

PRESS RELEASE



MOSAIC YOUTH THEATRE OF DETROIT / 610 Antoinette Street / Detroit, MI / 48202
t: 313-872-6910 / f: 313-872-6920 / www.mosaicdetroit.org

LYNN KEILY, Publicist / 313-872-6910 ext. 4005 / klynn@mosaicdetroit.org



Red Dwarf Legend and Sightings

The Red Dwarf (Nain Rouge) of Detroit

retold by S. E. Schlosser

The infamous Red Dwarf (Nain Rouge) of Detroit was reputed to be the foul offspring of the Stone God, who only appeared when there was to be trouble. The Red Dwarf was called "The Demon of the Strait" and its appearance heralded disaster. Cadillac, founder of Detroit, encountered the Nain Rouge while sitting on the bank of the Detroit River. The Red Dwarf had jumped down right in front of the French Colonial governor, startling him nearly out of his wits, and thrust a long stick at him as if it were a sword. Harried by the imp's whacks, Cadillac drew his own sword and parried, beating the creature back with the flat of his blade until it ran away, cackling madly. From that moment, Cadillac's fortunes took a downturn, and he was eventually recalled to France, losing his trade monopoly and all his privileges.

The Red Dwarf was next seen during Pontiac's Rebellion, a period in which the Native American tribes had banded together against the British following the French and Indian War. The united tribes had attacked a number of settlements and laid siege to Fort Detroit. The British had attempted to end the siege with a sneak attack on Pontiac's encampment, but their plan was betrayed to the rebel leader. Pontiac defeated the British in the Battle of Blood Run, which took place at a creek two miles north of the fort. Several survivors of the battle claimed to have seen the Red Dwarf running along the shores of the lake shortly before the battle began.

The imp was spotted once again in 1805, racing through the streets of Detroit just before the city burned to the ground. And during the War of 1812, when the forces of British General Brock began bombarding the American forces within Fort Detroit, General Hull acceded to a demand for unconditional surrender after he saw the Red Dwarf leering at him through the fog.

To this day, the creature continues to be the herald of misfortune for Detroit. The Red Dwarf dashed down 12th street, doing back flips and cartwheels on the night of the police raid that sparked the [rebellion] of 1967. And it was observed by Detroit Edison linemen taking a lunch break in 1976. The Nain Rouge climbed up a utility pole right in front of their eyes. When they yelled at it, believing it was a child; the Red Dwarf dropped to the ground, leered rudely at them, and scampered away. The next day, an ice storm left 400,000 Detroit residents without electricity.

Source: <http://www.americanfolklore.net/folktales/mi4.html>

Summary of sightings

- In 1701 Antoine Cadillac, Detroit's founder, encountered and even attacked the Red Dwarf. Within days, Cadillac lost both his fame and fortune.
- On July 30, 1763, the Red Dwarf was seen stalking Capt. James Dalyell on the banks of the Detroit River. The following day, the British captain and 58 of his soldiers were ambushed by Chief Pontiac at the Battle of Bloody Run.
- Multiple sightings of the Red Dwarf occurred just before Detroit was consumed in a massive fire in 1805.
- A blundering Gen. William Hull claimed to have seen the Red Dwarf in the fog just before his surrender of Detroit to the British without firing a shot in the War of 1812.
- Several Detroit citizens sighted the Red Dwarf the day before the 1967 rebellion.
- In 1976, two employees of Detroit Edison saw a small "child" climbing a utility pole on March 1st. Fearing the "child" might fall the two men called out to "him" and much to their surprise the "child" leaped from the top of the twenty-foot pole and scurried away. The Red Dwarf had reared its face again and the next day Detroit was buried in one of the worst ice storms in its history, and 400,000 people lost power.

Source: <http://www.davidaspitzley.org/MythicDetroit/>

###



In collaboration with the University of Michigan Residential College

This project is sponsored in part by the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.