the Louisiana Derby on March 13. After going on to capture the Preakness and Belmont Stakes later in the spring, the son of Secretariat is voted an Eclipse Award as top 3-year-old colt.

1989 – Lettuce Farm’s millionaire Honor Medal just misses his bid to become the only horse in the history of the New Orleans Handicap to win it three times, losing in a photo to stablemate Galba on March 5.

1990 – Mike Hooks’ Malagra speeds six furlongs in 1:08 4-5 in winning the Week of Fame Sprint Championship, erasing Colonel Power’s 15-year-old track record. The record will stand for 11 years until it is broken by a filly by Malagra, Hallowed Dreams, in 2001.

From the Ashes

April 12, 1990 – Fair Grounds is sold as the Krantz family, owners of Jefferson Downs, purchases controlling stock interest from the Roussel group.

1991 – Fair Grounds hosts the first Louisiana Champions Day on Dec. 7. The day is dedicated to an all Louisiana-bred, 10-race program with purses totaling more than \$70,000. A total of 14,989 fans wagered \$1,624,398 on the card.

1992 – Jockey Shane Romero, a New Iberia, La., native, captures an unprecedented fifth consecutive riding title by winning 100 races. The talented Cajun reinsman achieves an in-the-money percentage of almost 39 percent while his mounts earn more than \$800,000 in purses.

Dec. 17, 1993 – A seven-alarm fire completely destroys the grandstand. With a round-the-clock effort for 19 days, Fair Grounds erects temporary facilities and conducts racing for its remaining 60 days.

1994 – Construction begins in July on the new multi-million dollar grandstand/clubhouse project. The first permanent structure, an OTB building, is completed in December and doubles as a clubhouse.

1995 – Robert E. Meyerhoff's Concern, winner of the 1994 Breeders' Cup Classic, wins the New Orleans Handicap on March 12. Construction on the rebuilding project is halted in September when scandals involving the gaming industry jeopardize the financing.

1996 – Overbrook Farm's Grindstone is victorious in the Louisiana Derby in stakes-record time on March 17 and goes on to win the Kentucky Derby, thus making him only the second horse (Black Gold, 1924) to score that double.

1997 – Fair Grounds opens its new grandstand/clubhouse facility to the public on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27. Scott's Scoundrel becomes Louisiana's first equine millionaire with a second-place finish in the Louisiana Champions Day Classic on Dec. 13.

1998 – Louisiana Derby is upgraded to Grade II status in December. Louisiana Champions Day offers \$1 million in purses for the first time.

1999 – Both 2-year-old champions of 1998, Silverbulletday and Answer Lively, begin their 3-year-old seasons at Fair Grounds, and 1998 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Real Quiet makes his 4-year-old debut in the New Orleans Handicap.

A Third Century

2000 – Louisiana Derby, with a purse of \$750,000, attracts one of its strongest fields ever to help generate record single-day handle (\$9.08 million).

2001 – Louisiana-bred filly Hallowed Dreams wins the Victoria Lass Handicap on March 17 in track-record time of 1:08.34 for six furlongs, improving her record to 20 wins from 21 starts.

2002 – War Emblem, who started three times at Fair Grounds in the 2001-02 meet, wins the Kentucky Derby and Preakness. Lecomte Stakes and Whirlaway Handicap elevated to Grade III status beginning in 2003, giving Fair Grounds eight graded stakes, its most ever. Mountain General runs six furlongs on 1:08.03 to set track record in Thanksgiving Handicap on opening day of 2002-03 season. Fair Grounds-based Steve Asmussen leads all trainers nationally with 407 wins.

2003 – Funny Cide, who was placed second in the Louisiana Derby, wins the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, the second straight year that the winner of the first two legs of the Triple Crown has started earlier that season at Fair Grounds. Mineshaft wins the New Orleans Handicap en route to being named Horse of the Year. New Orleans voters approve slot machines in October.

2004 – Ashado wins the Fair Grounds Oaks and the Kentucky Oaks. Multiple Grade I winner Peace Rules wins the New Orleans Handicap one year after winning the Louisiana Derby, becoming only the third horse to win those races in consecutive years. Bayou Breeders' Cup Handicap run as Grade III race for the first time, increasing the total of graded stakes at Fair Grounds to nine.

CDI, Hurricane Katrina and Slot Machines

September 2004 – Churchill Downs Incorporated purchases Fair Grounds and its affiliated OTBs for \$47 million. U.S. Bankruptcy Court approves the sale Sept. 24 and the acquisition becomes final Oct. 15. Randy Soth named president.

2005 – Summerly wins the Fair Grounds Oaks and the Kentucky Oaks, the second consecutive year a filly has accomplished the feat. Fair Grounds introduces new stakes schedule, creating major event days. Louisiana Derby, New Orleans Handicap and Fair Grounds Oaks are run on same day (March 12) for the first time.

August 2005 – Hurricane Katrina makes landfall in New Orleans on Aug. 29. The subsequent failure of federal levees constructed and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers leaves 80% of the city flooded. The Grandstand roof is torn open by wind, resulting in significant damage to the Clubhouse seating area, and most of the property is flooded. Fair Grounds officials, working with state regulators, shorten the 2005-06 season to 37 days and transfer the meet to Louisiana Downs, marking the first winter without racing in New Orleans in 91 years.

2006 – The shortened “Fair Grounds at Harrah’s Louisiana Downs” meet is run at the Bossier City, La. racetrack, with an abbreviated stakes schedule that does not include the track’s biggest races like the Louisiana Derby and Fair Grounds Oaks. Fair Grounds is partially rebuilt in time to host the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in late April, and other restorations are done in time for start of 135th racing season on Thanksgiving Day, where a facility record crowd of 8,732 welcomes racing back to New Orleans.

2007 – Preakness winner Curlin, with the trainer/jockey combination of Fair Grounds regulars Steve Asmussen and Robby Albarado, trains in New Orleans for a month. A temporary Slots facility with up to 250 machines opens Sept. 21 in the Derby Building while construction begins on a permanent casino.

2008 – Proud Spell wins the Fair Grounds Oaks and Kentucky Oaks, the third filly to pull off the feat in the four most recent runnings of the Fair Grounds Oaks. Austin Miller assumes responsibility for racing operations upon the departure of track president Randy Soth. Miller named president Oct. 27, 2008, after 17 months as vice president and general manager of gaming and OTB operations. Eric Halstrom, formerly of Canterbury Park, simultaneously named vice president and general manager for racing. A permanent slots facility covering 33,000 square feet and holding more than 600 state-of-the-art gaming machines opens Nov. 14.

2009 – Friesan Fire sweeps all three of Fair Grounds' graded stakes for 3-year-olds, earning the distinction of post time favorite in the Kentucky Derby. Rachel Alexandra wins the Fair Grounds Oaks and Kentucky Oaks, the fourth filly to pull off the feat in the five most recent runnings of the Fair Grounds Oaks, en route to a historic Horse of the Year campaign.

2010 – Rachel Alexandra becomes the first reigning Horse of the Year to start at Fair Grounds since Whirlaway in 1942 as she finishes second in the inaugural New Orleans Ladies, her 4-year-old debut. Tim Bryant named new president of Fair Grounds on April 20, taking over for Miller, who was named president of CDI's Calder Race Course. Blame, who spent the winter training at Fair Grounds with New Orleans native trainer Al Stall Jr., wins a dramatic Breeders' Cup Classic at Churchill Downs over previously undefeated mare Zenyatta.

140 Years and Counting

2011 – The Louisiana Derby carries a \$1 million purse, the first seven-figure race ever run in New Orleans. Rosie Napravnik becomes the first woman to win the leading jockey title at Fair Grounds with 110 wins, including the Louisiana Derby aboard Pants On Fire. The Fair Grounds Hall of Fame hosts its first induction ceremony since before Hurricane Katrina, inducting trainer Steve Asmussen and horses Peace Rules and Rachel Alexandra. Fair Grounds opens its 140th Thoroughbred Racing Season on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 24.

2012 – Raut LLC's Hero of Order pulls off an historic upset in winning the Louisiana Derby at 109-1, resulting in a \$220.80 win payoff. The Louisiana Derby is run on the final day of the meet, Sunday, April 1, to coincide with the off day during NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four that was hosted at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Believe You Can, victorious in the Fair Grounds Oaks, goes on to win the Kentucky Oaks. Fair Grounds leading rider Rosie Napravnik becomes the first woman to win the Kentucky Oaks. Reigning Horse of the Year Havre de Grace makes her final career start in the New Orleans Ladies Stakes.

2013 – The 100th running of the Louisiana Derby features the inaugural Infield Festival with live music from Cowboy Mouth and Flow Tribe. 3-year-olds that raced at Fair Grounds during the season won the Preakness Stakes (Oxbow) and Belmont Stakes (Palice Malice) as well as finished 2nd through 6th in the Kentucky Derby. Howard 'H' Withers assumes responsibility for racing operations upon the departure of vice president and general manager for racing Eric Halstrom.

2014 – Vicar's in Trouble becomes the first Louisiana-bred since 1990 to win the Louisiana Derby when he goes wire-to-wire. Untapable wins the Fair Grounds Oaks and Rachel Alexandra Stakes en route to a victory in the Kentucky Oaks. Rosie Napravnik becomes the first rider to win both the Louisiana Derby and Fair Grounds Oaks in the same season.

2015 – Ken and Sarah Ramsey capture the Grade II Louisiana Derby for the second consecutive year when International Star wins the meet centerpiece to sweep the three graded stakes events for 3-year-olds, also winning the Grade II Risen Star and the Grade III Lecomte. In a matching feat on the fillies side, Fletcher and Carolyn Gray's I'm a Chatterbox sweeps the series for 3-year-old fillies in winning the Silverbulletday, Grade III Rachel Alexandra and the Grade II Fair Grounds Oaks. The Fair Grounds preps continue to be the most productive road to the Grade I Kentucky Oaks as Rachel Alexandra runner-up Lovely Maria later captures the Oaks. Jockey James Graham wins his 2,000th career race aboard Call Me George in the Grade II New Orleans Handicap.

2016 – Winchell Thoroughbreds' Gun Runner follows up his win in the Grade II Risen Star Stakes with a powerhouse, 4½-length win in the Grade II Twinpires.com Louisiana Derby. Ridden by Florent Geroux, who captures his first win in the Louisiana Derby, the son of Candy Ride (ARG) would go on to finish third in the Grade I Kentucky Derby presented by Yum! Brands. Trainer Mike Stidham wins his first Fair Grounds training title.