The Creolization of Food in New Orleans

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Contents

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Chapter 1. Introduction

An understanding of *creolization* ends the false security implied by the notion that culture is a static item one has to hold on to in order to preserve national identity and thus one's own identity. The term describes the creative process that takes place when cultures encounter or are confronted with something new. It reveals that getting to know another culture is what helps us to overcome the narrow borders of knowledge that we have of our own culture.

This paper will try to show that culture is not only given by the group we are born into but also created anew every moment when we interact with other members of the society. It makes clear that it is to the betterment of culture and its people to be open to new influences. It states that the crossing of borderlines and the successful mixing and adapting bring forward something special.

Culture finds expressions in language, art, science, customs, food and so on. It implies people's ability to pass on this knowledge from generation to generation, because it has a practical use for it. Cultural changes occur when the practical use vanishes due to changes in modes of living. The view of *creolization* therefore reflects a process that implies several characteristics: a high degree of tolerance toward new things, a huge amount of creativity and, nonetheless, a strong sense of tradition.

To make my point, I choose one single cultural category - food. I chose food since it is a universal cultural category - an everyday necessity for everyone. It is rather obvious that food is important for everybody since no one can live without it. Ethnologists have long looked at food from a special point of view.

They focused, however, on special phenomena such as food taboos or cannibalism, or the intake of strange items in terms of what we are accustomed to eat (such as worms, grasshoppers, etc.)[1] What becomes clear by looking at such research is that each culture develops its own rules for what is considered to be edible and what is not.

Food is not just a biological necessity but also a social act. The strong cultural influence exerted by food is most clearly reflected in such problems as eating disorders. This thesis will present a broad discussion of the topic of food in relation to culture in general in Chapter 3. Food will be explained here as a social phenomenon, not only as an integral part of our own social group but also in the exchange with other groups and individuals. What happens culturally when food and cooking are part of exchange situations will be demonstrated.

Food as an omnipresent item influences us all. One might expect therefore that it should follow a more or less general worldwide development. But this is not the case, as everyone knows. The question is why special food traditions develop in different regions. There are definitely a variety of reasons. Some of the differing approaches scholars utilize will be reviewed. Many scholars discuss the subject of food in different ways. In general there is a materialist vs. a mentalist approach towards it. For this study it does not matter which perspective seems to be more relevant. To be comprehensive, they will all be taken into account and referred to.

Whereas much of the architecture of the past is still here to be seen, music to be heard, and poetry to be read, interpretations of the cooking standards of the

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[1] The materialistic anthropologist Marvin Harris explained many food taboos in his books Good to Eat and Riddles of Food and Culture. According to him, for example, the pig taboo is just a product of practical considerations. He posited that pigs are not suited for being kept in the Middle East on an ecological and socio-economical level and therefore became taboo for Muslims.

past are primarily limited to contemporary descriptions. The primary sources for this thesis, therefore, are travel accounts from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although historians prefer to rely on unpublished sources, they are seldom found and so these first-hand accounts provide invaluable insights.[2]

Travel before the middle of the nineteenth century was accomplished by only the very few and rich or by the extremely adventurous, although this was to change with the advent of rail and steamboat transportation. In culinary terms, this meant that since most people had no direct experience with any style or quality of cooking other than their own, everything new and different was noted with great interest. By using a multitude of accounts, whose authors reflect different ethnic, social, ideological and intellectual backgrounds, the information derived can be rigorously compared and appears credible.

This thesis focuses on New Orleans. Everyone agrees the city has a unique food culture - the question, however, is, why does it? Why did the food culture gain such popularity and high standing in this specific location? The taste of New Orleans' cuisine is simply called *creole*. But what does *creole* stand for?

Is it just a recent phenomenon invented by the tourist industry? Looking back in history, it becomes very quickly apparent that the special role food plays in New Orleans is by no means a recent phenomenon. The reasons lie way back in the city's history. A close look will therefore be taken at historical developments. Of special interest are the precolonial, colonial, slavery and immigration periods. This historical perspective recounts how different ethnic groups formed new regional eating traditions.

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[2] Citations and quotations follow the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers 6th edition. Misspellings and outdated styling in quotations are left in original form.

As with other colonies, in New Orleans it was the pressures of survival during colonial times that brought about changes within the old known social settings. In this respect, the development of food exchange in the lower Mississippi Valley and the development of markets are of great interest. Different cultures met in New Orleans and in the struggle for survival reached new understandings with each other and mixed. Women were confronted with new roles. In this way, many women of different backgrounds came into key positions.

Chapter 5 addresses culinary creativity in New Orleans and deals with food as a larger process possessing a logic and dynamic of its own. Referring to the term *creolization*, it will be shown how new foods and cooking styles were incorporated into ethnic cooking traditions. *Creolization* is understood here as a process that works in two ways, newcomers managed to adapt their food to the new cultural environment and, at the same time, managed to retain their special distinctiveness.

Regarding tradition, however, *creole* cooking was never as traditional as it was pragmatic and creative. Tradition in this context should not be confused with fine food. The taste of the past only continues to tingle the tongue like a hot spice and focuses not so much on the way things were, but rather the way they are.

There is a general history that influences states and generations on a broad scale. There also exists, however, a regional history that influences people in a very small area. The overall view is necessary but the specific view will reveal the deepest insights. Different factors came together in New Orleans and gave rise to the *creole* food culture. Certainly, one of these happenings was the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition of 1885, an event that

significantly helped make New Orleans' residents aware of their own special culture.

Chapter 5 therefore focuses on the period around the turn of the nineteenth century and especially from 1885 onward. This unsuccessful exposition would not normally be worth mentioning (unless one was studying abject failure) if it had not had the important side effect of awakening cultural awareness in New Orleanians.

When the local citizenry realized that it was profitable to publicly display items of their culture that they had always taken for granted, and that visitors received this appreciatively, they became aware of their own unique and rich culture. Visitors more often commented on how different New Orleans' culture was from the rest of America then on the exposition itself. Indeed, the effect this had on the city seems to be the most important legacy of the exposition.

This growing cultural awareness manifested itself in culinary terms as well. Also appearing in 1885 were the first two cookbooks about *creole* cooking, La Cuisine Creole and Creole Cookery. The Daily Picayune started a column, Women's World and Work. This column featured, among other topics, recipes, menu suggestions and different articles about food. Both cookbooks and the newspaper articles provided additional valuable sources of information for this thesis.

Most Americans enjoyed a comparatively high standard of living after the turn of the century. The middle class was growing and with it new needs arose. Women's World and Work reflected a new approach towards the American middle-class housewife. Journalists in New Orleans, including Catherine Cole and Dorothy Dix, stimulated interest in food as a new and interesting topic. Other authors took this development in culinary journalism to a new level of critical

evaluation in the sixties. All this ushered in a new era of celebration and awareness of food culture and contributed further to the *creolization* of food in New Orleans.

Standardization, the turning point at which an oral tradition is transformed into a cultural art form valid outside of just one kitchen and beyond just one generation, is also explored in Chapter 5. It will be demonstrated that restaurants played an important role in this respect in their effort to attain constant quality and long-range performance and how cookbooks paralleled this approach by, first, committing to institutional memory old recipes and then by making them "scientific" by providing exact, standard measurements.

The preparation of food in New Orleans, like everywhere else, is mainly done by women in private households – yet men in the function of chefs in restaurants are awarded most of the fame associated with food preparation. New Orleans is no exception. Still there were some women who became cooking professionals and who gained significant fame by adding to the *creolization* of food culture in New Orleans. Women such as Corinne Dunbar and Madame Begué to name a few will be referred to in Chapter 5.

Such gender questions are, however, just of secondary interest. The transformations from ethnic cooking to regional cooking, from home cooking to restaurant cooking are of much greater significance. This thesis, however, does not treat the encounter of cultures as a simple merging or mixing of different cultures but as a creative process going two ways. When opening towards another culture, each culture tries to retain its own unity and gains a better understanding of its values. At the same time, both cultures mutually enrich each other. As the various ethnic and cultural communities were seldom equally

strong, changes happened. This *creolization* process resulted in the emergence of something new.

Creolization, further, is not understood as an automated process individuals are subordinated to. On the contrary, as a process it provides opportunities for individuals. Individuals rarely develop ideas in the face of strong resistance. They only take the chance to create something new when by need or accident a certain amount of freedom and opportunity is given. *Creolization* provided such opportunities in and around New Orleans and many individuals, as this thesis will show, took the chance.

New Orleans' society – since early colonial times - was different than the rest of the United States. Individuals by need and opportunity took certain chances. They helped create a food culture that is unique and famous today. The necessity of crossing one's own cultural bonds as well as the awareness of one's own traditions both formed strong regional traditions. Based on these traditions a metropolitan cuisine evolved that gained fame through its restaurants and has a worldwide reputation today.

Different factors, in different ways, provided new incentives to cooking: the colonial time caused specific demographic, economic and political conditions; the various ethnicities introduced their own cooking styles; products from the perennial garden around New Orleans and the proximity to the sea and rivers and trade products from the adjacent Caribbean and American mainland enlarged the variety; chefs became the creators of high cuisine and a new cultural awareness starting with the World Exposition of 1885 spurred an interest in food. This thesis will show how these influences added to and even more created the *creolization* process.

Chapter 2. What is culture?

A theoretical discussion of ‟culture″ in general must be provided, before a discussion of the *creolization* or food in New Orleans can take place.

2.1 Universalistic and Particularistic Concepts of Culture

There are countless definitions for the term ‟culture.″ One of the founding fathers of American anthropology, Alfred Kroeber, and Kluckhohn, another anthropologist, counted 150 different definitions in their 1952 study. Wikipedia tells us that culture comes from the Latin ‟cultura″ stemming from ‟colere″, which has the connotation of to "cultivate," to ‟plant.″ Culture thus refers to man′s creativity to mediate between nature and nurture (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 2). In general, the term ‟culture″ refers to the product of an individual, a group or society, which also includes that different individuals or societies may have different cultures. It is comprised of values, norms, institutions and artifacts.

A universalistic definition of culture stemming from William James Durant in Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit says:

> Kultur ist soziale Ordnung, welche schöpferische Tätigkeiten begünstigt. Vier Elemente setzen sie zusammen: Wirtschaftliche Vorsorge, politische Organisation, moralische Traditionen und das Streben nach Wissenschaft und Kunst. Sie beginnt, wo Chaos und Unsicherheit enden. Neugier und Erfindungsgeist werden frei, wenn die Angst besiegt ist, und der Mensch schreitet aus natürlichem Antrieb dem Verständnis und der Verschönerung des Lebens entgegen. (Wikipedia)

Allthough the close connection between culture and nature is apparent, scholars disagree whether culture dominates or cultivates nature. Professor Ostendorf disscussed this distinction more precisely in Länderbericht USA in 1992:

> Der umfassendste Sinn des Wortes Kultur bezeichnet die fortlaufende Auseinandersetzung des Menschen mit der Natur, also die Pflege oder Beherrschung sowohl der eigenen als auch der dem Menschen äußerlichen Natur. Damit wäre der politische Gehalt der Kultur definiert. Ebenso beinhaltet das Wort aber auch die aus der Bearbeitung beider entstandenen und hinterlassenen, objektiven „kulturellen Errungenschaften" (bisweilen im deutschen Sprachgebrauch als „Zivilisation" von der Kultur unterschieden), die - verdinglicht und zur Norm geworden – Handlungsfreiraum und die politische Dynamik der Kultur im ersten Sinne einschränken. (1992, 1)

The identification of "culture" with "civilization" developed in Europe during the eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. It reflects inequalities within European societies and between European powers and their colonies around the world. This view, however, contrasts culture to "nature." Culture in this sense is something that relates to elite activities. People who participate in such activities have a so called "high culture." It divides society into an elite with "high culture" and a mass with just "popular culture." It also implies that some people or societies are more cultivated – have more culture than others. Societies who lack such a form of high culture are regarded as uncivilized. Civilized societies have control over nature and uncivilized societies are barbaric or close to nature.[3]

Ostendorf stresses that this notion of culture was logical for Germany because of its history. Since there never has been a real revolution of the bourgeoisie in Germany, the middle class, deprived of political power, had to find other means of control. He sets America in contrast to this, stating that the United States of America was the first country that had a revolution of that kind at all. Whereas in Germany the politically isolated bourgeoisie was regarded to be the carrier of

[3] Also see Norbert Elias' book the Civilizing Process, who shows very well how the bourgeoisie in Europe civilized its own culture.

"high culture" in America no such courtly world existed. The availability of nature on this new continent that could be dominated became important for the understanding of culture in America. The underlying ideal was republicanism with such keywords as "virtue", "utility", "improvement", "economy", "plain" and "popular".[4] Ostendorf comments:

> Da dieser Neubeginn eines idealen Amerika keine institutionellen, keine feudalen und nur schwache vorindustrielle, handwerklich-ständische Residuen berücksichtigen mußte, konnten die Hoffnungen, die man in diesen Neubeginn setzte, sich ungehemmt entfalten. (6)

Republicanism became the unifying founding mythology and ideology. This idealistic approach was challenged, however, from the very beginning by the realities of American history itself. First Indians and slaves and later on the massive number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, with their strangeness of cultural and religious practices, were not considered fit for the republican ideal and brought about fear of foreign infiltration.

Cultural patterns in the United States were thus deeply influenced by the general development of the society as a whole: In the early days of the United States there were three different approaches to immigration, each favored by one of the leading states:

> Pennsylvania sought immigrants who would be good citizens regardless of religious background; Massachusetts wanted as members only those who were religiously pure; and Virginia, with its increasing reliance on a plantation economy, wanted workers as cheaply as it could get them, without necessarily welcoming them to membership in the community. (Fuchs 8)

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[4] From Raymond Williams in his book Keywords (1976) in Ostendorf "Amerikanische Kultur und Kulturkritik" in Länderbericht USA.

All three approaches were directed at whites only, at least in the beginning. It was not until later that Virginia started to look for black slaves instead of white indentured workers. But the Virginia way did not prove to be the strongest model. Instead, "the Pennsylvania idea would become the basis for United States immigration and naturalization policy for white Europeans after the founding of the republic" (8).

Religious differences were overcome by the ideology of republicanism that also served partially as a kind of religion itself - thus uniting adherents of quite different religious beliefs. Liberty was "not only the bond of union," but also "the confession, the religion, the life of Americans" (Grund, 1837, p.107f).[5]

However, equality and liberty were certainly not attributed to everybody but only to a certain exclusive group of people, i.e. the whites, and it took centuries to overcome this exclusion of major parts of the population from the benefits. Even the cultural heritage of those with proper racial background was endangered by the American approach to assimilation.

Ultimately, the United States of America favored a melting pot policy - an idea advanced by Hector St. John Crèvecoeur and developed further by Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James and Israel Zangwill (Ostendorf, *Multikulturelle* 9). In this traditional view all immigrant cultures are mixed and amalgamated without state intervention. Hughes puts it:

> the American culture portrays an extremely low tolerance level for differences and pluralisms. It is therefore difficult to perceive the true meaning of 'melting pot' since the American melting pot is not fluid. Instead of blending cultures it superimposes the Euro-white-American cultures over other non-Euro-white cultures. (275)

[5] Quoted from Fuchs, 1995, p. 30.

The concept of the idealistic civic culture consists of some basic elements: political equality and personal freedom for everybody. Both are closely interwoven and are part of Anglo-Saxon Puritan ideas of what good citizens are like in terms of work and morals. None of them could exist alone, without the other. The civic culture emerged in practice while political analysts later started to realize its foundations:

> The civic culture was based essentially ... on three ideas widely held by the founders of the republic, the ideas that constituted the basis of what they called republicanism: first, that ordinary men and women can be trusted to govern themselves through their elected representatives, who are accountable to the people; second, that all who live in the political community are eligible to participate in public life as equals; and third, that individuals who comport themselves as good citizens of the civic culture are free to differ from each other in religion and in other aspects of their private lives. (Fuchs 5)

Civic culture was extended not only to the people already having established themselves as American citizens, but also offered opportunities for the newcomers as it granted equal rights to everybody despite cultural or individual differences. "The new immigrants entered a process of ethnic-Americanization through participation in the political system, and, in doing so, established even more clearly the American civic culture as a basis of American unity″ (6). Ostendorf

In shaping the multicultural society of America all those various cultures were supposed to enjoy the same rights and respects. Still, anything not matching the republican concept was regarded to be un-American. Difficulties developed, repeatedly with respect to social and religious practices and beliefs, as Amy Gutmann points out:

> We encounter problems, however, once we look into the *content* of the various valued cultures. Should a liberal democratic society respect those cultures whose attitudes of ethnic or racial superiority, for example, are antagonistic to other cultures? If so, how can respect for a culture of ethnic or racial superiority be reconciled with the commitment to treating all people as equals?" (5)

From the beginning the evolving civic culture strongly opposed any normative or "high culture." At the same time it welcomed rational and technical ideas. This relation of dominance between nature and culture in America also served as a fertile ground for Herbert Spencers' theory of social Darwinism. His ideas provided a rescue anchor for the continuation of a presupposed leading role of white Anglo-Saxons. The anthropologist Franz Boas was among the first to fight such racist approaches and he was the one to ask for a clear division between anthropological and biological causes. Among his students was Margaret Mead, a well known food-related functionalist, who will be referred to later.

2.2 Materialist vs. Mentalist Concepts of Culture

The term "culture" gained new importance for anthropologists in the late nineteenth century in their approach to distinguish different societies. In general they differed between the material culture and the symbolic culture. Whereas archaeologists mainly focused on the material culture, anthropologists focused on the symbolic culture. Over time anthropologists changed their focus from how human-made products are used within a society to a look at social interaction that deals with the material culture as well as the symbolic culture.

This reflected the radical transformation process within American society from 1870 onward. The once pre-industrial and populist state of farmers was

transformed into an industrial and consumerist mass society. It was transformed from a mainly white Anglo-Saxon society to a multiethnic and pluralistic one. Especially the massive number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, and Industrialization changed American culture and "Europeanised" it. This way the strong American sense of opposing normative European traditions and holding on to their American ideological background of a civic culture was challenged by the newcomers.

The problem resulting from this was that people were assumed to come to the United States just to stay and work, and that the only thing that needed to be understood was the relationship between the immigrants and their new country. What the newcomers brought along in their package, however, was the culture of their old home. The American psychologist Harry Triandis explains that people always assume that their particular world view and how they judge and deal with people is basically right. The otherness, therefore mostly is considered as wrong or primitive at first contact. Immigrants therefore tried to stick to their learned culture in order to give them a minimum of security. This was a major hindrance to the process of forming American civic culture.

In addition to these influences, during the first half of the twentieth century the individual was more and more challenged by the developing new culture of consumerism. As one result of this development conformity was regarded more highly than individualism. It became necessary to fit into the boundaries of what was considered American. Things were either pro-American or anti-American. This new American Creed even went as far as to openly oppress those who did not conform as the McCarthy era showed.

In the fifties this approach changed towards a more consensus orientated culture, which was for one thing the result of a new affluence of the masses. The

new consensus led to a reduction of any kind of pluralism. Questions about identity caused a New Left to criticize the authority of the consensus culture. The discovery of one's own body, sexuality and desires became part of the new cultural agenda and finally found its critical stage in the sixties. In general, scholars changed their focus from political and economic to social science.

The symbolic view of culture became the legacy of the 70s. Clifford Geertz, Pierre Bourdieu, Dell Hymes and Roland Barth are just some scholars to mention, who followed this new approach. Members of a culture were supposed to rely on common symbols that gave meaning to them. They were meant to rely on these symbols to frame their thoughts in order to make culture readable and reproduceable. The individual was supposed to fill these symbols with personal significance. In addition, a new interest in any kind of European tradition influenced American culture.

The Swedish social scientist Ulf Hannerz stressed in the 80s that a closer look must be taken at culture in order to understand people's behavior and the ways they make sense to themselves and to one another. He criticized the cultural concepts that still had their roots in nineteenth-century European nationalism, with its ideological emphasis on the distinctiveness, integrity and purity of national cultures. With respect to anthropology this had led to a view that cultures, like species of animals or plants, seemed well-bounded and timeless entities (7). Hannerz also pointed out that this change of view was necessary in order to realize that ideas people work with, the things they enjoy or despise, the language they speak, do not necessarily originate where they are found (9). This realization makes the very notion of national cultures increasingly dubious, something like an ideological construct (10).

The postmodernism of the eighties led to a stronger focus on gender, class and race. A contemplation of old American traditions was reflected in political and cultural issues. The American anthropologist Eric Wolf criticized previous cultural studies in his book Europe and the People without History with respect to:

> while some anthropologist ... narrow their focus to the ever more intensive study of the single case, others hope to turn anthropology into a science by embarking on the statistical cross-cultural comparison of coded features drawn from large samples of ethnographically known cases. (Wolf 17)

He criticized the approach of many scholars who try to find rigid patterns in concepts such as "culture" or "society". He stated that in such concepts the individual is just part of a bigger system it belongs to. Within such systems people are supposed to act according to fixed rules in their daily lives and in relation to other people (Wolf 7-19).

Concepts like "culture" and "society" are, however, no single entities but processes that are affected by outside influences and that change throughout history. This view states that "culture" and "society" cannot be a matching pair – there is no congruence. The interaction between "culture" and "society" is much more dynamic (Mintz, Culture 508-512). To better understand this dynamic interaction Mintz defines both concepts separately:

> By culture I mean the historically developed forms through which the members of a given culture relate to each other; by society I mean the element of action, of human maneuver within the field provided by cultural forms, human maneuver which aims either at preserving a given balance of life chances and life risks or at changing it. (Mintz, Culture 505)

Such a concept of culture can be derived from Latour's ethnographic study of biological science. He differentiates science in a dualistic view as ready-made-science on the one hand and science-in-action on the other. According to Latour this means that when biologists or technicians use well-known and properly working tools and publish non-problematic scientific statements - called 'black boxes' – science may be considered ready-made-science that produces nothing really new. On the other hand, when scientists work with new or non-reliable tools and create risky scientific statements far beyond the currently known facts, one may call this science-in-action. Latour explains this matter by using the Greek metaphor of the double-faced Janus. Science often has two faces expressing opposite things: the ready-made-science face may claim, "Once the machine works people will be convinced" while the science-in-action face might say, "The machine will work when all the relevant people are convinced" (10).

Similarly, culture can be viewed in two ways: on the one hand as 'ready-made' with well-known, established and commonly recognized events that block the communication and relations between certain people on a systematic basis, and on the other hand as a culture 'in-action'.

Although the ready-made-culture approach can be useful in interpreting misunderstandings, it alone does not necessarily provide insight into the many fixed historical cultural boundaries, or how they might be overcome. These boundaries between groups of people have a negative influence such as not enabling group solidarity along cultural distinctions[6] or even causing cultural feuds and warfare. At best the ready-made-culture approach can lead to cultural distancing – when cultures are mutually respected – or at worst to cultural wars

[6] Sherif explained this conflict between groups with "The Robbers Cave Experiment".

(what Hargreaves warns of) – when one culture tries to subdue or eliminate the other culture or cultures.

Cultures therefore must be understood more as collective systems of meaning that belong primarily to social relationships and to networks of such relationships. Only indirectly, and without logical necessity, do they belong to territories. Mintz carries that thought even further and writes "traditions are not so much sedimented and sacralized over time, as invented as needed" and citing Anderson he even calls a "nation an imagined before realized community, deriving its pristine concreteness from a shared vision that blends wish and fact (Anderson 1991)" (2003, p. 19).

All these different approaches led to fragmentation among scholars. A fairly recent field is the one of cross-cultural communication. In an effort to understand one's own culture as well as that of others cultures the relatively unrelated areas of cultural anthropology and areas of communication are related. Its approach is to understand how different people communicate with each other in order to support management and marketing efforts on a global scale.

The German social-psychologist Alexander Thomas gives a quite useful definition of how culture is understood by the field of intercultural communication. Thomas calls culture a universal phenomenon. He states that all people live within a certain culture and are continuously constructing the culture they are living in. Culture provides a structure for their field of action that is the whole range of material things to institutions, ideas and values. He calls culture a guideline code ("Orientierungssystem") for a nation, society, organization or group. This code embraces symbols such as language, food, clothes, mimic, gesture, and so on and gets passed on from generation to generation within the specific group. It defines for all members of the group,

where they belong and at the same time enables them to relate to their surrounding world in their own individual way. Culture thus influences how members of a certain society reflect on their surroundings, what they think and how they act. Each particular guideline code simultaneously provides opportunities for individual action and gives rules and limitations to what is appropriate (22).

This last thought that individuals have the freedom of taking their own actions is most important in Thomas' definition, together with the term 'guideline code'. People in general like to have guidelines in order to find their way around in this complex world. The definition of culture as guideline code provides a useful tool for people to get sufficient orientation. What is here called culture enables people to give a meaning to their surrounding world of material and living things. The human need to apply meaning to something is an unconscious act. It is nothing arbitrary, but a process that follows the exact rules culture gives them. This we call the socializing process. Each individual goes through a socializing process from earliest childhood on. By doing so, certain tools (methods, rules, values, ...) are gained that help them as individuals to find orientation in the world. These tools are useful in two ways, to adapt to the social environment and to change existing things. Any individual therefore can do both, adapt and innovate.

These theories have been criticized for being based on anthropological culture concepts from the nineteenth century, emphasizing culture based on differences. The relationship between the local and imported culture is, however, not one of competition. According to one's own code there is a certain way to take in new information. Each individual has the knowledge of adaptation. This is a common concept. Only when it occurs outside the normal context is it

actually noticed. Kroeber noted long ago that ‟as soon as a culture has accepted a new item, it tends to lose interest in (its) foreignness of origin″ (257-258).

The food scientist Thelma Barer-Stein makes this double sidedness of culture clearer when she defines culture as mainly habitual, since "cultural habits help us to retain that identity, solidity, and security that is so important to each human being″ (14). But while these habits might seem quite long lasting and some may even accompany us through our whole life, they are still subject to change because culture is not only given by the group we are born into but also created anew every moment we interact with other members of society. She notes the important difference:

> Perhaps an adequate summary would be that unlike race, which is inherited, culture seems to represent the total of all aspects of the patterns of daily life that are learned by an individual and determinedly affects that person's behavior, providing a sense of order, security, and identity and yet paradoxically is in a state of continuous change. (14)

There is constant interaction between all elements of culture and its sub-cultures, so that culture cannot be perceived as something fixed and static:

> Culture is dynamic; it is always in a process of change because there are always those within each cultural group who strive for change and those who strive for the status quo. The challenges, misunderstandings, and dilemmas between generations are evidence of this dynamism. (14)

Therefore "culture is not static; it preserves traditions but also builds in mechanisms for change″ (Fieldhouse 2).

2.3 Creolization of Culture

The colonization of the New World brought thousands of men and women of different origins and backgrounds into contact. Newcomers just like natives had to adapt to the specific economic circumstances and the changes within it. In addition, the newcomers, no matter whether they arrived as slaves or freeman, were all forced to adjust not only to an unfamiliar environment but also to people with totally different cultural backgrounds. Within the constraints of the peculiar circumstances in which they found themselves - blacks, whites and natives had to learn to live with each other, no matter how much they exploited or resented each other. How they chose to interact, how they preserved parts of their own cultures, how much they took from other cultures are questions that will be investigated in this paper. A new culture was formed depending on the decisions they made. This process is called *creolization* and it affected all immigrants and natives alike.

The cultural debate, therefore, is about the loss of integrity in national cultures; and about the interrelatedness of cultures, about a new cultural diversity that was created within the national boundaries of the United States as natives joined migrants and immigrants and slaves. For this discussion I would like to assume Ulf Hannerz′ suggestion that the concepts of ″creole culture″ and ″creolization″ give a better understanding of what happens when cultures meet (11).

Although these terms have a long and complicated history, *creole* and *creolization* give the right direction. The word *creole* has its origin in the merging of distinct populations such as descendants of migrants settling in new land. *Creole,* according to Tregle, was designed as the name for the progeny of the native population and the conquistadors by the Spanish. But it still had different

meanings in varying historical contexts, as "creole has meant a variety of things to a variety of different societies" (137).

A historical consideration of the development of the meaning of *creole* is a must. It is generally agreed that *creole* is either a corruption of the Spanish word ″criadillo″, the diminutive of ″criado″ (meaning 'brought up, reared, produced, bred, domestic'′) or the verb ″crier″ (meaning 'to create'). This clearly shows the close connection between nature, culture and *creole*. Since the term was first used in the context of Spanish and Portuguese colonization, it is primarily linked to differences between the Old and the New World experiences (Ostendorf, 1994, p. 2). In this sense, the term represents a concept that, according to Daniel Crowley′s definition, is "applicable ... in any area where a culture neither aboriginal nor alien but a mixture of the two, with retentions on both sides and ample borrowing from other outside sources is in the process of becoming dominant″ (74). As Ostendorf summarizes the sources, *creole* always means a kind of colored, colonial or corrupted person, a *creole* being somebody created (Ostendorf, 1997, p. 2).

Hall points to some different origins of this term:

> It derives from the Portuguese word crioulo, meaning a slave of African descent born in the New World. Thereafter, it was extended to include Europeans born in the New World, now the only meaning of the word in Portugal. In Spanish and French colonies, including eighteenth century Louisiana, the term creole was used to distinguish American-born from African-born slaves. (60)

Deutsch puts the meaning of the term differently, covering only French and Spanish born in the colonies (39). When Louisiana became Spanish in 1763 the term first appeared there. Soon the usage was extended to other classes of the

American born population and was carried with pride. "The Latin American elite born in the Americas was called the creole elite" (Hall 60).

So the original meaning was altered "as the creole elite of Latin America redefined the word creole to mean people of exclusively European descent born in the Americas" (60). The new usage of the term emerged from the struggle for white superiority in the post-war years. Under no circumstances did white *creoles* want to be accused of having any African blood (Tregle 152). The term *creole* actually originated and always stayed connected closely to concepts of the Old and the New World, of imperialism and racism (Ostendorf, 1997, p. 3).

For this study, the specific content of the Louisianan *creole* culture is of special interest. In colonial times, the term *creole* included anyone, save Indian, born in Louisiana. There was also a feeling of identity between the native and the French population as both of them now had to face the Spanish rule bringing more economic restrictions and less freedom (Ostendorf, 1997, p. 7f). Still, the *creole* identity became important only after Louisiana itself was becoming part of the United States of America, which will be discussed in chapter 5.1 "The Formation of Creole Identities after the Louisiana Purchase".

Before the middle of the twentieth century historians seldom described the colonization of North America in terms of cultural interaction. Indians, blacks, and poor white settlers rarely played a significant role. The most prominent early works on the transfer of Old World cultures were written not by historians but by anthropologists. In 1938 Melville Herskovits wrote a compendium of hundreds of American practices having African heritage to explain the origins of African American culture. In his notable work, Herskovits provided a general overview of the problem of acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation generally is understood as a one-way transfer and it is mainly understood in the

way that Indians or Africans acculturated to Europeans and not the other way around, whereas assimilation refers to the adoption of a different culture by an individual or group (Buisseret 3f).

During the 1960s race relations in colonial America became an important topic. It became apparent that history is not just made by white people. Many studies were written by anthropologists and historians like Mary Douglas, Peter Wood or Sidney Mintz. These scholars combined different disciplines, such as cultural anthropology and history. Peter Wood, for example, wrote about the richness of human interaction in the colonial period. Wood perceived intercultural relations as a process, in which no people, no matter how exploited they were, passively accepted cultural change. Culture in this sense was a

> continuing series of reciprocal relationships, involving borrowing and resistance, conflict and cooperation, modification and invention. A full understanding of the transfer and development of early American cultures, therefore, assumed a thorough knowledge of the specific historical contexts in which interaction occurred. (197)

This shows that a close analysis of specific historical contexts must be taken. Such a view directs attention precisely where it should be, upon individual men and women shaping their lives in response to changing social, political and environmental conditions. In this sense culture can be understood as what it is, namely a creative process.

In the 1970s Sidney Mintz and Richard Price constructed another important framework to leave the shortcomings of "acculturation" and "assimilation" models behind. In their effort to analyze the African heritage that survived the middle passage and slavery, they argued that no group "can transfer its way of

life and the accompanying beliefs and values intact from one locale to another" (1).

It still appears, however, that these works have several weaknesses. First, some were concerned with the experience of a single racial group and played little attention to relations among colonial peoples of different color. Second, the story of race relations tended to be static, as if early Americans were caught up in unchanging social structures. Third, studies of race relations stressed conflict. Other more subtle forms of human interaction were neglected. And last, no attention was given to individuals, since historians concentrated on questions of status or group identification and neglected to ask how specific individuals shaped their own lives in response to specific, often unique environmental and demographic conditions.

David Buisseret addressed these shortcomings. He argued that the different forms of the word *creole* and *creolization* have "in common the idea of describing something that is born or developed in the New World, and this is at the heart of the concept of creolization. It describes that 'syncretic expression' in which new cultural forms came to life in the New World" (6). He asked for a *creolization* model that takes all of the involved groups into account, not just the newcomers and natives, but also the resident creoles, who have played a powerful role in the *creolization* process. He further stresses the importance of the amount of *creolization* that took place prior to first contact in the New World. Therefore, the situation in which immigrants arrived played a role: how big was their number and how coherent was their group? Lastly, he stresses the important influence that environment and economies have on the *creolization* process which need to be taken into consideration as well: how was the

economic and political situation in the arrival country? Was there a material abundance to live on, a metropolis able to support the newcomers? (7f).

Close attention to this last argument was also given by Daniel Usner in his book Indian, Settlers and Slaves, which described clearly the necessity of colonists trading with Indians due to severe food supply shortages. In his recent work "The Facility Offered by the Country" he illustrates the creolization of agricultural practices of people in their daily struggle for survival. Chapter 4.2 "Food Exchange in the Lower Mississippi Valley" will pay closer attention to his arguments.

Another helpful source for a better understanding of the process of *creolization* is by Susan Ball. Ball defines three different stages according to which *creolization* takes place. She named them "reduction, configuration, and exchange". Buissert comments that especially the idea of reduction is most notable. Ball argues that Africans and Europeans who came to the New World must have left some of their cultural baggage behind. The phase of configuration is when elements are reorganized in order to meet the needs of the colonial or contact situation. Exchange, she calls the phase in which the actual process of *creolization* takes place. (14)

In recent times the term *creole* was also applied by linguists. The way it is used by them as a metaphor actually aids in understanding certain cultural processes. Hannerz compares *creole* cultures with *creole* languages and concludes that both are "center-periphery relations" (12). The *creolization* process, he says is, open ended; there is no single final outcome to it. The comparison to language makes this clearer. There might be a standard metropolitan form of a specific language together with a diversity of language forms such as dialects in the surroundings. The metropolitan language develops

by drawing influences from the periphery. Sometimes the metropolitan form is so successful in its penetration that the periphery is *decreolized*. He explains this process:

> ...creole cultures like creole languages are those which draw in some way on two or more historical sources, often originally widely different. They have had some time to develop and integrate, and to become elaborate and pervasive. People can be formed from birth by these systems of meaning and can largely live their lives in contexts shaped by them. There is, in the creolist understanding of society and the world, that sense of a continuous spectrum of interacting forms, in which the various contributing sources of culture are differentially visible and active. In relation to this, there is a built-in political economy of culture, as social power and material resources are matched with the spectrum of cultural forms. (12)

According to this all cultures we encounter today can be understood as outcomes of *creolized* cultures that had developed in a periphery looking backward to where they originated from.

Richard Cullen Rath criticizes this analogy. He says that culture is not like language, but that they are integral to one another. While depending on each other, they both aid individuals in making sense to their worlds. For a better understanding he states that:

> Culture is not a meaning-loaded underlying structure; nor is it some infinite corpus of expressions. It is the way between them. This idea of culture seems to be a profoundly individualistic or personal definition, and in some ways is. ... This definition of culture as ways of making sense has three advantages. First, it places culture in its proper relation to both language and society. Second, variety and conflict no longer have to be explained away, because culture does not exist outside the people constructing it. Third, authenticity and essentialism cease to be issues, because no claims are made about culture as a normative object. (101)

Models of *creolization* may be better understood with the latter definition. Further, Cullen Rath acknowledges a universal structure at work on the deeper levels of culture and responsible for creolized outcomes in a culture-contact situation.

The *creolization* process discussed herein has been complicated by the fact that there were numerous cultures involved, such as African, Indian, French, Spanish, Italian, German, etc., and because interaction occurred in a changing set of political frameworks, a particular ecology as well as a particular and changing economy in Louisiana. The outcome is neither an organization of stable diversity, nor a culture drifting toward homogeneity in form of an all-American culture. It is an organized diversity of cultures together with a continued fluidity of culture along the *creolizing* continuum, as Hannerz puts it.

It is important to understand that the cultural flow is not strictly one way. The *creolization* process is not a mere passive acceptance of the cultural guideline of one to the other, but it involves an active, creative response of individuals. Besides the initial contact, the process continues to be tracked far beyond and powerfully affects present day culture in America. Old subcultures keep reinventing themselves and new subcultures are being born. Any guideline code gets *creolized* continuously by new cultures it encounters and in turn *creolizes* these new cultures. This constant openness to impulses from outside cultures created the particular culture in New Orleans. Without the *creolization* process it would have stagnated at a mediocre level.

This view clearly shows that a discussion of food in New Orleans cannot be the simple analysis of an isolated cultural entity of a certain society, but that it is a research of culture as a dynamic and creative process. New Orleans offered a perfect setting for such a process since many people of different nations met and

mingled here in a new environment and activated a process that is best defined as *creolization*. Before a close look at New Orleans and *creolization* can be taken a better understanding of food and culture must be provided, since these discussions and developments of what culture is about were reflected in the discussions about food culture as well.

Chapter 3. Culture and Food

Despite the obvious importance of food within culture, scientific interest has been rather limited when compared to other cultural elements because for many academics "there remains a lingering sense that the field of food studies is lacking in intellectual rigor" (Inness 5). Many studies have shown that food is not just an element of culture, it is much more, it is a key to culture, since food is much more than just calories and vitamins presented in one form or the other.

It is obvious that food habits are integral parts of culture and its central ideas. Food has such a strong standing within each culture that it sometimes is even taken to characterize a culture. It might lead us to remember our own heritage, when we encounter it. There is no cultural group and no individual for whom at least one specific food - the memory, taste, or smell of which - does not evoke loving nostalgia. "Eating is symbolically associated with the most deeply felt human experiences, and thus expresses things that are sometimes difficult to articulate in everyday language" (Farb/Armelagos 111). As Jean Soler points out, one can consider cooking as "a language through which a society expresses itself" (55).

3.1 Materialist and Mentalist Approaches

Culture and food have a symbiotic relationship. According to Claude Levi-Strauss, cooking is something universally done by all people, in which nature is transformed into culture. This gives evidence of the close relation between culture, food and nature. Through analysis of food and eating systems one can gain information about how a culture understands some of the basic categories of its world. The selection of food and its preparation provides profound insights

into the development of culture. This was exploited for anthropologic and general social studies.

The classical anthropological approach tried to explain the production and preparation of food and its relation to rites and myths, the ceremonies and the presentations of foods as a key to the underlying culture. Anthropologists mainly focused on so-called primitive nations. So in the Americas they concentrated on Native American societies.

It was military and national security calculations that sparked the first studies on food habits in general in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States. "Because of the impending threat of war the government was interested in how food habits could be changed if rationing became necessary to deal with possible food shortages" (Fieldhouse 17).

Since then there have been many influences over the years on the study of food. The following list is merely a sample of some trends. Although some historical studies of food are either antiquarian or are intended to illuminate a time-specific setting, many scholars have used food as an evolutionary marker of change over long periods, with the aim of making generalizations about socio-economic behavior.

At first sight, food seems to be a quite simple matter, something material, a substance comprised of various similar impersonal and material components (Meigs 104). The basics of food consumption seem to be quite universal and not culturally dependent at all. Sanjur points out: "All human beings require the same nutrients to meet their biological needs, yet the foods that supply these nutrients are as different as the environments in which people exist" (xiii).

Tannahill provides a historical ecological perspective, deriving different food habits from different environments. He writes "In tropical countries perspiration

evaporating from the skin helped to cool the body; strong spices encouraged that perspiration and at the same time stimulated a thirst for the liquid necessary to replace it" (363). If this was a universal truth, it must be questioned why many East Africans, who use spices in huge quantities quite uncommon to Western people, satisfy their thirst with an equally well-spiced tea boiled up with milk.

Fieldhouse rejects such an ecological approach, "Materialist approaches which view food habits as being determined by the environment have been largely abandoned, as they treat humans as passive creatures taking whatever food is available" (17). He asks for a mixed eco-cultural approach which seems to him more appropriate to diet as each subject consists of both, material and mental factors. It is the unique combination of these two powers that shape each individual's habits out of the various possible food choices offered by cultural and economical contexts.

Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo identify a 'developmentalist' food literature in The Sociology of Food. In their view this includes some of the writings of Marvin Harris, Stephen Menell himself, and others such as Sidney Mintz and Jack Goody. The orientation here is towards the explanation of socially and geographically varied patterns of food consumption in terms of their historical evolution in particular contexts of economy and the exercise of power. Thus food avoidances and preferences are not random and beyond rational explanation, but can be elicited from a series of historical events that have left their trace in present-day diets. Mennell's influential book is discussed critically by Warde in Consumption, Food and Taste, who sees it as an extension of Norbert Elias' work on the civilizing process. Mintz in Sweetness and Power, on the other hand, works within the framework of world system theory, a materialist approach to

the study of change. He has looked at the changing role of particular commodities over long periods of time such as sugar.

During the twentieth century, many sociologists and anthropologists took an interest in food, from the functionalists to the structuralists. Among the functionalists were empiricists who described food habits in terms of the kind of customary and ritualized behavior (Lupton 1996). They identified certain values and norms in eating patterns that are symbolic of broader structures in society as a whole. They argued that what may appear to be strange food customs to outsiders may in fact have a function that helps to bind society together (Goody 1982).

In this sense religion also directly influences eating habits and the usage of certain foodstuffs as can be seen from the breakfast cereals that initially "were developed in the United States to meet the needs of vegetarian groups like the Seventh day Adventists" (Goody 346). The Indian protection of the cow, the special rules of Orthodox Jews (Gabaccia 45) and the Islam rejection of the pig, which narrowed the impact of Islam on the people of many countries[7], are further examples.

Functionalism emphasizes the utilitarian nature of food and gives priority to its physical qualities. This whole approach has been criticized for analyzing patterns and processes within a static framework, and allowing little room for the explanation or even recognition of the importance of origins, change and conflict. It has also been attacked for the claim that we can identify the functional needs of a social system from its customs and institutional structures. Much of the early food-related functionalist work was undertaken by social anthropologists,

[7] "Wherever Islam has penetrated to regions in which pig rising was a mainstay of the traditional farming systems, it has failed to win over substantial portions of the population" (Harris 78).

amongst whom two prominent were writers such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead.

Burnett and Sanjur in particular have shown the central role of food in the study of social history. They include material considerations of wealth and the technology of production and the changing nature of consumption by identifying the various stages in the evolution of the mass market. Sanjur emphasizes that food is a unifying cultural element − a universal standard. It "is a fundamental principle for the nutrition worker to recognize - that in spite of the endless diversity of the characteristics that differentiate human beings, we are still more similar than we are different" (xiv).

By comparison, structuralism seeks broader and deeper causes and meanings of food habits, especially how taste is culturally shaped. Flavor, texture, nutritional qualities and other biological properties are underplayed in favour of social context. In particular, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1983) analyzed the universality of oppositional meanings of food such as raw, cooked and rotten (he called it the "culinary triangle"). Lévi-Strauss, however, has been criticized for generating universal structures and generalizations from the myths of tribal peoples, and for failing satisfactorily to elucidate the foodways of advanced societies.[8]

Roland Barthes is one of the most insightful of the structuralists. He stated, "It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior" (21). Barthes interpreted popular food preferences and food in media such as advertising. For him, food was central to various aspects of

[8] In his book The Savage Mind from1962 he tried to describe characterisitc patterns of mythological thought.

life touching the body and the mind, all of which are susceptible to a unified method of enquiry, a psycho sociology.

Like Lévi-Strauss and Barthes, Mary Douglas a well-known anthropologist deciphers the "grammar" of meals, as if they were coded texts to be dismantled into their significant components, but she prefers a description based upon participant observation. She observed in her book Culture and Food, "The selective principles by which humans choose their dietary sources are not likely to be physiological but cultural" (75). Douglas has been called a structural functionalist because she draws upon elements of both approaches.

Since the 1970s, feminism has added a dimension to food studies that was previously sorely lacking. Feminist writers have analyzed the role of women within the household and their part played in food preparation tasks like Shapiro in Perfection Salad. They also addressed the relationship between food and body shape in the construction of female identity within a framework of patriarchal expectations.

Food, cooking and eating are an integral part of our culture affecting different fields of our social relationships, Barer-Stein explains:

> Without food we cannot survive. But food is much more than a tool of survival. Food is a symbol of hospitality, social status, and religious significance. What we select to eat, how we prepare it, serve it, and even how we eat it are all factors profoundly touched by our individual cultural inheritance. (14)

The sociological and cultural approaches applied a deeper meaning to food than just feeding the body; an important social factor is embedded in the sharing of food, which is not only the oldest social welfare system, but also "a part of good social relations" (Sobo 259). Offering or sharing food can create social groups and the refusal of food sharing can lead to a break-up of a group.

Thus, "exchanges of food are linked to bonds of social alliance and solidarity″ (Meigs 96). Food can be "used to develop social relationships of exchange and alliance between the various individuals and larger social units of the system″ (102). Also the food we prepare and offer for a certain person is a means of transporting much more than mere calories, but also a social meaning. Food therefore acts as a ‟vehicle for symbolizing and expressing ideas about the relationship between self and other″ (Murray Berzok 97).

Offering food to a guest, to a host or someone else is an opportunity to indicate the value of the person. While food will generally not be denied to any guest or by-passer, except to obvious outcasts, there are many ways to express not only honor but also indifference or even insult. This has been true for historic cultures as well as for today and it always follows the same principle according to the fact that "Systems of government may change, but the basic language of food does not: to offer too cheap or commonplace a meal is insulting; the opposite, ostentatious″ (Tannahill 80).

Bourdieu (1984) has proved to be one of the most significant theorists of relevance to food studies. Like other writers, he recognized the need to move away from reliance upon the production-orientated explanations of society, which had for so long dominated materialism, towards a framework that can accommodate considerations of consumption and lifestyle. He argued that members of a culture rely on symbols to frame their thoughts and expressions in intelligible terms. Symbols therefore make culture possible, reproducible and readable. Bordieu, however, sees class as important and interprets taste and the nature of consumption behavior as both expressions of class identity and as means of reproducing the class distinctions in society. For him food habits represent a naturalization of ideology.

The more cultural turn in social science has affected aspects of food studies in the 1990s. Barer-Stein and Gabaccia illustrate the various themes well in their books whose titles You Eat What You Are and We Are What We Eat both refer to the German dictum "man ist was man ißt." They concentrated mainly on the relationship between food geographies and consumption. For most social scientists with an interest in food, this cultural shift has meant the adoption of ethnographic methodologies of data collection.

Barer-Stein remarks on the cultural view on food that whatever change occurs, culture centers on a certain heritage that is providing its strength and psychological function. She says, "Cultural heritage offers to everyday life not only a sense of collective identity, but pride and dignity, purpose, and stability" (15f). In terms of food, this tells us that people very likely hold on to traditions. Food habits thus resist change and even "have become divorced from contemporary needs" (Tannahill 363), even though they are subject to them like all other habits and beliefs (Sanjur 3).

Referring to the culture discussion in Chapter 2 it is obvious that we are not born with perceptions of cultural differences; they develop like the rest of our perceptions and our cognitive powers. The mother, as the child's usual primary caregiver, passes on first differentiations. Ricci states that eating habits are already basically shaped in early infancy before the age of two (Ricci 89). Indeed the process of perception is a very complicated selective process that involves many unconscious judgments and communications. It is important to remember that "culture is a learned experience; it is acquired by people as they live their everyday lives. It is not biologically determined and therefore can be modified or unlearned" (Fieldhouse 2).

From a more social psychological point of view we can consider food and eating habits to be "intimately connected with cultural conceptions of self. Food as object and eating as act resonate with attitudes and emotions related to the individual's understandings and feelings about self and other and the relationship between" (Meigs 103).

In addition various beliefs can have an impact on food habits. Sheets-Johnstone, in a universal statement, identifies medicine as the sole real reason for body concepts and corresponding food habits, "The concept of the body in any culture and at any time is shaped by medical beliefs and practices" (133). Regarding this complex social psychological perspective of food Sanjur, notes:

> Food belief systems in any society are influenced by a complex set of cohesively held group attitudes and values. Food beliefs are closely associated with ideas of illness, health, age physiological states such as pregnancy, post-partum, and lactation, and even social feelings and emotional needs. (164)

These food belief movements are not confined to historical examples but are still vigorously alive in all cultures today (165). The health food movement, the American faddism, the spiritual food stemming for the so-called Hippie culture of the 1960s and the Vegans as of late, clearly prove this fact (Tannahill 347). It is ideology, not the ingredients, that is decisive in these belief systems. Hughes states that "many of the so-called health-food diets are nutritionally questionable, and they are chosen more often than not for their faddish cultural connotations" (Hughes 278).

If the beliefs are different, the distances between the various cultures tend to be more difficult to overcome. But these incongruities between ethnic groups do not necessarily have to result in a hostile atmosphere, but may also promote and enhance mutual respect between the defined cultural groups (as Lave and

Wenger describe in their study, Situated Learning). This distinction can gain a positive pragmatic potential of positive 'affordances.'

The well-known German food historian Teuteberg emphasizes that we must enlarge our biological and medical views of food in terms of cultural views (28). Teuteberg also points out that the factor of making conscious choices selecting our food is what most differentiates us from animals. Other historians have concentrated on the evolution of national diets like Levenstein (Revolution at the Table) or Teuteberg (1996).

There is no doubt that in general the public's interest in food is growing. In the US the television schedules are sprinkled with cookery programs and the best-seller lists are regularly topped by cookery books. The regular links now made between food and health, have made us all care and worry about our diet. Particularly wide ranging projects are the emergence of international societies whose aim is the study of food in a comparative context. The International Commission for Research into European Food History (founded 1989), the Association for the Study of Food and Society or The Southern Foodway Alliance are just some to mention. Popular enthusiasm for the history of cooking has encouraged extensive publication in this area, along with public events such as the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, which has been organized every year since 1981.

Food studies have been highly fragmented according to the approaches traditionally adopted by individual disciplines, and they have also been lacking in theoretical coherence. The time has come for a greater understanding between geography, sociology, anthropology, economics, psychology and all the other social sciences that have found some common interest in food.

The cultural turn, post-modernism, and post-structuralism are all terms that have been used to summarize recent methodological and theoretical developments in the social sciences. The variety of publications in terms of food has been exciting and stimulating. A better understanding of the nature of food-related knowledge as a combination of ecological, biological, social, historical and economic constructions was applied. This new critical approach to food practices acknowledged their socially, culturally, economically and politically embedded nature, and paid attention to the competing interests that drive change. This brought about the awareness of subcultures such as slimmers, vegetarians, consumers of organic foods, and so on; in addition it made clear that food choices may be means of resistance against broader trends in society. The privileging of the body as a crucial site of significance in understanding health and identity issues and an analysis of identity and subjectivity through the medium of food studies, will be focused on in the next chapter "Eating Disorders."

Again and again the interaction of various generations, on the one hand by the handing down of knowledge from the older to the younger generation, and on the other by the adolescent always creating a blend of their culture suitable to the current circumstances of their life as well as outside influences, constantly defines culture new. The willingness to experience new tastes and change existing grammar is what interests most in this thesis.

Food must be understood to be a creative phenomenon, not only as an integral part of our own social group but also in the exchange with other groups and individuals. Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens,

communication takes place via food and something new emerges. This is the *creolization* process.

On an individual level food habits reveal much more than just culinary taste. Friedensohn tells us, "obviously the foods we eat tell much about where we have lived and where we have traveled, how much we earn, what we read, and whom we know" (165). We define perceived differences with others by what we eat. We differentiate ourselves from others by exchanging foods and values, information and opinions. This way we get *creolized* and at the same time *creolize* the others as well.

For many of us, our first introduction to a new culture happened while sampling its cuisine. Ethnic food is a great way to introduce someone to the customs and traditions of another country, as "eating ethnic food teaches us something about the culture in which it originated" (207). It must be kept in mind, however that having some knowledge of some ethnic food and regarding it the sole indicator of the level of knowledge of a culture is insufficient as Schell reasons; "This belief among some Americans that we show our knowledge of a culture by our knowledge of its food is sincere but shaky" (209).

3.2 Eating Disorders

The strong connection between culture and food becomes even more apparent when we look at eating disorders as they are a clear expression of cultural influences on individual nutrition behavior and they are also a countermovement to the abundance of food and the excess of eating (Ostendorf, *Eating Culture* 37).

In studying eating disorders, one can see most clearly how food habits are shaped by differing cultural patterns. According to Armelagos (579-595), to gain

a comprehensive scientific perspective on a subject it is always preferable to consider all the aspects of and influences on a given set of phenomena. We can learn about a culture not only by its ideals and its customs, but also from its failures and shortcomings. Susan Bordo takes "the psychopathologies that develop within a culture, far from being anomalies or aberrations, to be characteristic expressions of that culture; to be, indeed, the crystallization of much that is wrong with it" (229).

Food intake is dominated by the poles of pleasure and physical needs "and between these two poles there exists a difficult and complex history, strongly conditioned by the relationships of power and social inequality" (Montanari xi). It is our curiosity as individuals and our eagerness for pleasure which make us willing to taste foreign food.

Anna Freud identifies pleasure to be one of the leading forces that determine our diet from earliest childhood. "The amount of pleasure which an individual child gains from eating depends only partly on the adequate fulfillment of bodily requirements; for an equally large part it is dependent on the manner in which the food is given. The child finds feeding most pleasurable when it can eat what it likes, how much or how little it likes and in whatever way it likes" (109).

Freud therefore sees the causes for eating disturbances in early childhood experiences:

> Where it is necessary, on medical grounds, to urge the child to eat beyond the limits of his appetite, or where mothers, for their own reassurance, force the child to eat against his will, emotional factors may enter into an otherwise simple feeding situation. Eating then becomes symbolic of a struggle between mother and child, in which the child can find an outlet for its passive or active, sadistic or masochistic tendencies towards the mother. (108)

It is not only the food itself, but also how and when to take it and to prepare it that is mainly developed during childhood. "Food habits are acquired early in life and once established are likely to be long-lasting and resistant to change" (Fieldhouse 3). This can clearly be seen by looking at the results of overweight therapies[9].

The importance of pleasure when it comes to food makes obvious the dilemma the United States must have had developing a food culture. As explained before the founding period was accompanied by strong republican and puritan ideals that nearly got a religious meaning in form of the civic culture. Ostendorf explains this dilemma:

> ... Jonathan Edwards erinnerte seine Gemeinde bereits 1630 daran, dass sie in ein ‚Arbeitshaus und nicht in ein Freudenhaus' gekommen seien. Kein Wunder, dass das Essen bei der Arbeit und nicht beim Genuß landete. Seine Warnung brachte auch eine problematische Beziehung von Nahrung zum Genuß, vom Essen zur Sünde, vom Appetit zur Sexualität auf den Weg, sinnesfeindliche Vorbehalte und asketische Bremsen gegenüber einer verführerischen und gefährlichen Natur, die für die Anfänge einer republikanischen, will sagen innerweltlich-asketischen Esskultur in den USA prägend wurden. Es gab schließlich keinen sybaritischen Adel oder (außer in New York) keine Großbourgeoisie, die sich standesgemäß Domestiken und den tagtäglichen Genuß erlauben konnte. (Ostendorf 2003, p. 8)

This attitude is reflected in food studies as well. In his book Paradox of Plenty Levenstein writes that since the 1880s scientists, home economists and cookery writers propagated the ideas of a New Nutrition. These taught:

> That all foods could be broken down into proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, and that one should eat only as much of each of them as

[9] Even though in a 1975 study no relation between childhood development and adult adiposities could be established (Buchwald, 2002).

> the body required. The idea that the body's energy needs could be measured in calories took hold, along with the notion that one would gain weight if one ingested more of these than the body burned. Ideals of feminine beauty changed markedly, as the heavily corseted matronly ideal of the late nineteenth century gave way first to the more lithe and athletic prepare Gibson Girl and then, in the early 1920s, to the positively skinny „flapper." (9)

The result was a struggle for slimness especially by women. Excess weight was blamed on consuming too many calories. Women went from one crash diet to the next. People no longer ate what they liked but what dietitians told them was good for them. In connection with this development food additives like vitamins that promised a healthier and better life came into fashion. These new attitudes changed American diet decisively and created their own food subculture. People who did not fit into these new concepts became outsiders and turned to the opposite.

Obesity, therefore, is not only a medical, but also a psychological and a socio-cultural phenomenon. In his book, Body-Image and Self-Awareness, Bruch states, "The experience of self-hatred and contempt for being fat is frequent enough, yet it appears to be not only determined by social attitudes; it is also closely interwoven with psychological and interpersonal experiences early in life" (221).

A sharp decline of self-consciousness is found to happen at a Body-Mass-Index[10] (BMI) of 35 or above, but especially women feel discriminated against already with a BMI of 25 as Ardelt-Gattinger and Lechner found out. After a

[10] Body Mass Index (BMI) is a tool for indicating weight status in adults. It is defined as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters (kg/m2). For example, an adult who weighs 70kg and whose height is 1.75m will have a BMI of 22.9. For adults over 20 years old, BMI falls into one of the following categories: Below 18.5: Underweight; 18.5-24.9: Normal; 25.0-29.9: Pre-obese; 30.0-39.9: Obese; Above 40: Very obese.

pregnancy, a resulting weight gain is medically still "of little negative consequence" and even if the woman is medically considered to be mildly obese, Massara writes it might be culturally well accepted and even "may be aspired to for its positive connotations of 'tranquility', health and a lack of problems in life" (252).

Marvalene H. Hughes states, "the interrelatedness of the concepts 'big' and 'beautiful' is African" (273). In a cross-cultural survey, Cassidy found that indeed there is a close relationship between well-being and weight, as usually the socially dominant persons also having a satisfying private life were more or less overweight. Elisa J. Sobo reports about the view on fatness held by the average Jamaicans: "Fatness at its best is associated with moistness, fertility and *kindness* (a sociable and giving nature) as well as with happiness, vitality, and bodily health in general" (260).

In comparison in American white society it is most likely to reduce the ability of people to move with the social strata, and to be the cause for discrimination. An American saying is, "that you can't be too rich or too thin" (Sobo 256) and mainstream Americans, at least theoretically, prefer diets that lead to thinness (268). This preference is the cause for a higher level of depression and other neurotic disturbances to be found with severely obese people, says Drunkenmolle.[11]

Cooking and eating are thus a matter of a national culture but also a basic factor of everybody's own culture. It is hard to change the cooking of a country "because the earliest-formed layers of culture, such as foodways, are the last to

[11] Many medical articles are written on this subject and there has been a long discussion focused the possibility that personality differences exist in obese people, but finally it was shown that they are not really different. The best treatment of obesity is still in question. Nearly all-interdisciplinary approaches are able to reach a weight loss for a short period, but only about 3% of the therapies are able to produce a weight loss of at least five kilograms lasting for at least four years.

erode" (Kalcik 39). According to Anderson, ‟foodways″ are defined as "the whole interrelated system of food conceptualization and evaluation, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation, consumption, and nutrition shared by all the members of a particular society″ (156). These contributions of the ‟foodways″ to obesity are complex:

> In particular, cultural values and patterns surrounding the domains of family, sex role organization, food and health shape perceptions about the cause, significance and effects of weight gain, which, in turn, contribute to the etiology of obesity. (Massara 253)

Since eating is a very personal process Angela Little points out, "eating constitutes the most intimate act of our existence. In this regard, I put eating ahead of sex - usually considered the most intimate act - because the substance of food, and food alone, becomes transformed into our own very substance: we are indeed what we eat!″ (24). Pierro Ricci describes the symbolic meaning of the mouth which serves nutritional aims as well as erotic ones (102). Nutrition and sex are closely connected in more than just one way. In a study with adult obese patients nearly half of them were found to have gravely disturbed body-image-concepts accompanied by impaired heterosexual adjustments (Bruch 223). The body image is "how a person perceives his or her own body and its relation to what he or she perceives to be the socially approved body image″ (Mennell 316). While it was found that the body shape is as important for severely obese people, up to a BMI of 50, as for people with an average weight, it was found that the people with a BMI above 50 cared significantly less about their outlook (Dixon, 2002).

Eating disorders do not necessarily lead to obesity but also severe weight loss. It was in the 1950s when women stopped showing an appetite for food but instead talked about various diets (Shapiro 221), and in the 1960s the leading

ideal of the slim, leggy teenager was created forcing everybody with a different shape to practice or at least consider dieting (Tannahill 347). Initially, women were primarily affected by eating disorders associated with dieting. The growing cultural importance of body shape, however, caused men to be increasingly afflicted with such disorders as Bordo points out (227). Women still comprise the largest portion of the anorexic population - approximately 90% (237). This phenomenon is obviously a result, at least in part, of culture and we should ask why "our culture is so obsessed with keeping our bodies slim, tight and young" (228). Interestingly it is again the social situation that seems to determine which eating disorder develops. Obese people are often to be found in families with parents having known periods of real hunger in their lives (Bruch 15), while "cases of anorexia nervosa arise disproportionately among the well-to-do strata" (Mennell 332).

In general, body disorders show how strongly food affects our life. It is the intake, the ingestion, which sets food apart from the rest of the material culture of a society (Meigs 104). Which food to eat is not only a matter of taste but of complex social and cultural practices. "Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life" (Gabaccia 8).

Food intake and its form are responses to biological and socio-cultural stimuli (Fieldhouse 1). The body, far from being just a non-cultural constant, is to the contrary continuously influenced by culture (Bordo 229). The field of cooking and nutrition is the major link between biology and cultural sciences because there is none other in biology where the relationship with the social sciences is more inclusive and also more critical.

Nutrition is a field where culture directly affects the physical body, "Food habits are culturally determined; that is, the individual's subcultural background and orientation, as well as his or her personal characteristics and perceptions ultimately determine what his or her dietary patterns will be" (3). Bordo goes even further, when she states, "our bodies, no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture" (229). It becomes clear that different cultures have different body concepts. In a culture contact situation this must lead to a *creolization* of such images as well.

In terms of the *creolization* process Ostendorf reasons in his article "Melting Pot, Salad Bowl, and Gumbo. Die Neue Welt und ihre Küchen: Nationale, regionale oder ethnische?" that one cause for most of the severe nutrition disorders in America today lies within the ascetic beliefs of a republican founding society. He further emphasizes that the dynamics of a *creolization* process in terms of food traditions in the United States these days is highly influenced by the dichotomy between asceticism and hedonism (17). In terms of New Orleans the hedonistic aspect definitely dominates and forms a counterpart to the rest of the United States as will be seen later.

3.3 The Development of Cuisine

It is obvious by now that food culture in general is difficult to discuss since there are so many facets. To get a comprehensive understanding of the cultural processes it involves one may not just look at the principles according to which the selection of food takes place and how preparation methods (cooking styles) evolve. As stated in the beginning, cultures must be understood as systems of meaning, as guideline codes for social relationships and networks of such relationships. Only indirectly, and without logical necessity, do they belong to

territories. Traditions are important, but just when they provide meaning in the present. The ability to adapt and invent is what is prerequisite in keeping a culture alive.

The important social standing of food in terms of serving and sharing of food and the passing on of food traditions from generation to generation as described earlier already made clear that each social group in a socializing process develops an own cultural food code. This chapter will show how cuisines evolve within such food codes.

Nutrition was a precondition for the development of culture. The ability to produce surplus food allowed early civilizations to develop specialists such as priests and scientists who did not have to directly produce their own food. On the one hand, the methods of producing, preparing, distributing and sharing food are important aspects of culture itself. On the other, culture deeply influences food habits. But this does not mean that a certain cuisine is illogical or unhealthy in its most basic components and practices. There are many differences and preferences, possibly even unhealthy elements in the more sophisticated dishes, but this does not equate to ignorance of the basic needs of nutrition in the central elements of the various cuisines and cooking practices of today and the past. It is however, "a matter of historical record, that good plain cooking in any particular country, at any particular time, has always been logically and sensibly adapted to the materials, equipment and fuel available" (Tannahill 93).

For the mainstream population, efficiency and economy seem to always have been the most influential factors on their dietary habits. Their usual food "was the diet best fitted not only to cultivation potential (though that was always a major factor) but also to the specific requirements of the inhabitants,

requirements originally shaped more by work and living conditions than by any considerations of pleasure or satisfaction" (363). An economic surplus was necessary to develop different tastes and also to mark different social strata of the society by different dishes. There is a close connection between the evolution of cuisines and wealth within a society.

The simplest possible division derived from dietary habits is the matter of quantity. When humans had to survive in the wilderness and the next food source was one that had to be hunted, a big, round body was a primary indicator of well being, suitably fit to survive. This age-old archetypical pattern dominates most, or at least many, peoples' perception of the human body to this day. "In accordance with cultural definitions of health, weight gain and a good appetite may be viewed as a sign of good health; whereas weight loss tends to be associated with malnutrition and poor health" (Massara 253).

Once the quantity of food available is sufficient to feed everyone, quality becomes the main factor to establish social groups and strata. While initially people need to satisfy their hunger by any food available, abundant food allows for the development of tastes and thus the opportunity to make choices and to eat according to appetite. There is a marked difference between hunger, "a body drive which recurs in all human beings in a reasonable regular cycle" (Mennell 316) and appetite. Cappon describes appetite as follows, "An individual's appetite is his desire and inclination to eat, his interest in consuming food. Eating is what a person *does*. Appetite is what he *feels* like doing, mostly a psychological state" (21).

It is significant to note that many unique cuisines developed (and continue to evolve) despite globalization and the international availability of various ingredients and foods. Originally, many ingredients were restricted to certain

regions and regional cooking styles were the rule. One may have reasonably predicted that, by the eighteenth century, when many items became available internationally, a unification of cooking styles (e.g. the founding of an international cuisine) would have evolved. In reality, the development has gone in the opposite direction:

> Despite all the exchanges of peoples and foods over the preceding 300 years, nothing even remotely resembling an international cuisine had emerged; rather the opposite, because the pursuit of the empire had nourished a growing awareness of national identities within Europe as much as abroad. Formerly, the pattern of eating had been divided horizontally, with the food of the rich, like the food of the poor, having much in common all over the continent. But a vertical division had now also emerged, with the cuisines of the different countries taking their own individuality, so that it was possible, as it had rarely been before, to identify characteristic national styles. (Tannahill 230)

It becomes therefore apparent that not only the availability of food items is important, but also the question of their cultural acceptance. As mentioned before, no social group in any society eats everything available. Eating does not only satisfy biological needs, it also expresses social relationships and by this helps to define cultural identity. Food is an integral part of any cultural guideline code. In general, each social group has its own distinctive eating habits that provide a persistent collective feeling of togetherness and confirm their cultural identity.

Despite the fact that, physically, everybody should be able to enjoy most of the same food (except for some Asians and American Indians who cannot digest lactose) cuisines are as diverse as their host cultures. In order to better understand the relevance and affect that "cuisine" represents for various populations, it is necessary to first define the term.

New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus defines "cuisine" as "cooking with reference to quality or style" (234). Applying this definition, this paper examines culinary refinement that satisfies cultural needs beyond those associated with mere satisfaction of hunger. Cuisine, defined here as an aspect of culture, has to be regarded as an art, as are architecture, sculpture, literature, music and philosophy.

Each society selects its food from a more or less wide range of options arising from cultural and environmental determinants, and regional eating traditions thus evolve. Cuisines are therefore easily regarded as a collection of appropriate combinations of ingredients, cooking methods, flavor principles and dishes, and are subject to certain established conventions of a particular society within a specific historical context.[12]

The German food scientist Teuteberg notes:

> Der essende Mensch muss sich zwar tagtäglich buchstäblich Nahrung 'einverleiben', kann aber im Gegensatz zum Tier geistig darüber reflektieren. Er entscheidet unabhängig vom Instinkt selbst, wie er sich ernährt. Die natürliche Umwelt bietet ihm dazu viele Möglichkeiten, aber ihm bleibt es überlassen, ob er davon Gebrauch macht. Nicht alles an sich Verzehrbare wird gegessen. Die Ernährung besitzt eine biologisch-chemische Konstante, die sich technisch messen und rational bearbeiten lässt, aber auch eine nicht minder wichtige soziokulturelle und emotionelle Seite, die sich solchen quantifizierbaren Erklärungen weitgehend entzieht. Die Essenskultur, die Objekte, konkrete Handlungsmuster und genuine Wertordnungen verleiht, hat es erlaubt, die Grundbedingungen der Nahrungsweise immer weiter zu verfeinern und zu variieren. Die ganze Geschichte der menschlichen Ernährung lässt sich letztlich daher als stete Suche nach ihrer Optimierung interpretieren, wobei die dazu erfundenen technischen Werkzeuge und Verfahren

[12] This is discussed in many works of Douglas (1974), p. 83-88; Lévi-Strauss (1966), p. 937-940; Belasco (1987), p. 15.

> unerlässliche Hilfen darstellen. Gedanklich verkürzt heißt das: Der Mensch ist nicht nur, was er isst, sondern zugleich wie er isst. (15)

There is no doubt that it is a matter of historical record that the cooking in any particular country has always adapted to the materials, equipment and fuels available. This is how a regional eating tradition evolves. Among the historical determinants of such a tradition are the environment and climate, the cultural history and ethnic and social demography and changes due to economic history (Yoder 325-329).

The choices a society makes are then handed down from generation to generation according to a socializing process. In this way, a sense of ethnic identity is formed referring to a distinctive culinary tradition. Each ethnic group tries to preserve these particular food habits and the exposure to foreign habits will always result in strong social reactions (Fieldhouse 41-44). Exposure to unfamiliar food habits is almost guaranteed to bring ethnocentrism to bear. Mary Douglas describes cuisines as "a cultural category, not a material thing. (They) can persist over fundamental material changes so long as the feeling of ethnic distinctiveness is valued (2002, p. 30). Certainly, there is some inherent attraction, not to mention fear and suspicion, associated with new foods. Gabaccia points out, "human eating habits originate in a paradoxical and perhaps universal, tension between a preference for the culinary familiar and the equally human pursuit of pleasure in the forms of culinary novelty, creativity and variety" (6).

Choosing and refinement are the most important activities characterizing the process of cooking and eating that mark the difference between food intake of animals compared to humans and that lead to the evolution of cuisines. Both characteristics are always centered in the complex of our culture, as Barer-Stein

tells us about choice: "Even a cursory glance at diets around the world reveals the strange fact that people do not only eat what is available; they eat only what they consider to be edible" (14).

Barer-Stein repeats this argument while explaining the title of her book, You Eat What You Are:

> This books title is frequently confused with Adel Davis' early book on popular nutrition entitled You ARE What You Eat. It is indeed possible that we really are what we eat - but because our daily lives are embedded in our cultural heritage, it is even more probable that we eat what we are. (16)

Juxtaposed with these socio-cultural concepts, another approach is brought forward by Krondl and Boxen. They argue that the more civilized a society is, the more energy is put into the preparation of food and the more choice is created. In the process of civilization, which is mostly an optimization of handling the surroundings, the cultural codes of a society are changing significantly while only a few remnants of older behaviors and manners might be kept alive (Elias 233f). It is this civilization process that leads people to bring forward a cuisine.

The availability of different foods as well as the financial capacity to afford them was a primary factor producing bourgeois menus. Their individual components were neither necessarily totally new nor very much different from the ones of today. "It is the menu rather than the individual dish that divides the fourteenth century so irrevocably from the twentieth" (186). The poor, if they wanted to eat meat at all, had to settle for certain parts of the animal body that were considered second class or believed to be possibly harmful to the soul of the consumer, like the tails, the heads, and the intestines (Ricci 82f).

Whereas spices were most prominent among the upper class during the Middle Ages by the seventeenth century, the French elite turned their backs on them and instead inclined toward anchovies, capers, chives, mushrooms and shallots. This was not a question of taste but of status, "When saffron, cinnamon and 'fine spices' came within the reach of everyone, the wealthy looked elsewhere for signs of distinction" (Montanari 119).

When the various national or regional cuisines in Europe emerged, the culinary influence of France and Italy were dominant. "It was the Italians who had emerged first from the medieval morass of sauces and spices" (Tannahill 231). By 1570, a *nuova cucina* marked for its lightly spiced simplicity had evolved that became most famous worldwide later. Sicilian cooking in contrast "followed the Arab practice of using the spice to flavor stews and sauces" (Christensen 27).

Only the wealthy could afford fine French cuisine, which still is quite a matter of taste. It was Renaissance Italian cooking, however, which was the forerunner of what would become French "haute cuisine". M.F.K. Fisher, one of the best-known voices in American food writing in the twentieth century, explains how a single occasion had a dramatic affect on the evolution of food in France:

> It was that year (1533) that Fate and Pope Clement VII changed the table manners of Europe. The Holy Father, probably conscious less of the gastronomic importance of his act than of its political results, married off his niece Catherine de Medici to France's young Henry. And Catherine took her cooks to France with her. They were probably the first great chefs de cuisine in that land, and galling though the fact may be to those Frenchmen who mix patriotism with their love of fine food, they were Italians every one. (75)

Thanks to the influence of Catherine's cooks, "roughened tongues were made smooth, and hot throats cooled; palates, long calloused by the indiscriminate

spicings of the dark centuries, slowly grew keen and sensitive″ (75). Still it took quite some time to establish the new taste. "The decisive change in French cooking did not become apparent until the middle of the seventeenth century" (Tannahill 237). One essential expression of this change became the cookbooks as will be described later in this study.

Changes in nutritional habits cannot only be induced by cross-cultural contacts but also by the internal changes of society itself. As Fieldhouse says, "Shifts in cultural patterns and values within a society inevitably affect or are reflected in dietary practices″ (8). But it is only the well-off who can afford to develop a taste of their own, more or less independent of economic influences, because "while cooking may be an art where food is plentiful, when shortages are the currency of everyday life, filling the stomach is the only art″ (Tannahill 279).

Restaurants therefore played an important role in the development of cuisine especially in respect to their effort for constant quality and long-range performance.[13] The restaurant in Europe, as we know it today, was first known in France. As late as the turn of the nineteenth century the restaurant was still a fairly recent phenomenon. The first one was founded in Paris in 1765. When, in the early nineteenth century, the middle class was attaining new power and property, a tremendous boom in the restaurant business occurred. We will later see, how this was reflected in New Orleans as well.

One figure in particular highlighted the development of the French restaurant tradition: the great chef Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935). His main achievement was that he codified the rules and regulations of fine French cooking, which in the end made the *à la carte* menu possible and which spread French cooking far beyond France's borders (Coyle 15; Larousse Gastronomique 421f, 883).

[13] Cookbooks paralleled this approach by committing to institutional memory old recipes and by making them "scientifically" by providing exact, standard measurements.

In addition to restaurants, in the 1870s, coffee shops were opened in France as an alternative to the pub. They were followed by teashops, offering sandwiches, the first being opened in Lyons in 1887 (Goody 345).

In the United States, restaurants began to spread in about 1826.[14] When "Americans also began to eat at restaurants" (Civitello 201), their eating habits changed. A special gender-specific form of outside eating for men developed, that had its peak between 1890 and 1910, "a man could walk into almost any saloon in the country and, in return for ordering a drink (or two) help himself from an extensive free buffet" (Tannahill 327). While these drinks were usually alcoholic, there also was a public source for non-alcoholic beverages, as the "drugstore soda fountain, a long counter like a bar where patrons are served non-alcoholic beverages, is an American invention" (Civitello 208).

For women and couples, it was quite a different situation. Women were quite strictly confined to their own premises if they wanted to be considered decent and respectable. "Going shopping was one of the only excuses a respectable middle-class woman had for leaving the house" (Civitello 197).

There was no difference in respect to restaurants or coffee shops. These establishments were mainly seen as unsuitable for ladies. By "the 1890s there were quite a few places where a respectable gentleman could take an equally respectable lady to dine of an evening" and even less places were suitable for ladies to dine alone (Tannahill 328). Common etiquette dictated that a lady not exhibit an intense interest in eating, as this was considered immoral to most: "In Victorian England and America, an appetite for food was equated with an appetite for sex, which was taboo" (Civitello 198). Civitello further informs us that the kind of food eaten was also strictly controlled by the norms of society:

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[14] The Union Oyster House in Boston, Massachusetts, claims to be the oldest continuously operating restaurant in the United States. (Civitello 201)

> A woman seen eating meat and potatoes put herself on a level with a barnyard animal. Many women took to eating in secret - reversing the trend for women to eat in public that was begun by Catherine de Medici almost four hundred years earlier. (198)

While looking at restaurants, it is also useful to examine nuances of early restaurant employees. Restaurant cooks, together with those working in other public places or for families, form the group of professional preparers of food. While some chefs may gain considerable fame, the general social position of professional cooks is not very high, as Hughes notes, "Cooking, professionally, is a position of servitude both economically and politically" (275).

Not surprisingly, this profession shows a heavy concentration of blacks and other economically disenfranchised minorities that also leads to a different gender-specific perception of the duty of cooking. "Cooking as a function of sex role is less stereotyping (more androgynous) among blacks because of the black person's frequent occupational involvement with cooking outside the home" (Hughes 277).

Restaurants clearly show that there is a marked difference between the development of private cuisine at home and public cuisine in restaurants. In outstanding hotels and restaurants mainly men do the professional cooking. Laura Shapiro states that although "In recent years women have been moving into the realm of professional cooking in significant numbers, but at its highest levels the world of great cookery is probably more staunchly masculine than the armed forces" (222).

The important aspect for this study is that both spheres, the private and the public, developed on their own with the public one building on the private one and doing so influenced and *creolized* each other and continuously do so.

Chapter 4. The Development of Regional Eating Traditions in the Lower Mississippi Valley

Palmié refers to the Cuban lawyer Fernando Ortiz who used the term Gumbo as a metaphor to describe Caribbean society. This metaphor is also very useful describing Louisiana's colonial society. Contrary to the melting pot metaphor according to which the different cultures dissolved to form a new one, in a gumbo the different items remain recognizable although cooked together in the same pot for a long time and constituting an all-in-one-pot dish (Ostendorf 2003 6). Ortiz describes that different groups formed new identities in the new settings they encountered in the New World and describes such as "a teeming black underworld that formed a counterpoint to the economic parasitism and ostentation of the white elite in its equally parasitic economy of crime and a consciously elaborated culture of conspicuous symbolic subversion" (Palmié 152). The history of the Lower Mississippi Valley shows how such new identities were formed in respect to trade and food traditions.

During colonisation, cooking was central to survival and was a costly matter. As people with varying ethnic backgrounds settled, they all participated in forming a new culture, generally disregarding their social, political, religious, cultural or ethnic prejudices toward each other. There was much early exchange since "colonial cooks did not limit themselves to local products, although these were their main ingredients. Long before the thirteen North American colonies formed their 'more perfect union,' colonial eating had become a creole blend of the products and traditions of many interacting cultures from around the world" (Gabaccia 11).

The exchange of ingredients and recipes illustrates again the contradiction between necessity, curiosity and longing for familiarity when it comes to eating:

> The colonial era provides evidence of the pleasure most people took not only in consuming the familiar comfort foods of their childhood but in adopting new foods and incorporating new ingredients and techniques into their traditions. (Gabaccia 12)

Besides bringing foods from other settlements and from abroad, local food production was remarkably important in the early years of the United States as many Americans provisioned themselves by hunting, raising, gathering, and processing most of the foods they ate. Domestic items characterized food production. The majority of people in the Americas depended on what products they raised themselves. People's free will did not always determine diet. Necessity more than choice dictated ingredients.

This chapter shows how the forefathers from the time of conquest and colonization also shaped a regional eating tradition in the lower Mississippi Valley.

4.1 The Columbus Exchange

During conquest of the American continent, most Europeans lived in rural settings and subsisted primarily on porridges. There were different grains for different classes. The less wealthy ate rye and the poorest, oats and barley, but wheat was considered a luxury and was thus reserved for the rich (Braudel 136, 143). Spices were highly valued since they played a dominant role in making the boring food more interesting. The eighteenth century brought a major change since people started to believe that only fermented food, namely bread was healthful. Therefore bread and especially wheat bread became most popular. Soup and dipping bread were the mainstays for common people during that time all over Europe. The

newly discovered colonies helped to achieve a greater variety of different foods.

Food, as one of the most basic pre-conditions for survival, has driven mankind to migrate for sometimes considerable distances and thus led to an intensive exchange of people and cultures in the regions where food was more easily found. The town this thesis concentrates on - New Orleans - was (just like the rest of the New World) founded in the process of looking for food. Barer-Stein explains:

> What is often overlooked is something more basic: many peoples of the world have migrated to find food. Historically, this has frequently resulted in the necessity of relinquishing customary tastes according to what foods, seasonings, and even cooking methods are available to them in the new location. Finding new foods and new sources of foods and seasonings also motivated many adventurers and explorers and swelled the economy of countries. (14)

The Indians who lived on the American continent in the pre-Columbian era relied on what the ground and waters offered on a seasonal cycle. Mary Douglas describes this as follows:

> The physical environment is very important in societies and communities in which hunting, foraging, gathering, gardening, or animal husbandry contributes substantially to household subsistence; the physical environment in such societies determines what foods are available and when they are available. These factors also influence the social and ideational factors which contribute to particular (food) behavioral patterns. (1984, 103)

About 12,000 years ago people on the American continent had started to domesticate plants. Sauer informs us that it is assumed that agriculture was introduced into the West Indies through migration of the Arawaks from the South

American mainland (45). The earliest cultivated plants from 10,000 to 2,500 B.C. according to archaeological findings were beans (*phaseolus*, *cannavalia*), chili peppers (*capsicum baccatum* and *chinense*)[15], guava (*psidium guajava*) *and ahead of all squash (lagenaria siceraria, cucurbita moschata, and* ficifolia). These food items originally constituted additions rather than core foods.[16] Early Indian societies lived close to the sea and mainly lived on seafood, but not yet on agricultural products.

Two plants finally were successful enough to become core foods: corn (*zea mays*), which first was cultivated in the north of Mexico from where it dispersed, and cassava (*manihot esculenta*) which spread from East-Venezuela (Pickersgill 57-59). According to Sauer, a line can be drawn between North and South America that marks the division between aboriginal vegetative- and seed-crop farming patterns. The following picture shows this line as well as the distribution of aboriginal agriculture:

[15] Such an early attraction of chili peppers might wonder, since scientists are today still puzzled about humans' like for such a burning substance. According to Rozin and Schiller, chili peppers are always important in diets with a limited variety of foods. They are added to provide a change in taste. People then get used to it and will like the burning sensation since it provides a sense of familiarity. Food without it will taste bland (77-101).

[16] Johnston explains the core-fringe pattern: the majority of humans subsist on a diet with one sort of food plant at its center. This core item is a starchy food which provides the bulk of calories in the diet of people. It is usually cooked, relatively soft, and homogeneous in taste and texture and accompanied in a daily diet by so called fringe foods.

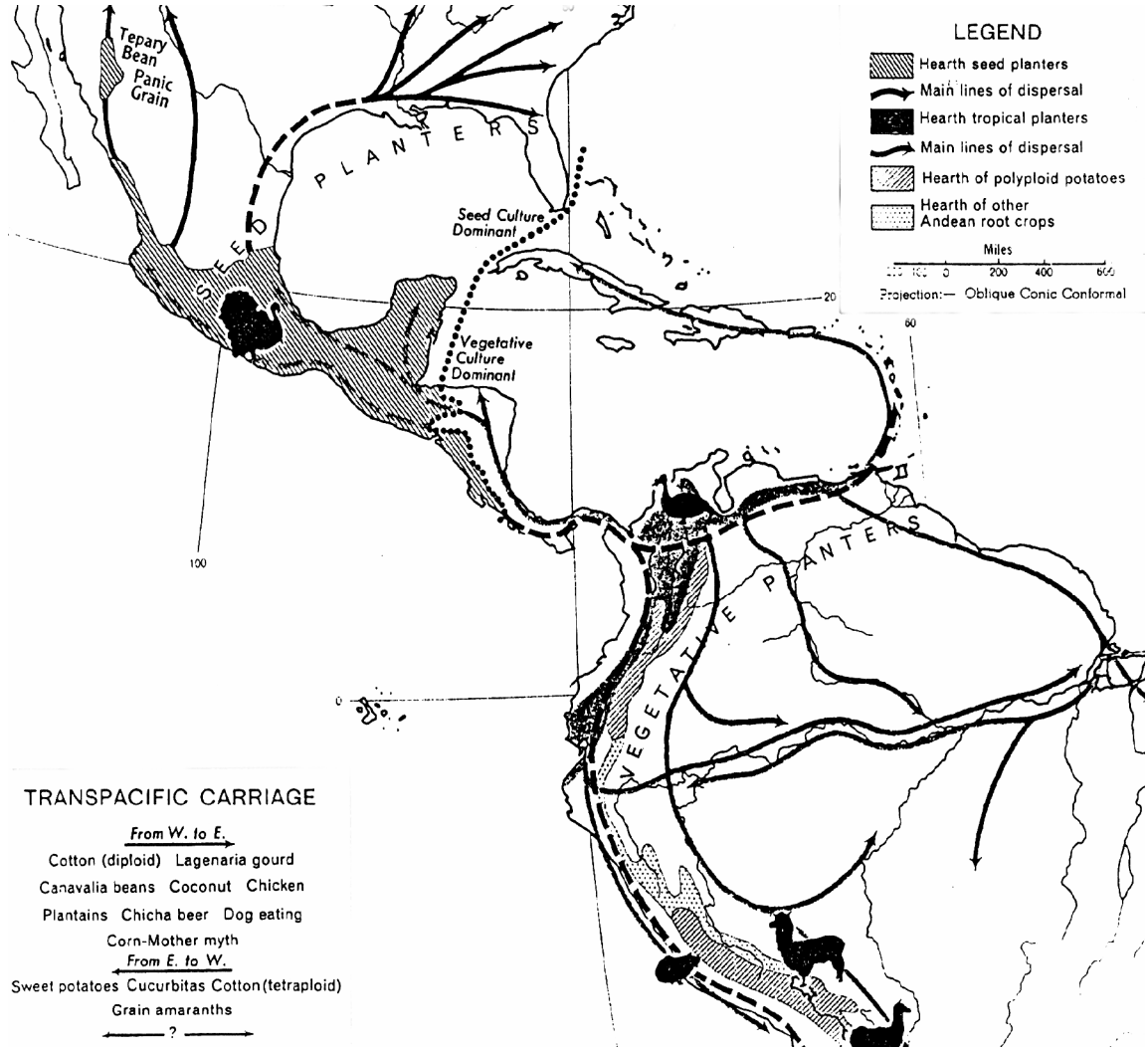

Fig. 1. Map, Sauer 1952:40

This map clearly shows a link from the very beginning from the Caribbean to the Indian nations living along the Gulf of Mexico. In the process of distribution, corn, beans, and squash became the dominant agricultural plants to them. These three crops form a symbiotic complex, with no equal elsewhere. When all three are sown together, the corn grows up first so that the bean can climb up the corn stalk afterwards. The beans' roots support nitrogen-fixing bacteria which fertilizes the soil. The squash covers the ground, thus prevents weeds from growing and makes use of the last available space there is (Sauer 64).

Another important complement of these three crops was not discovered until the twentieth century. In 1937, research at the University of Wisconsin proved

that corn lacks nicotinic acid, or niacin in an available form for human beings. This means that unless corn is supplemented by adequate foods, it will cause severe malnutrition. This form of malnutrition was known in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and in the American South at the turn of the century as pellagra (Todd 114). The Indians already then used methods to prevent pellagra. Horatio Bardwell Cushman, who grew up among the Choctaw Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century, described in his book History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez how they prepared their basic meal, which was called "tafula." According to his description, "tafula" was made of pounded corn, boiled together with "lye for fermentation" (173).[17]

Today we know that lye or lime, which is found in ash, releases the niacin which is bound in the corn so that it becomes available for the human body. It probably was this knowledge that enabled Indians to grow corn as their stable food crop in pre-Columbian America without causing damage. The strong influence Indian cooking tradition had on the development of a new regional cooking tradition in the lower Mississippi Valley is seen in the fact that this technique, as well as the dish, is still known today. In The Picayune Creole Cook Book which first was published in 1901 one finds recipes for "lye hominy" and "lye hominy bread."

Despite its deficiencies a preference for corn had very practical reasons. Corn can be cultivated with aboriginal farming methods. The Indians only had to clear a piece of land for which they used fire and then use a hoe to dig holes in which the kernels were put. Corn, furthermore, can be picked and used at different stages of ripeness. Ripe kernels, successfully dried and stored are one of the longest-lasting provisions. This way corn was available to the Indians all year

[17] He also describes the preparation of other dishes such as *bunaha* or *oksak atapah* which mainly consisted of corn as well and to which the Indians added lye as well (174).

around. In addition, corn can be grown nearly everywhere, from tropical to moderate climate. It therefore is also suited for an area like the Gulf region where one mainly encounters tropical climate but also can be hit by winter storms.

The biggest disadvantage in cultivating corn, is its high demand in water and the fact that it drains the soil in such a way that it takes 5-12 years after one harvest for the soil to recover (without fertilizer) (Visser 26-33). This was one of the main reasons why rice was so successful later on in Louisiana.

It was the search for spices, for an alternative route to their main source of origin, India, which essentially inspired the conquistadors of the fifteenth century to sail westward to the double continents now known as the Americas. The native populations the explorers expected to encounter were supposed to be rich kingdoms (of valuable spices), but what they encountered were (in their narrow perceptions) only hunting and gathering civilizations.

This perceived strangeness of habits of the native population led the conquistadors to consider them as primitive, wild people. To illustrate their own picture of these people they assigned certain qualities, derived from the Greek description of various races on Earth by Pliny the Elder. The foremost assignment to the native population was a food habit: cannibalism. Since Pliny created his history of nature, cannibalism is the key word for wickedness and primitiveness of a population (Jahoda 1). Many anthropological studies concerning eating habits tend to concentrate on cannibalism and eating of unfamiliar and distasteful items (Mintz, *Time, Sugar* 357). It is therefore not surprising that Columbus and his successors reported cannibalism to be rather common in the New World (Jahoda 15). The following report from La Salle's expedition to the lower Mississippi Valley of 1682 is illustrative:

> We were out of provisions, and found only some dried meat at the mouth (of the Mississippi), which we took to appease our hunger; but soon after perceiving it to be human flesh, we left the rest to our Indians. It was very good and delicate. (Shea 175)

It was reported again and again that the natives were eating raw meat. Next to cannibalism, a diet consisting of raw meat was considered barbaric and highly uncivilized. Europeans considered these people animals rather than humans. Eating raw insects connected them to the devil, while cooking or roasting food was considered to be a cultural advance (Jahoda 18).[18]

Contrary to these prejudices, conquerors arriving in the Caribbean actually encountered people who had developed a highly complex agricultural society. In terms of food and nutrition these newly discovered people had already shown a great capacity of culture and civilization, especially in the creation of various kinds of maize. "When Columbus first sighted America, its inhabitants had already developed more than 200 types of maize" - as Tannahill recounts, one of the most remarkable plant breeding achievements in history (204). At least Columbus was convinced that he had discovered sources of some wild kinds of spices that might be turned into cinnamon, ginger and pepper by cultivation[19] (Tannahill 200). The rapid and catastrophic collapse of Indian populations that followed the Spanish conquest also resulted in the loss of numerous varieties of domesticated plants. On the other hand this new exchange of foods enriched the variety again.

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[18] The reference to Pliny is also clear in Columbus' reports of the people with the dog snout, who were consuming human meat and capturing other humans as soon as they spotted them, drinking their blood and even castrating them (97). This negative depiction of food habits, combined with sexual habits, was one of the central elements responsible for the denigrating of newly discovered people. Thus, entire populations were denounced as creatures neither capable of reason nor becoming Christians, as Paul III declared in the year of 1537, and therefore were subjected to slavery instead (Martin, P. 196).

[19] Proven true only for pepper, being entirely different from the Indian spices.

Towards the new ingredients and foods, "European explorers and conquerors reacted with both diffidence and curiosity″ (99). Again we have the contradiction between curiosity and looking for the well-known comfort of familiar foods. It seems that at first curiosity was not very strong as implementation of new components from European cuisine took quite some time:

> A long interval of time passed between the discovery of new foods by Europeans and their integration into the European dietary regime. It was a process of assimilation that required two or three centuries, a delay too great to be simply physiological. (99)

The major reason for this delay was simply a lack of interest; the new products were obviously outside of the structural balance of European food consumption as it had developed from the fourteenth century. Despite these hindrances, food traveled between the Old and the New Worlds and there was a wide distribution on both continents.

After Columbus′ arrival back home with maize seeds, maize probably was fastest to become an important ingredient for cuisines of the Old World. "The Spaniards began distributing maize around the Mediterranean, although it was the Venetians who took it to the Near East, from which it traveled up to the Balkans and also back to France, Britain and Holland″ (205).

Although a New World crop, maize was already a widely used staple grain for French peasants by the middle of the seventeenth century. In John Locke's journal of his travels to France, there is the following entry:

> Mond.Sept.12. (1678) From Petit Niort to Blay 6 (leagues). The country between Xantes & Blay is a mixture of corne, wine, wood, meadow, champaine enclosure, wall nuts & chestnuts, but that which I observed particularly in it was plots of Maiz in severall parts, which the country people call bred d'Espagne, &, as they told me, serves poor people for bred. That which makes them sow it, is not

> only the great increase, but the convenience also which the blade & green about the stalke yields them, it being good nourishment for their cattle. (Lough 236)

Another later description from 1757 tells us how firmly maize was established as a common food at that time:

> In Frankreich wird diese Getreideart an vielen Orten, sonderlich aber in der Landschaft Languedoc stark angebauet, und von dem Landmann als seine vornehmste tägliche Nahrung statt des Brodts und Getränks gebraucht, obgleich solches größtenteils auf eine sehr simple Weise geschieht. Man hänget die eingesamelten Weizenkolben in freyer Luft zur Winterzeit bey hartem Frost auf, denn dis soll den strengen Geschmack vertreiben. Als denn sondert man die Körner ab stampfet sie zu grober Grütze, und kochet sie ganz dünne mit vielem aufgegossenen Wasser. Das Wasser oder Boullion giesset man ab, und dis ist das gewöhnliche Getränk des Landmanns; die Grütze aber, die auf dem Boden ihrer Schwere wegen liegen bleibt, wird von ihm als seine tägliche Kost anstatt des Brodtes gebraucht. Eine sehr compendiense Brau- und Backkunst! (Winter 6f, 45)

Soon, New World foods were found not only on poor peoples' tables. In eighteenth-century France, colonial food items also became fashionable in "haute cuisine."

> French interest in anything from the American Colonies ran high, and such dishes as Indian corn pudding and wild roasted turkey made any table smart. Prices for them ran into several figures - almost as expensive as truffles. It took a woman of unlimited income and capricious brain to combine the two whims of the moment, and serve a turkey stuffed with truffles to her admirers. (Fisher 77)

For Europe, the potato also gained a great importance and became a basic staple, "By 1573 they were common enough for the Hospital de la Sangre at Seville to order them in at the same time as other stocks, and from Spain they

took passage to Italy where, by 1601, people no longer even treated them as a delicacy″ (Tannahill 216).

As for the tomato, also brought back by Columbus, the approach of Europeans was quite different. While the Spaniards readily included it in their diet and Italians followed some time later, the English were very reluctant towards the tomato, considering it a cold fruit lacking nourishment as well as substance (207). Despite all these hesitations, most food items Columbus once had brought back to the Old World had become familiar in most European cuisines by the time the American continent was colonized.

The food exchange, however, went two ways. Old World products also made their way across the Atlantic. The Spaniards, Portuguese, British, and French all took familiar food items with them. A description of the island of Jamaica from the mid-seventeenth century gives evidence of ‟Radish″, ‟Lettis″, ‟Parsley″, ‟Cucumbers″, ‟Pot-herbs″, ‟Plantains″, ‟Cabbages″, ‟Pease″ and ‟Colly Flowers″ that were cultivated there (Blome 12).

The main contribution to the American food culture from the Europeans during the encounter period was the introduction of domestic animals. Indians were not as familiar with husbandry. The abundance of wildlife and seafood did not make husbandry as necessary.[20]

European explorers imported cows, cattle, pigs and also horses, goats, sheep, geese, and hens. Blome reports in his early travel description of Jamaica that he encountered big herds of cattle and other European animals (2). To some extent this was a result of the habit among sailors to leave a couple of pigs on uninhabited islands so that colonists later would find familiar food. The animals

[20] Contrary to beliefs hat Indians didn't have domesticated animals at all, Sauer gives evidence that there were, for example, the Muscovy duck from Chile to Mexico, a special kind of dog in the Caribbean and a pig-like collard peccary in Colombia which Indians domesticated (48f).

ran wild and rapidly increased. From the Caribbean, the livestock spread to the mainland and at the end of the sixteenth century, cattle and horses already played an important economic role in New Mexico, California and the Gulf of Mexico region (Crosby 176, Viola 101f).

Together with animal husbandry, Europeans brought the knowledge of how to cure meat, which was the most important method of preservation at that time. Cured meat, as well as salted fish, became important foods for all new comers - slaves and white alike. Preservation methods for milk could not establish themselves. Maybe because of the hot tropical climate that did not allow the storage and successful processing of milk, but maybe also because of a simple dislike from Africans and the indigestibility of milk for some Indian nations (Sauer 87).

Sugar was originally introduced into Spain by the Arabs. The harvest and refinement of it required intensive labour. Sugar thus was one of the most important things England tried to obtain from its American colonies - rather than purchasing it from Italian and Spanish merchants (Pinck 49). "When sugar became readily available, it also became popular - and even more popular when it was discovered (about 1600) that fruit could be preserved in it and (sometime before 1730) jam made with it" (Tannahill 219).

Sugar was an outstanding substance for the social changes of consumption. The wide distribution of spices, tea, coffee and especially sugar has been "one of the truly important economic and cultural phenomena of the modern age. These items were, as it seems, the first edible luxuries to become proletarian commonplaces; they were surely the first luxuries to become regarded as necessities by vast masses of people who had not produced them" (Mintz, *Time, Sugar* 359).

In many regions of Africa, corn, hot peppers and peanuts became basic items for cooking. Later, during slavery, these products returned 'Africanized' to the New World (Mintz 1987, 37).

The "Columbus exchange" makes clear that food did not always have its origin where it would seem most likely. Cultures incorporate new items into their existing traditions and then quickly claim them for their own. According to what best fits people's life circumstances, they adapt and transform new items so they fit their daily life. Food in this respect reveals cultures' best and very pragmatic function for people's lives and proves its high creative potential despite the strong feelings we have in terms of tradition.

4.2 Food Exchange in the Lower Mississippi Valley

The myth of the frontier as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the ambitious and self-reliant individual has long blinded the realities of colonial societies. In this flawed view of the frontier, social relationships were set apart from their economic, cultural, political, and ecological contexts. Frontier societies were portrayed as static, bound and separate systems, set off against each other. We, therefore, have been blinded to the dynamics of the different cultures involved prior to contact, to the ways in which the three racial groups – blacks, whites and Indians – confronted their world in order to modify it in their favor, to how they coped creatively with everyday situations and to the dynamic consequences of that confrontation and its altering circumstances over time (Wolf, 4).

Ethno history has already done much to introduce cultural pluralism into scholarly studies. Such studies of colonial societies portray a world that Indians, whites and blacks created together with a focus on inter-ethnic relations. Palmié

in a moral analysis of social action in the Caribbean points out that an understanding of the new evolving cultures cannot be gained by looking solely at Old World cultural traits but "Self-representation was inevitably directed toward a New World context of interpretation" (154).

The American anthropologist Eric Wolf asks scholars to pay special attention to the long-neglected discipline of "political economy", meaning a focus on the "primacy of material relationships" (21). Wolf suggests a close look at "material relationships" in order to understand the social interaction and cultural change that took place. The frontier exchange economy presented just such a context, as Usner explains:

> The term 'frontier exchange' is meant to capture the form and content of economic interactions among the different groups, with a view to replacing the notion of frontier as an interracial boundary with that of a cross-cultural network. (1987, p.167)

A focus on the exchange of food demonstrates precisely the great extent to which social and cultural interaction took place. Food, as explained before, is not just another trade object but as a significant element of culture is a means of exchange.

The main reasons for a cultural difference of New Orleans from the beginning, as compared to the rest of the United States, were its relative isolation and position inside the colonial empires of France and Spain. Therefore, "central to an understanding of colonial New Orleans is a basic understanding of early modern French social structure and social theory" (Johnson 13), even though it was adjusted to the special conditions of New Orleans.

In colonial times and compared to the English, French government practice was marked by a relative freedom of religious practice. Henry IV granted religious freedom and the right of public worship in geographical enclaves inside

France (at least to certain Protestant groups named in the edict of Nantes), while dissenters in Elizabeth's England were forced to leave the country (Johnson 15).

Regarding the mixing of cultures and multiculturalism, French customs were distinctively different from English ones. In England, people could move vertically within their own society, but there was no opportunity to mix with other cultures or integrate other hierarchies into the English one. People with different cultural origins had to deny them or were left excluded. The English and colonial American strategy towards the native population consisted of creating a dependence on European goods, thus creating debts and forcing settlements for them in treacherous contracts for land where whites could settle exclusively. Hundreds of those contracts secured white predomination over most of the American south (Walther 19).

The French followed a different approach:

> In contrast, the assimilationist impulse in France offered far greater freedom for individuals to associate not only with members of their own corporate group, but, more important, with members of other groups as well. By the eighteenth century, this freedom had become a fundamental characteristic of French society. (Johnson 16)

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, mercantilism was the keystone of economic thought in absolutist European states. Not yet comprehending the notion of competitive, yet mutually advantageous, two-way trade, mercantilists nevertheless argued that the wealth of a nation could be enhanced nonetheless through trade and that colonial commodities could contribute to the commercial wealth of the nation. The discovery and settling of the New World must be seen in this context. The prospect of national wealth was the main motivation for reaching beyond the known world, for diversifying the economy, for building new

settlements and for a willingness to trade with, displace, and even enslave Indians and blacks.

During the mercantilist era, the French concept of nation was quite different from the English one. In the seventeenth century, Colbert and Louis XIV had developed an assimilation policy that found continuity in French mercantilism. According to this theory, a nation was not specified by certain ethnic, lingual or geographic criteria, but by territory and people were justly governed by a central power (15). There was considerable freedom in France as compared to England. "Anything like the English approach of establishing norms and imposing conformity was out of question in a realm as large and diverse as France" (18). What was true for the French mainland was also true for the colonies that were considered outposts of the mother country.

The minor role assumed by plantations and the relative openness of racial interaction before 1763 were prerequisites for forming an economy with a special character of its own. Inhabitants in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced and marketed food items in their customary way. These customs were unique and stood in contrast to the economic idea that colonial planners had in mind.

The evolution of any trade is partly determined by supply and demand. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the types of food nature provided man in the lower Mississippi Valley and to consider any uneven distribution resulting from the differences in modes of subsistence (Curtin 5). In pre-industrial societies people, no matter where they lived, produced most of the food they needed themselves. Over time, they all practiced some kind of subsistence activity such as farming, hunting, and fishing – according to where they lived and to what the seasonal cycle offered. This self-sufficiency, however, did not preclude exchange beyond the household or village. In the lower Mississippi Valley, the combination

of a diverse availability of foodstuffs and the presence of varying groups with different subsistence activities resulted in the development of trade long before any whites or blacks arrived (Usner, *Indians* 150).

The physical environment was the initial determining factor that controlled the availability of food items. Indians, settlers, and slaves were all confronted with the semi-tropical climate, the swamps, the hurricanes, the floods and the dangerous wildlife. Natural vegetable products and the main food animals, such as deer, bear and turkey, were rather evenly distributed. Agricultural lands, however, were only found in the interior and seafood could only be harvested along the coast and in the Mississippi River (with its tributaries, including the lakes and bayou sections of Louisiana.) The location of food supplies determined the sites of settlements, which tended to cluster around the waters and fertile lands (Swanton 26).

The table of food items below shows the different foods available in the southeastern United States, in general, and specifically those that the various tribes of the lower Mississippi Valley utilized:

Table 1. Geographical and Tribal Distribution of the Vegetable Foods of the Southeastern Indians According to References in the Literature

Vegetable foods	Choctaw	Chickasaw	Mississippi River	Caddo	Chitimacha	Food animals	Choctaw	Chickasaw	Mississippi River	Caddo	Chitimacha
Bean	x	x	x	x	x	Deer	x	x	x	x	x
Corn	x	x	x	x	x	Bear	x	x	x	x	x
Gourd for vessels	x					Beaver		?			
Orache						Bison	?	x	x	x	
Peas (a var. of bean)		x				Elk (properly Wapiti)	?	x			
Squash, pumpkin	x	x	x	x	?	Manatee					
Sunflower	x	x	x	x		Opossum					
Blackberry	x				x	Panther					
Cane	x		x		x	Raccoon					

Vegetable foods	Choctaw	Chickasaw	Mississippi River	Caddo	Chitimacha	Food animals	Choctaw	Chickasaw	Mississippi River	Caddo	Chitimacha
Chestnut	x		x	?		Squirrel	x	x			
Chinquapin	x					Wildcat					
Cockspur grass			?			Porpoise					
Dioscorea villosa						Deer	x	x	x	x	x
Grape		x	x	x		Eel					
Groundnut			x		x	Herring					
Hickory nut	x	x	x	?	x	Mullet					
Huckleberry	x					Plaice					
Mulberry	x				x	Red horse					
Mushroom			x			Sardine			x		
Oak acorn	x		x	x		Sturgeon					
Penicum maximum	x					Tunny					
Persimmon			x	x	x	Rockfish or bass					
Plum	x		x	x		White guard fish					
Pond lily (seeds)		x	x	x	x	Wolf fish					
Pricklypear					?	Trunk fish					
Raspberry					?	Clam					
Rice, wild			x		x	Crab					
Sagittaria					x	Mussel					
Seagrape						Oyster					
Smilax	x				x	Snake	x				
Strawberry	x	x	x		x	Tortoise and turtle					x
Sweet gum	x					Alligator					
Sweetpotato (wild)	x	x	x		x	Crawfish					
Walnut			x	?	x	Snail					
Canna	x					Locusts					
Fig			x			Wasps in comb					
Muskmelon		x				Partridge					
Okra		?			?	Pigeon		x			
Orange						Turkey	x	x	x		
Passiflora		x				Duck and goose		x			
Peach			x			Carp			x		
Peanut					?	Catfish			x		
Rice						Sucker			x		
Sorghum	x										
Sweetpotato	x	x			x						
Watermelon		x	x	x							

Source: John Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) 293-295.

As the previous chapter already described and this table again shows, the link between all of the lower Mississippi Valley Native American societies was that they all depended on a maize agriculture that was accompanied by the cultivation of beans and squash. They knew how to make use of maize in infinite

ways: Adair mentions 40 different preparation methods. They roasted the green and not-quite-ripened ears, they boiled the kernels whole or broke up in pieces and they made meal and grits out of dried kernels. They cooked it in water, steamed it or made a kind of dough that could be baked to make bread. Maize was either prepared by itself or together with meat, fish, and other vegetables, such as beans, sunflower seeds and hickory nuts. One of their preparation methods was very much like what became one of the most common dishes throughout the Southeast: hominy, which the French settlers called sagamité (Adair 437-439).

Hominy[21] was the basic grain dish of colonists, slaves and Indians alike. The Picayune Creole Cook Book, published in 1901 by the New Orleans' daily newspaper, The Picayune, explains the preparation of hominy:

> Hominy is called by the Creoles the older sister of Grits. It was the Indians around Louisiana who first taught the use of hominy. They used to take the dried Indian corn and thresh it till all the yellow, hardened outer germ or hull came off, the grain being left white. ... It was the chief food of the southern negroes. But it was also a standing dish on the most elegant tables. The little Creole children were reared on 'La Saccamité.' The hominy was boiled in water in the same proportions as grits, but, of course, allowed to cook much longer, till the great white grains of corn were very soft, and yielded easily to pressure. It is still cooked in the same way, and eaten with milk or with sugar, the latter being a favorite dish with the Creole children. It is also eaten with meat and gravy, or simply with salt and butter. (192)

[21] Hominy resembles in fried form the Cajun dish coush-coush. Coush-coush is a cornbread batter cooked in a skillet with a small amount of fat until the bottom is crispy, then stirred and cooked until that bottom layer is crispy, and so on until all the batter is cooked and you have a pan full of crisp pieces of what is essentially fried cornbread (Pischoff Wuerthner xxi).

The main animals Native American societies used as foods were deer, bear and, when available, bison. In addition, seafood and small game animals, such as turkey and squirrel, formed parts of their diet. Variations within this subsistence activity depended upon the ecological niche in which the different tribes lived. Rarely was a succession of food plants and animals accessible at any one locale throughout the year in sufficient quantity to sustain life. Because of the differing modes of subsistence, the trade in food items and seasonal migration heavily influenced the lives of Indians in the Southeast. From Swanton we know for example that the Choctaw, because they had only limited hunting and fishing grounds, concentrated more on agriculture than did other tribes and that they traded a portion of their produce (Swanton 255; Usner, *Indians* 155).

It is important to understand that food had a great cultural significance for Indians and that their economic and ceremonial activities were closely connected. This can be seen in the fact that many tribes named their towns according to foods that were commonly found within their borders and they also often named the months according to the most important food item for each particular moon as Le Page du Pratz reported in 1758 (Swanton 260f).

In 1540, the Spanish conqueror Hernando de Soto was the first white to cross the territories now known as Louisiana. Intending to plunder the territory, his spoils fell far from his expectations (Pinck 43). The Spaniards did not find it necessary to settle in Louisiana. Exploration, acceptance of dominion, religious conversion and trade were their main goals. After that first visit, and for one hundred and thirty years following, Louisiana seems to have been forgotten by the Europeans. In 1682, René Robert Cavalier La Salle traveled down the Mississippi and claimed the river and its tributaries for France, naming it Louisiana after his king, Louis XIV (44). It took several years before a colony

was founded in this region, when naval captain Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville was sent by France. Accompanied by his younger brothers, Bienville and Lieutenant Sauvole, Iberville anchored in the harbor of Ship Island and established Biloxi.

In Louisiana, the French did not pursue the Canadian assimilation policy as systematically, even though they tried to follow the major outline (Johnson 30). France relied militarily on the native population and Louisiana was part and parcel of the French military and colonial strategy that was reflected in 1698 when Pierre d'Iberville was commissioned to found a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi:

> The French feared an English move southwestward that could result in the eventual seizure of Spain's rich mines in Mexico. But with a base in the mouth of the Mississippi, France could league together the Indian tribes of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes in a secure alliance. (29)

France not only cooperated with the Indians but also tried to unite them. Iberville began negotiations "to settle intertribal wars and affect a general peace among all Indian groups friendly to the French so as to maintain a united front against the English (31). In 1700 and 1701, Iberville, who died of yellow fewer in 1706 (Pinck 44), left several young cabin boys with the Natchez and Chickasaw tribes to study their language and cultures (Johnson 31).

Mutual respect for cultural rules pertaining to food and its exchange constitutes yet another factor that helps determine whether different culture groups accept a food. Food, therefore, also was part of the trade protocol. Important elements included the giving of presents, smoking the calumet and the sharing of food. Passages from two letters sent to Iberville from Henry de Tonti in 1702 illustrate how these customs were respected. Tonti reports about a tour he made among the Choctaw and Chickasaw and describes how "the men

came to meet us with some food" (Galloway 171) as soon as they reached the first cornfields of one village. He further informs Iberville that he arranged:

> for the reception of the savages whom I (Tonti) am bringing you (Iberville), and for the presents that you wish to give them ... at the Tome 5 sacks of wheat-meal gruel & a sack of oats and as much again at Mobile so that these people will not draw upon your food supplies and that they may be paid at the settlements. Permit me to tell you sir that these nations wish to be won over by considerable presents ... (172)

When England declared war on the French in 1702, France relied on the Indians even more heavily. During these years, it was a constant problem to find enough people who were willing to settle in Louisiana. The low number of settlers resulted from both an extremely high mortality rate and the fact that many colonists returned to France. The basic problem was that moving to Louisiana did not seem to promise a better life than what people already had in France.

Iberville died in 1706 and Bienville was appointed to succeed him. Bienville founded New Orleans in 1718 and, because it showed many advantages of location in comparison to Biloxi, it soon became the capital of the province (Brasher 5; Hatfield 3f).

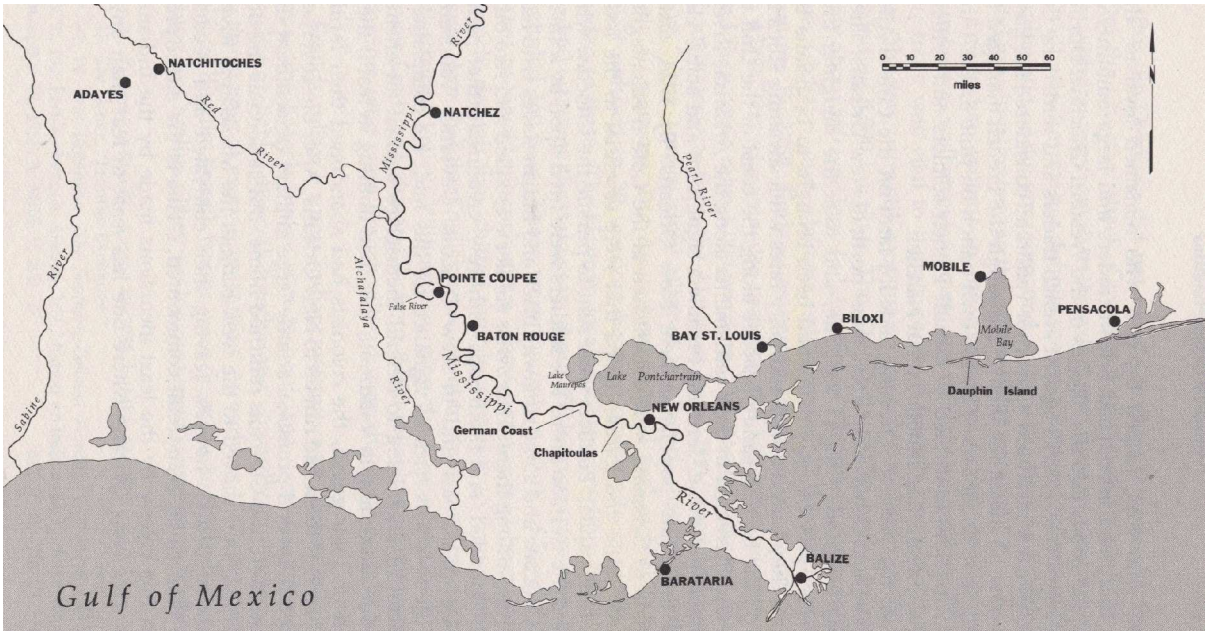

Fig. 2. John Snead, map *Louisiana During the French Period* by, in G. M. Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1992) 17.

When New Orleans was founded by Bienville, 30 prisoners, six carpenters and four Canadians (Walther 21), its natural environment was a serious obstacle for the production of food. The arriving settlers had to deal with the semi-tropical climate, swamps, hurricanes, floods and the wildlife:

> Adjacent lands, mostly swamps, marshes, dense woodlands, or sandy relict beach soils, proved notably unsuited to farming. Lacking local production and perpetually short of imported foodstuffs, the colony became almost entirely dependent on nearby Indians for sustenance. (Johnson 33)

Between 1703 and 1710, the French settlements ran out of food supplies four times, a situation that led to interethnic relations. The colonists depended early on almost entirely on food trade with Indians. New Orleans, from its beginning, was primarily settled by French people who were not farmers and who had to have close contact with Indians to fulfil nutritional, domestic and sexual needs. Besides this major group, there were African slaves, Canadians, Indians "and the miscellaneous collection of colonists France was sending in - Rheinish

Germans as well as convicted army deserters, smugglers, prostitutes, vagabonds, libertines, and poorhouse inmates" (36).

The colony was in constant need of settlers and the result was that many colonists had to be brought by force. The following table gives an idea of the social composition of the colonists:

Table 2. French Colonists Sent to Louisiana between 1717 and 1721

Officers	122
Soldiers	977
Employees	43
Workers of the Company of the Indies	302
Holders of land concessions	119
Their indentured servants (*engagés*)	2,462
Salt smugglers and other exiles	1,278
Women	1,215
Children	502
TOTAL	7,020

Source : Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. Africans in Colonial Louisiana (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1992) 7.

Most of these people lacked either the knowledge or the willingness, or both, to gather and grow their own food. The ones who did not intend to do any farming settled primarily in towns. As a result, 25% of Louisiana's colonial population lived in New Orleans by mid-century and had to be fed from outside sources. Furthermore, many of the colonists were not skilled craftsmen. Therefore black slaves undertook many professions such as cook, baker, brewer, miller, butcher, and so on (Usner, *Indians* 54).

These early French colonists from prisons and workhouses proved unable to create a solid agricultural basis, as they were mainly unskilled people, few of whom had any farming experience at all (Johnson 33). Even if they had wanted

to succeed in agricultural pursuits, they lacked any knowledge and experience in that area. "Drawn virtually entirely from the urban working classes, not a single one out of more than three hundred troops sent to Louisiana before 1720 listed farming as his former occupation" (32).

Louisiana's constant lack of food in the early days stemmed from the fact that the French colonialists were looking for wealth to carry away rather than settlers to grow crops. French colonial policy was centered more on trading furs than in settling in those years (Pinck 45). The crown gave Louisiana to proprietary companies, first in 1712 to the company of Antoine Crozat and later, in 1717, to the Company of the Indies of John Law (36). In 1723, Law's firm was restructured as the Company of the Indies. All three of these companies sought their profit through the exploitation of Louisiana - at the expense of the colonists and putting the long-term welfare of the colony itself at risk. Corruption became a major problem. Officials appointed to rule the colony frequently personally profited by seizing supplies sent from the mother country and selling them themselves at high prices to the settlers (Hoffman 121ff; Din 11).

In general, the prices for French imports were raised and those being paid for Louisiana's few exports were lowered. The settlers, therefore, were quick to discover that the indigenous population (and later their black slaves as well) would supply the necessary food far more cheaply and much more reliably than their own motherland and so they relied on trade instead to support themselves.

An early travel account from 1775 relates that the Indians:

> carried the spirit of husbandry so far as to cultivate leeks, garlic, cabbage and some other garden plants, of which they make no use, in order to make profit of them to the traders; they also used to carry poultry to market at Mobile, although it lays at the distance of an hundred and twenty miles from the nearest town; ... of their

> fowls and hogs they seldom eat any as they keep them for profit. (Romans 84-85)

This description of how the trade in food with the colonists affected the Indians' farming practices not only provides evidence that it increased the variety of products cultivated by Indians, but also that despite availability the new products did not necessarily find acceptance as foods. Indians indeed rejected most items of the colonial cuisine, including such common things as salad, soup, wine and poultry (Usner, *Food* 283).

Aside from Indian nations such as the Choctaws, the Chickasaws and the Natchez, who occupied the largest parts of Louisiana outside the boundaries of the colonial settlements and which traded frequently with the colonists, there were about 20 different "petite nations", being the survivors of formerly larger tribes. These nations lived close to Europeans or had moved closer to the European settlements in order to be able to trade with them on a more regular, person-to-person, basis. Additionally, there were Indians such as the Chitimachas enslaved by colonists. The enslaved and the regularly trading nations played the most important part in contributing to Indian food culture within the new evolving eating tradition (Usner, *Indians* 24, 45, 60).

Table 2 shows the low percentage of women during the early years. From 1704 onward they brought in several shiploads of French women to marry the colonizers (Walther 21). Many of these women were in their late thirties and had been convicted of different crimes:

> And to add to the poor man's anxieties, the lonely settlers clamored for wives. An appeal for wives was sent to France, and the authorities at home, scurrying about in mad haste to meet the demands of the important new colony in Louisiana, scoured the houses of correction, the hospitals, the prisons and the streets for

> the much-desired wives, and sent them to the wilderness of New France. (Cram 305)

The overall scarcity of white women made Indian and African women invaluable for most French men. These female slaves not only became their sexual partners, but also fulfilled the various household duties (such as cooking, trading and growing of food), and thus acted as cultural transmitters (Hall 3ff; Usner, *Indians* 50, 57, 235).

As the production of food by the local Indian tribes ran short due to the growing colony's consumption, the colonists asked their Indian friends for captured women from other Indian tribes, to serve as slaves and grow food for them. Beginning in 1719, male African slaves were brought in as well and both groups tended to marry. Female Indian slaves were not only attractive for the Africans, as "the great number of female Indian slaves proved too tempting for the mostly male colonists to resist" (Johnson 34). For the male black slaves there was obviously no choice whether to bring their wife or not. Runaways usually settled with the Indian tribes as there seemed to have been no racial discrimination between them, as Hall reports (65).

A great mixing of blood from three continents took place, particularly since relations between Africans and Indians and between whites and Indians were legally sanctioned. "In addition to concubinage with Indian slaves, marriages between colonists and Indians flourished" (Johnson 34). Despite the official view of the pope, denouncing Africans and Indians as sub-humans and thus ready-made subjects for slavery, "the local church, at least for a time, actively promoted such marriages" (35).

This, however, was just a temporarily heretic policy, because "after Iberville's death in 1706, Bienville began issuing bans against unauthorized

residency with Indians and against Indian marriages″ (35). Still, Bienville's regime was rather easy on Indians, using force only as a last resort and allowing them to be integrated in the market economy of New Orleans. Indians strengthened their ties with the blacks and also continued to supply foodstuffs to the city and thus to the making of New Orleans′ cooking (Ostendorf, *Eating Culture* 43).

Besides the run-away slaves living with Indian tribes, or forming "mixed Indian-African maroon settlements hidden away in the swamps on the outskirts of New Orleans" (Johnson 38), the male African slaves had intermarried with Indian female slaves in considerable numbers. Even slaves staying with their masters were forced into closer contact with the Indians since their masters were often unable to feed them properly (38). Slaves were given free time on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to work elsewhere for food or to cultivate their own small plots that they were given. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The readiness to mix racially, in any case had great effect on the outcome of the new colonial culture. Soon enough, many settlements of runaway slaves were formed all over Louisiana, and they established a closely-knit network that helped the colony to survive:

> A very high level of cooperation existed between maroons and slaves both on plantations and in the city. The maroons did not seek to withdraw from the economy of New Orleans but actively engaged in trade in the city. They cut and sold squared cypress logs to white sawmill owners and cypress troughs and tubs for processing indigo. They made and sold baskets and sifters from willow reeds. They fished, trapped birds, collected berries, and grew corn, sweet potatoes, and squash. (Hall 79)

The trade in food showed a high degree of cross-cultural adaptability and creativity. A process that Wolf explained:

> In the rough-and-tumble of social interaction, groups are known to exploit the ambiguities of inherited forms, to impart new evaluations of valences to them, to borrow forms more expressive of their interests, or to create wholly new forms to answer to changed circumstances. (387)

While France had its own experience violently conquering territory and eradicating native populations, its policy in the lower Mississippi Valley in the beginning was toward an assimilation approach. "It seemed sensible to cultivate the friendship and cooperation of native populations" (Johnson 20). This proved an important factor when the French were winning back Indian tribes from the English trade network in the mid-eighteenth century even though their prices were higher, while their goods and distribution were less so, "The French succeeded largely because, in contrast to the English, they did not encroach on the Indians' lands, rupture their societies, or push them farther and farther a field" (39).

In a cultural respect, the French colonists were open to influences from their social environment and they did not try to intensively spread French culture and values. In fact, they went along even to the extent of looking for spouses among the natives. This led to a process of mixing cultures that was far from one-sided (28).

Of course, French people did not become "Indians." Fieldhouse describes such a process according to which the relations between the French people and the native inhabitants of the French colonies developed as "acculturation." It is "the process by which groups and individuals adapt to the norms and values of an alien culture" (Fieldhouse 6). Susan Kalcik describes this as a pull of the old

and a push of the new influences (38). It means nothing else than what is meant here by using the term *creolization*: Each culture retains its own unity and opens its totality, and both of them are mutually enriched.

What began as a matter of acculturation also became a strategy for cultural survival. In general, the farming and hunting practices and the tastes and preferences of all cultures involved were affected by this early food exchange − affected, but not entirely changed −a process this thesis calls *creolization*. Each group selected from other food cultures only those elements that were useful to them and integrated them successfully into existing lifestyles. The different ethnic groups proved able to extract the necessities of life not only from the natural, but also from their social environment. This process went on when food markets evolved in New Orleans and what Chapter 5.2 "The Markets of New Orleans" deals with.

The trade in food was essential for the people in the lower Mississippi Valley and continued even when economic, ideological, and political change occurred near the end of the eighteenth century. These sweeping changes included the economic shift towards plantation production, the evolution of a racial ideology and the birth of the new nation − the United States of America. As a result, the number of whites and blacks increased dramatically in the region (the American, French and Haitian revolutions also were strong influences in this regard). Racial ideology, which obviously affected blacks as well as Indians, became a severe hindrance to the formerly open cross-racial exchange. Laws restricted and regulated previously open economic relations.

Indians gradually lost out in the new demographic competition. When the French started to settle Louisiana in the late seventeenth century, the number of Indians living there had already significantly declined from the time of the first

European penetration into the area by De Soto in the year 1539.[22] The Spaniards not only left behind common European diseases but also they brought a pig herd with them that carried many illnesses that were deadly to humans and also to many animals crucial to the Indians' food supply, including deer, bear and turkey.

Despite this decline the Indians still made up the majority of Louisiana's population during the eighteenth century. In 1726, they outnumbered the rest by 35,000 to 4,000 and thus constituted the biggest group of food consumers and producers, playing a significant role in the formation of the regional eating tradition (Galloway 399; Hall, 10). By the second decade of the nineteenth-century, the non-indigenous population surpassed that of the Indians. The growing demand for land by the whites (and their livestock) stripped away the very basis of the Indians' subsistence way of life and Native Americans became marginal to the new economic scheme (Usner, *Indians* 210; Usner, *American Indians* 309).

The feeling of superiority and a lack of economic need prevented social interaction for the most part. This stood in sharp contrast to the interaction that had taken place during the early colonial times in Louisiana. These developments, however, did not mean the end to food exchange in this region. Moreover "settlers, slaves, and Indians accommodated to and resisted the newly emerging economic order by pursuing customary production and marketing

[22] Even though different ethnic groups were somehow tolerating each other most of the time, there were frequent clashes. Superiority was displayed toward Native Americans and frequently genocide occurred. This was not necessarily accomplished by violent acts of war; it has been estimated that epidemic diseases killed as many as 97% of the native populations of the Americas. A large number also died due to destruction of their homes and as a result of the buffalo's near extinction (Knopf 94-95, 130).

practices, which now became more like strategies of survival" (Usner, *Indians* 33).

Besides the French the only other identifiable European group was a small number of Germans. Some German settlers had come to New Orleans as early as the late 1720s and more followed in the 1740s when times for farmers were hard (Johnson 42). It was these Germans, "expert farmers brought in by the Company of The Indies during the 1720s and settled along the Mississippi north of New Orleans on the 'German Coast', who had proved the single most important factor in saving the colony from starvation during that critical decade" (42). Because these German peasants could not keep alive their traditions of "pork and sausage, cabbage, lentils, rye bread and beer" they quickly adapted to what they encountered there (Tannahill 244). Their impact on the regional economic development is shown by the fact that as early as in 1769 they "harvested roughly 14,000 *quarts*[23] of corn, 12,300 *quarts* of rice, and 1,400 *quarts* of beans" (Kondert 390). This group, however, was too small to keep its identity and they soon intermarried with their French neighbors.

The integrative, assimilation policy of the French motherland was mirrored in the colonies (albeit to a degree probably not welcome in Paris) while the English segregationist approach was also reflected in their colonial policies (Johnson 24). This was to be seen most strikingly in the construction of different ethnic groups that were not part of the French social attitudes but of the English ones. "When the English finally conquered Canada from France in 1763, they immediately imposed a policy that distinctly separated the new dominant English group from

[23] A *quart* was a French unit of measurement which could vary in weight. When applied to grains, a quart was roughly the same as a barrel and usually weighed 160 pounds. Surrey (1916), p. 265f.

the French and Indians and at the same increasingly separated the two subordinate groups from each other" (26).

England tried to cleanse its territories. As early as 1755 thousands of Acadians who had lived in Canada took refuge in New Orleans and were dubbed *Cajuns* there (Walther 21). Since the early colony was desperate to get good farmers, the French and Spanish colonial governments even encouraged about 10,000 Acadian families to come from Canada after their territory there was ceded to England. In spite of a constant lack of sufficient funds, colonial officials paid for the Acadians' passages, allotted them land, assisted with tools and, in general, gave all kinds of support. The first major wave of Acadians arrived between 1755 and 1767, and a second one in 1785. They formed new settlements along the Mississippi about seventy miles above New Orleans and at Atakapas and Opelousas on Bayou Teche (Kinnaird 17; Usner 173-188).

The Acadians were farmers and fishermen who originally came from Normandy. They were very poor and faced severe hardship in the difficult climate of Louisiana. In order to survive, they had to adapt to the new surrounding and its seasonal cycle. They became especially adept at growing corn and rice, and also had great success in expanding their livestock herds. They also were knowledgeable of seafood, and the waters of the nearby rivers, lakes, bayous and the sea not only provided them with this food resource but also with alligators, turtles, frogs, ducks, quails, ... (Collin 142).

The Spanish, too, were being limited numerically to some administrative personnel. The ones "who came to New Orleans found themselves far more changed by the city than they were able to change it" (47f). The Spanish period that started in 1766, when Spain took over the colony, did not establish a solid Spanish influence. There was a major increase in population, but few of the

newcomers were Spaniards. The Spanish were mainly unmarried and, for example, 67% of the officers over twenty years of age intermarried with French *creole*s rather than bring in Spanish wives. The Spanish were accustomed to settling together with the native population in their American colonies, as Pike reports from New Mexico, where whites made up only about 5% of the population of the 'Spanish' villages (367), while another 20% were *creole*s and 25% mixed (463).

In general, the immigrants that arrived during the Spanish time from 1763 onward did not bring significant change since the Spanish Catholic culture was not decisively different from the French. There was no need to draw a dividing line between the newcomers and the local population. The Spanish thus adapted rather quickly to the food they encountered. In 1779, five ships with 1,600 Canary Islanders reached Louisiana. The inventory of food for the passage shows what they had grown and eaten in their home country, namely "biscuits, or hardtack, flour, beef, pork, salted fish, peas, garbanzos, rice, barley, potatoes, olive oil, vinegar, eggs, onions, garlic, pumpkins, cheese, olives, honey, dried fruit, sugar, wine, coffee, tea, and chocolate″ (Din 18).

After they settled along the bayous, they started to produce "corn, kidney beans, 'ordinary beans,' fowl, eggs, butter, hogs, and assorted vegetables″ (60). Since most farms, however, did not raise cattle for beef, milk or butter production, and only a few had pigs and only about half had chickens, most of the families just survived on corn and beans as did the Indians (25, 74).

Since *creolization* is always a two way process the Spanish also left some of their traditions in Louisiana. "Several celebrated items from the catalog of New Orleans cuisine derived from Spanish dishes, jambalaya from Spain's paella for instance″ (Johnson 51).

The Spanish colonial rule brought about some improvement in the rights of slaves, which proved favorable for a more positive atmosphere between the different social groups and therefore more cultural exchange:

> Convinced that unduly harsh treatment engendered slave revolts, but unable to persuade the planters of their argument, Louisiana's Spanish began to interpose themselves and the local administration as guarantors of slaves' rights as specified in Spanish law, particularly the rights to reasonable treatment and self-purchase. (54)

New Orleans, with its peripheral position between the English, French and Spanish empires, became a counterpoint to the Anglo-Saxon North America (Ostendorf, *Eating Culture* 35).

As a very general rule, degrees of closeness of contact between groups correlated with the degree of cultural exchange. Social interaction of field slaves and of Indians was almost exclusively confined within the group. The marketing of food stuffs, however, gave some of them the possibility to go beyond this enclaveness. Thus, persons who had the most contact with others served as carriers of the new developing culture of later arrivals. The growth of a non-plantation and non tribal community complementary to the plantation system and of social groupings that functioned outside the boundaries of that system had great influence on the development of the society in general and the food culture in particular.

4.3 Slavery and Food

A major change was brought to the colony of Louisiana not by a food crop, but by tobacco. Bienville, despite explicit orders of the company, restricted tobacco growing to a small strip at the lower Mississippi, thus protecting the

favorite hunting grounds of his Indian allies, the Natchez, although it was considered the best land for growing tobacco (Johnson 37). When the company realized the systematic obstruction Bienville was carrying out against their orders, he was replaced by Etienne de Périer who brought decisive changes. "He quickly expanded agricultural development into the interior, particularly into the rich uplands held by the Natchez″ (37).

The Natchez resisted the expropriation of their lands and in 1729, when their cultivated fields were handed over to colonists they rebelled and killed 259 settlers and soldiers. The French responded with a series of bloody massacres and within three years annihilated the Natchez nation completely (37). This genocide weakened the alliance between the French and the Indians considerably and the Company of the Indies decided to return Louisiana to the crown. In 1733, Bienville returned to New Orleans as governor and "it was about that time that the miscellaneously heterogeneous population of Louisiana, or at least of New Orleans, began to jell into a colonial society″ (38).

Soon, the colorful mixture of people from a variety of origins and ways of life in New Orleans became attractive for settlers in the countryside of Louisiana. They went to New Orleans, leaving the plantation owners stripped of labor. As a consequence "planters shrilly demanded the importation of African slaves to work their lands.″ The first ones came as early as 1719, but the number greatly increased starting in 1723 (36).

The need for slave labour brought so many blacks to Louisiana that the French lost their numerical majority of non-natives in 1721. It was to no surprise that this massive importation of people changed not only the demographic but also the cultural structure of Louisiana considerably. "The formative contingent of slaves brought to Louisiana came directly from Africa and

quickly became a substantial majority" (Hall 67). Typically for Louisiana, most black slaves came from the same African area and tribes.

> Between 1719 and 1731, twenty-two of the twenty-three slave-trading ships that came from Africa while France ruled Louisiana arrived. Between June 1719 and January 1731, sixteen slave-trading ships arrived in Louisiana from the Senegal region. (67)

This heavy concentration of slaves came from Senegambia, "a region of homogeneous culture and a common style of history" (Curtin 6). The slave trade from Senegal intensified after 1725. "Two-thirds of the slaves brought to Louisiana under French rule came from Senegambia, and they included a strong and influential contingent of Bambara" (Hall 68). The reason for bringing in Senegambians, or especially Bambara, in big numbers was simple, "in 1720, the Company of the Indies was given administrative control and a trade monopoly in both Louisiana and Senegambia" (68).

The history of Senegambia offered a chance to obtain many slaves as victorious warfarers sold their opponents into slavery. "Those sent to Louisiana were mainly captives taken during the wars arising out of the founding and consolidation of the Segu Bambara Empire established by Marmari Kalubali" (69). After 1723, nearly all slaves to Louisiana were captured Bambaras, people of the Sudanic civilization. Victims of Bambara wars, enslaved and transported westward, were also classified as Bambara slaves. The French used the term for any Senegalese slave soldier (Usner, *From African Captivity* 36). In the chaotic world of early Louisiana, this homogeneity was a highly valuable feature that allowed slaves to largely hold onto their own common culture (Hall 29, 160; Curtin 4).

Slave traders were just interested in getting as many slaves as possible in good condition across the Atlantic. Therefore, they fed them on food which was

familiar to them. The recommended diet for slaves included yams, peanuts, plantains, corn, okra, black-eyed peas and hot chili, since all these foods remain palatable long after harvesting and were thus ideal for use on the long voyages across the Atlantic (Wilson 116). Slaves carried other items or at least the seeds with them and later cultivated them. Ginger, watermelon and sweet melon are examples of them.

It is interesting to note that some of these foods that made their way as African foods across the Atlantic actually derived from there, as the chapter "The Columbus Exchange" described. For example, hot peppers, a New World crop, had been introduced to West Africa as early as the sixteenth century. When Africans were captured and transported as slaves across the Atlantic, hot peppers returned with them. Especially, since Africans praised it as medicine against stomach disorders and dysentery which were major scourges of the Atlantic crossing.

Chili had become a spice in many African dishes and thus was an important psychological factor for slaves in the New World. Rozin suggests that hot flavors are "used to provide a familiar and reassuring flavor and thus blunt fear of the unknown whilst at the same time promoting acceptance of new foods" (Fieldhaouse 216). There were other originally American foods, such as corn and peanuts which the slaves were familiar with due to early introduction into West Africa and which helped them to adjust to their new life (Viola 167).

In West Africa, social tradition placed a very high value on cultivation of the land. West Africans believed that they would keep a proper relationship with the creator of the earth by doing so. Growing food, therefore, was culturally highly important to them (Curtin 4). Black slaves grew food wherever possible and, since they were familiar with the semitropical environment, most of the food

items they had cultivated for their livelihood back in Africa, such as rice, yams, millet, sorghum, maize and bananas, flourished in southeastern Louisiana as well. Thus, many African foods, okra[24] and rice among them, were cultivated in Louisiana (Perdue 42f; Usner, 1992, p. 197).

Fig. 3. Okra Plant. Personal photograph by author. 1995

As in France, maize was well known in West Africa, having been introduced by Portuguese sailors as early as the sixteenth century. It soon found wide

[24] The Angolan word for okra is *guingombo*. Slaves used to prepare a soup that contained everything available. The basics were herbs, vegetables and seafood, and meat when possible. Okra was one of the vegetables and served as thickening agent. This dish became known as *gombo* which later was supplanted by gumbo, which today is still one of New Orleans' favored dishes. The following recipe is a modern day version and shows just one of the many ways it can be prepared:

2 pounds medium-size fresh shrimp (with shells); 1 gallon Chicken Stock (...); 1/3 cup butter; 3 pounds okra, sliced; 1 large onion, finely chopped; 1 green pepper, finely chopped; 1 clove garlic, minced; 2 tablespoons chopped parsley; 11/2 cups canned tomatoes (...) Peel and clean shrimp. Put shells in the chicken stock and boil at least 10 minutes. Strain and set aside. Melt the shortening in a soup pot. Add the okra, onion and green pepper and sauté until liquid has evaporated. Add garlic and chopped parsley and cook for about 2 minutes more, then add the strained chicken stock and the tomatoes. Stir thoroughly and add the shrimp. Cook over medium heat for about 30 minutes. Serve with rice. (Burton 197)

acceptance as a traditional staple that is still known in Africa as "funchi" or "fungee." It is made from cooked maize-meal and has the consistency of a pudding. This dish is very similar to the Indian tafula or French sagamitè and English hominy that the early traveler Catesby describes as "Mush ... make of the meal, in the manner of hasty pudding" (Swanton 353; Leith-Ross 63; Viola 167; Curtin 13, 24; Post 62).

This similarity of dishes should not be considered as a phenomenon of early acculturation, but hints much more to the fact that similar economic and social preconditions may have similar results. Implicit in anthropological approaches to cultural similarities is the acceptance of the idea of parallel development, not only arising from the survival of singular aspects of one culture coming into contact with another, but also determined by the parallel conditions existing in each area.

Another staple of West African diet was wet rice (oryza glaberrima). It was domesticated between the Sine-Saloum and the Casamance rivers in Senegambia as early as 1500 B.C. (Viola 165). Negroes from Senegambia, therefore, were widely familiar with rice cultivation. It is likely that rice as a plantation crop was introduced to white masters in Louisiana by slaves who grew it in their gardens (Wood 58-62). For sure, however, the slaves' incorporation of rice in their food culture let it become not only a major cash crop, but also a core food in Louisiana. Slaves not only knew how to plant and harvest it, how to remove the husks from harvested grains by pounding them with a pestle in a mortar, but also how to prepare it.

When tobacco and indigo in the lower Mississippi Valley didn't prove to be ideal crops, the planters looked for an alternative. Rice as a cash crop had already reached a considerable significance in Carolina as early as the 1720s.

Since colonists and Indians knew nothing about this crop, it was the slaves' knowledge that made it successful. In addition, wet rice was perfectly suited for the tropical climate of Louisiana and its heavy soils, deposited by the Mississippi. Rice could be produced on the same fields year after year without rotations and fertilizers. Thus rice, in comparison to tobacco and indigo, was much better suited for Louisiana as a cash crop and also had major advantages as a food plant in comparison to the demanding corn (Cattle 243).

Rice was adopted with success and rapidity by all ethnic groups. Surely one reason for this was its availability and cheapness once it became a cash crop, but certainly its compatibility with the well-known corn or wheat also contributed to it. Like corn and wheat, rice can be pounded to make grits or mashed to serve as a flour-substitute for bread, cake, waffles and a huge variety of other dishes. It entered the cooking tradition in form of jambalaya, or to go with beans, any sauce or gumbo. Rice simply became the standing *creole* dish, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.4 "Creole Cooking" (The Picayune Creole Cook Book 172-181).

In the South, few people were able to choose their diet from a broad variety of dishes. These people mainly were slaveholding planters, but their numbers were quite small:

> The slave-owning planters class, the ones who lived in mansions and had overseers, like in the movie Gone with the Wind, was a very small percentage of the white population in the South. In 1850, only about 25 percent of white families owned slaves, and of those, only 1,933 families owned more than 100 slaves. (Civitello 183)

The life of white settlers overall was poor; they did not comprise a rich colonial class. The products obtained from their small plantations included meat,

grain, and vegetables for subsistence and tobacco, rice and other staples that could be sold for cash. This seemingly poor lifestyle was, in comparison to the slaves' existence, a very high living standard (183). Slaves subsisted on rice and corn as stables. Vegetables from their own gardens and what they hunted, fished or gathered together with salted meat and fish made up the rest of their diet.

Stoddard, traveling through Louisiana after its purchase by the Jefferson administration, describes that only few owners give any food to the slaves besides a small amount of corn, forcing the slaves to rely on their own efforts during their spare time (332f). The following travel account from 1807 indicates as well that the rations slaves received barely saved them from starving:

> Im untern Louisiana werden die Neger äußerst schlecht genährt. Jeder erhält monatlich etwas über ein Fäßchen Mais in Aehren, welches nicht mehr als ein Drittel-Fäßchen in Körnern*) ausmacht; auch nehmen noch viele Eigentümer etwas für ihre eigene Ration davon weg. *) Ohngefähr 60 Pfund. (Perrin du Lac 257)

In Louisiana, he reports that the slaves' food in the Mississippi territory mainly consisted of salted meat and corn as well as the products of the cows and gardens they were given. When animals were butchered, slaves usually received what white folks rejected. Thus they had to learn to use any part of an animal, from the head to the tail and they created out of need many delicious dishes this way (Joyner 100). Some cook books still teach how to prepare glands, tripe, pigs' feet, hogshead, kidneys, liver, tails, ears, or brains (Picayune Creole Cook Book and The New Orleans Cook Book). Here the *creolization* process Chapter 2 described becomes apparent. Citing Hannerz once more, "There is, in the creole understanding of society and the world, that sense of a continuous spectrum of interacting forms, ... In relation to this, there is a built-in political economy of

culture, as social power and material resources are matched with the spectrum of cultural forms" (12).

Economic forces shaped ideas about the social role of food. Questions like who should prepare it, how it should be prepared, and what should be eaten all centred on the black slave cook. As for the few rich white planters, their meals were more sophisticated and it was the black female slaves who prepared them. Linda Civitello reports that in the plantation owner's kitchen:

> The white plantation mistress gave instructions but she did not cook, so the black female slave cook reigned supreme in the southern kitchen. She had a skilled, high-status job with a great deal of prestige. She worked in the house, not in the fields, and she was proud of it. Slave owners were afraid of their cooks because the cooks had the power to poison them and sometimes did. (183)

These black slaves laid the foundations of one centerpiece of what is considered Southern culture today:

> Fine southern cooking and legendary southern hospitality were made possible by the labor of women slaves. Food historian Karen Hess states that in the first half of the 19th century, all southern cookbooks by white women were recipes that they got from black cooks. The first cookbook by an African-American, What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking, was published in 1881 in San Francisco. (184)

One could say that the plantation kitchen was a kind of free territory - one of the earliest territories in which black females could feel the joys of ruling, since "In the South, the plantation kitchen was separate from the house, just another outbuilding along with the dairy, the stable, and the outhouse" (Civitello 184). Thus these women were predominantly responsible for passing on critical knowledge of cooking and thus important cultural knowledge as well (Inness 7).

Another such field that helped preserve cultural knowledge was the slave garden. The slaves were daily given a two-hour lunch break to work for themselves (Littlefield 97), during which they also produced fruits, vegetables and firewood to sell to other people (Usner *Indians* 39). Growing food was a natural part of the African heritage and during slavery it became a matter of survival.

Blacks grew food and participated in local food trade because it meant achieving an escape from severe malnutrition. Mintz pointed out that growing ones own food also meant a certain degree of autonomy to have the freedom of choice which foods to plant and being able to trade part of their own produce. The cultural and economic effect of what began as subsistence production was immense. It had a very high impact on the formation of a food culture in the lower Mississippi Valley.

Historically, as it relates to food and diet, black people in the South were divided into two groups. One group, the black slaves on the plantations, was forced to cook and eat foods that could be prepared easily, in a short time in sufficient quantities. "These people had to use the foods available to them, and they were ingenious in their use of spices and herbs to make ordinary foods palatable" (Sanjur 251).

The other group, made up of house workers, was able to obtain various foods from the owners' household. A wider variety of food was available to them than to the slaves in the fields. One can say, "the food habits developed by blacks were combinations of the eating habits of these different groups of people during slavery" (Sanjur 252).

Both groups were also influenced by their close contact to other ethnic groups, such as Indians and Europeans. It was the *creolization* process going

both ways, "The European cooking techniques underwent many adaptations as the black woman added her African cultural style" (Hughes 273). On the other hand, Europeans added their cooking styles to the newly evolving cooking culture as well. The cultural flow is not simply one way. The *creolization* process is not merely a passive acceptance of the cultural guideline of one to the other, but it involves an active, creative response. Any food culture is continuously *creolized* by other food cultures it encounters as well as *creolizing* these other food cultures.

Notions of enculturation and acculturation, restructuring and reinterpretation, along parallel lines, can help explain cultural phenomena in the New World. In the case of New Orleans a too generalized 'European' explanation to other causation alternatives is definitely wrong. It became apparent that the survival of particular European, African or Indian phenomena in comparison with the non-survival of others was due to specific political, ideological, economical and demographic conditions inherent in the new situation in the Lower Mississippi Valley in general. Some phenomena were even caused by particular social and economic conditions that existed elsewhere with similar results and had nothing to do with some kind of foreign heritage.

The formation of a *creolized* culture in any one particular place - such as New Orleans, as this thesis focuses - must be seen in a comparative and differentiated view. Discussing the Caribbean, Mintz pointed out that among the factors that may have influenced such differentiation were:

> the type of local economic development; the presence or absence of colonial institutions within which all colonists could participate; the relative proportions of different social groupings, particularly of slaves and freemen; the distinctions of privilege established by the

> metropolis, to separate 'creoles' from 'homelanders'; and the sexual and mating codes and practices in each colony. (1971, p. 487)

As the next chapter discusses the process of *creolization* in the city of New Orleans in more detail the continuing nature of the contact situation must be kept in mind to understand the cultural configuration that developed in this specific town:

> New Orleans served as a distinctive cultural entrepôt, where peoples from Europe and Africa initially intertwined their lives and customs with those of the native inhabitants of the New World. The resulting way of life differed dramatically from the culture that was spawned in the English colonies of America. (Hirsch xf)

Chapter 5. The Creolization of Food in New Orleans

The first part of this thesis focused on cultural food theories, the theoretical background to the process of *creolization*, and discussed factors influencing the development of a regional eating tradition, such as colonialism, exchange economies, slavery and immigration. The comparison with the linguistic use of the term *creole* in Chapter 2 was used in order to help understand this complex process of cultural transformation. A closer look at *creolization* must now be taken to avoid generating misinterpretations. There are three major distinctions between the way linguists use the term and the usage in this thesis:

First of all, in the linguistic sense a *creole* is a reduced or simplified form of another language. This is not at all what is meant by the author of this thesis by using the term *creolization* in terms of cultural food evolutions. The opposite of simplification and reduction is indeed what *creolization* stands for here, namely creativity and enrichment.

Secondly, linguists understand *creoles* to a large extent in their genesis as European phenomena. The precise nature and degree of European influences depends, however, on the ways in which the cultural, political and sociological situation developed in any particular place. In New Orleans there were important European influences from French, Spanish, German, Italian and other immigrants, but African and Indian influences were just as significant as was described in the previous chapter.

Third, according to the linguist view, there is a tendency for the *creole* to become more and more modified in the direction of the model language and to disappear as the acculturation process continues. In contrast to this perspective, *creolization* in this context is the continuum process. *Creole* food is not a fixed entity that persists in an unchanged manner in the cuisine of New Orleans.

Creole food is the synonym for the creativity of cooks in a never ending acculturation process. Food, much faster than speech, shows the dynamics of such a process.

In a historical and social analysis of the Caribbean, Palmié criticizes the terms "bricolage" and "creolization":

> For what both suggest are templates that essentially lie outside the concrete processes of reflection, communication, and struggle by which individuals attempt to forge forms of selfhood and moral community in interaction with their historically given social and cultural milieux: the first by insinuating determination through preexisting organizations of thought and perception, the second by imparting a false sense of determinability to the contingencies of the appropriation and deployment of cultural resources. (155)

Whereas such criticism is justified, this thesis does not understand the process of *creolization* as a spontaneous random act deprived of any individual achievements. This second part shows the interwovenness of events in a set of historical and ideological determinants in a given ecological and economic setting, in which individuals took chances to create remarkable outcomes. The force of political representations and of those who wielded power over others, was only a background for contemporaries who managed to make a living within such an evolving society.

Individuals were not determined by the process of *creolization*, but on the contrary, they determined the process. Our human future, viewed as an understanding reconstitution of the past, must certainly include some redressing of the balance, some reintegration, some serious attempt to bring into being new kinds of organic, humanly rewarding social entities.

5.1 The Formation of Creole Identities after the Louisiana Purchase

By 1708, there were, in all of Louisiana's French settlements, only 278 persons (including 80 Indian slaves.) By 1717, the French population had risen to only about 400. The demographic situation as well as the food supply became so critical that even German farmers had to be recruited for Louisiana or actions were taken as to actively sponsor the Acadians, to immigrate to this colony (Conrad 99; Hall 3ff). The increase in the black population was not only due to blacks being brought in, but also due to a decrease in the white population. Thus the whites were unable to establish a solid, self-reliant colony without help of blacks and Indians.

Still, from 1718 to about 1810, New Orleans could fairly well be considered a European city. This French character had been strengthened by the arrival of Acadians, described in the previous chapter. Although the Europeans did not comprise a majority of the population of Louisiana from the earliest days of the colony, their cultural influence was strongest during the first period. The character, imprinted on the city by these early French and Spanish settlers in general, and on its food in particular, was so profound that it has remained strong ever since. "By the middle of the eighteenth century, New Orleans had become, at least in its social structure, a peculiarly French city" (Johnson 45).

In 1803, Spain returned the colony to France, and twenty-one days later France handed it over to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase. This handover led to much greater change than the one between the French and Spanish rule. The purchase of Louisiana brought about an immense increase of the English-speaking population, which had already increased during the decade before the purchase (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 8). After 1803, the cultural climate of the colonial era changed as most newcomers

had quite different customs and beliefs. "In almost every conceivable way they represented a tradition utterly unknown to the indigenous population" (Tregle 134).

Due to this strong American immigration, the population in New Orleans tripled during the first seven years after the Louisiana Purchase. Three major subgroups of French-speaking immigrants arrived: white and non-white Saint Domingue refugees and the European French (Lachance 102). It was the refugees from St. Domingue who doubled the city's population between 1803 and 1810 (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 9). These so-called "foreign French" - the biggest single group then, about 10,000 whites and non-whites - was composed of refugees that came from Saint Domingue as a result of the Haitian Revolution that had begun in 1791. Finding in Louisiana a similar climate and French-speaking residents, the refugees doubled the city's population and constituted a major factor in resisting Americanization of the city. The foreign French added to the formation of an Afro-*creole* culture and at the same time refreshed the French character.

By 1810, the once under-populated French colonial capital had become the country's fifth largest city. The Statistical, Political, and Historical Account of the United States of North America gives the following account in 1819:

> In the year 1712, when the colony was granted to Crozat, the population consisted of 400 whites, and twenty Negro slaves. A great number of slaves were afterwards imported from the coast of Guinea, and distributed by the company ... The population of the state, according to the census of 1810, amounted to 86,556, distributed among the different parishes as follows: Orleans, 21,552... (Warden 528)

The attempted integration of Louisiana's population into the all-American nation gave rise to controversies. *Creoles* felt especially discriminated against by the works of G.W. Cable picturing them for the American public with quite unpleasant characteristics. The outside pressure led to a closer cohesion inside the *creole* community and a strengthening of cultural conservatism. "The resultant exacerbating fear and resentment drove creole passions to formulation of a hardened orthodoxy in which to enfold what they perceived as their endangered heritage" (Tregle 132).

Tregle views the *creole* culture mainly as mere belief, a faith in differences rather than real distinctions. He describes this myth:

> At their very core stands the explication of *creole* itself, rigid, absolute, and closed to any gradation of meaning: it holds that the word can never be used except to designate a native Louisianan of pure white blood descended from those French and Spanish pioneers who came directly from Europe to colonize the New World. Thus even Acadians, or cajuns, are rigorously excluded, having arrived in the colony not straight from the Continent but by the way of Canada. (132)

It is important to note, "The whites of French Louisiana were far from a coherent, self-conscious class of slave owners. [...] Social and cultural conflict among the whites was intense" (Hall 61).

The *creoles*, therefore did not gain a positive identity by developing their own culture. They were more likely engaged in a negative identification, distinguishing themselves from the newcomers only by one basic fact:

> One of the effects of the Louisiana Purchase, ironically, in light of the eventual myth, was its reinforcement of this color-blind identification of creole with native-born, a consequence of the indigenous population's serious cultural limitations in its contest of strength with the incoming Americans. (Tregle 138)

The principle of territory was brought forward as an argument to defend the present population of Louisiana against the immigrants and protect their social position, "those born to the region had priority rights within it" (138). This status was granted to everyone alike, no matter what ethnic heritage they had. First another term was used but "the phrase *ancienne population* soon proved cumbersome and unwieldy" (138), it wouldn't suit to generate any adjective and to imagine how Americans pronounce it might lead to confusion. "Simple practicality dictated use of the handier *creole* in its place" (140). What was the real meaning of this new word? Actually it had limited application. In fact, there was no secondary meaning, "'a creole' meant that he was native to the state, whether white or black, free or slave, Gallic or Yankee. Reference to 'the creoles' implied equation with the *ancienne population*" (141). Everybody of any racial heritage was included in this community except when the context of the usage of the term "obviously ruled out slaves or free persons of color" (141), which happened after the Louisiana Purchase.

Thus it seems true that the concept *creole* was shaped in Spanish colonial times, "but the more significant truth rests in the reality that creole identity actually figured very little in the community's concerns during the whole of Louisiana's colonial experience. It was the clash between original Louisianans and migrant Anglo-Americans after the Louisiana Purchase which for the first time made place of birth a critical issue and gave the *creole* label its crucial significance" (Tregle 133f).

The *creoles* attempted to strengthen their pride by denigrating others, mainly the American immigrants, by clashing with them and their traditional lifestyle:

> In the process they would manage to fashion yet a second myth, that of the crudity and vulgarity of the newcomers to the region, for how better to magnify the supposed superior attributes of the

> 'creole' than to balance them against imputed inferiorities in his foil, the 'American'? (134)

As the *creoles* boasted that they were the first to come to Louisiana, they also developed a theory of being of noble origins, as the French aristocracy as well as the Spanish one had sent their male offspring overseas as cadets. "This 'race of proud and arrogant men,' we are told" (135) is the origin of the *creole* population of Louisiana. Influenced by a proud mythology as well as by economic and political fears the *creoles* made a sharp distinction between themselves and the American immigrants.

The representatives of the upper class numbered few in the *creole* community. It is therefore wrong to identify the white *creole* population of Louisiana as the upper class. *Creoles* of both colors were mostly occupied with trying to survive and produce enough food, rather than spending time in developing a distinguished culture:

> Such a milieu held little possibility of promoting an elevated or highly cultivated life-style, and in truth the great majority of New Orleanians of that time possessed none of the pretentious qualities assigned them in the creole myth. (Tregle 144)

Some only considered people with French blood the proper *creoles*, although the lines of struggle did not open inside the *creole* community between French and others but rather between the united *creoles* and the newcomers. "For several decades after 1803 the history of New Orleans and Louisiana centered largely in vigorous battle among Latin creoles, Americans, and foreign French for control of the society" (Tregle 141).

The arriving Americans on the other hand rejected the c*reole* myth and did not acknowledge any *creole* superiority, rather the contrary was true. The

newcomers suffered from the climate and the hostility of the fauna and flora. Tregle points to their major problem:

> It was a cultural rather than the physical climate, however that gave them most pauses. Far from being impressed by a creole 'aristocracy,' they saw Louisiana as a community comfortable in the stagnation of its ignorance and almost willfully unprepared to function effectively in the modern world. (148)

Neither a strong cultural influence nor a better adaptation to the environment supported a superior position for the *creoles*. What then, was the basis for the leading role they continued to play after the purchase of Louisiana?

> One major strength, however, permitted the creoles to hold off their rivals until at least the late 1830s. Sheer numerical superiority ensured their continued dominance in the first years after the Purchase, for even with the steady flow of migrants from other states the Americans long remained in the minority. (152)

Before the Civil War there was no risk of diminishing the social status in the term *creole*. Numerical superiority ensured *creole* dominance until at least the late 1830s. The dividing lines were of ethnic origin in the beginning but soon the nature of business became the distinction between American and *creole* areas. The Americans clearly dominated the business areas by the end of the 1820s. The ignorance towards their needs by the city council to whom they had to pay considerable amounts of taxes pushed the Americans to seek separation from the other communities and by 1836 they managed to win state-wide legislative approval for a division of New Orleans into three different municipalities.

This division of the city in three separate, largely autonomous municipalities, separating *creole*s, Americans and immigrants the following map shows:

Fig. 4. New Orleans Showing the Three Municipalities. Map. Edward Hall (New York, 1866).

The Americans were settling in a special area not by force or restrictions on where to settle, but by free choice:

> Despite tradition, no barriers blocked the earliest arrivals from settlement in closely guarded precincts of the original town, nor did lack of space within it turn them uniformly to what would eventually become known as the 'American quarter'. (Tregle 154)

Prosperity and business were proportionally greater with the Americans. In "1860 . . . the district above Canal Street contained 63 percent of the city's total taxable property against 37 percent for the area below, while populations balanced almost equally" (159).

It was not only business that was dominated by Americans but also the professions requiring higher skills. Only few *creoles* were able to read or obtain higher education. Newspapers, not surprisingly, addressed citizens able to consume them, and the usage of French decreased. While neither education nor commerce provided a basis for the belief of a *creole* superiority, the procrastination of youngsters was chosen as the allegedly distinctive mark between the *creoles* and the Americans.

The *creole* position became even more fragile when the Americans where accompanied by numerous groups of different origin. For example, "great waves of Irish and German immigrants flooded into the city during the decades from 1830 to 1860″ (164). There were so many that it became impossible to distinguish American from *creole* quarters. Traditional names were far from expressing the current reality of the type of population settling there. This resulted in the decline of the leading role of the *creoles.*

The new immigrants oriented themselves much more toward the American rather than the *creole* community, since the former offered equal rights to everyone capable of exercising them and the latter closed itself to elite circles. For the Germans and Irish it was easy to decide who to stick with. "What they saw as the opportunities of their new world they found not in the lassitude of creole society but in the kinetic restlessness of American ambition″ (166).

The *creoles* "quickly perceived that the ease of Irish and German assimilation into the national mold" was decisively increasing the numbers of "united" Americans, whether old or new, and thus pushing *creoles* into a minority everywhere in the city. "This judgment was vindicated in 1852 when American leaders ... fused the three municipalities into a reunited city″ (167).

The *creole*s continued to target the newcomers since they were not as established as the Americans. This time their attack concentrated on the foreigner, who posed the greatest danger. These local clashes were embedded in the nationwide disputes that led to the Civil War, providing another period of hope for the *creoles.* "The coming of the Civil War provided what some saw as their last chance for revival of creole supremacy" (168).

Obviously, this seeming opportunity was not realized, the *creoles* had to adjust to a position equal to the rest of the population:

> The collapse of the Confederacy came therefore as a terrible blow to zealots such as these, who had looked to the Civil War as their passport to a revived Gallic society secure in its cultural rebirth and guaranteed its rightful sway over 'Americans' as well as naturally inferior blacks. (169)

As a result of the defeat of the Confederacy, even the French language came under harsh attack. Tregle identifies the Civil War as a "crowning humiliation for the creoles, its outcome excluded the French language from elementary schools and forbade publication of laws and judicial proceedings in anything other than English" (170).

The time period of the formation of an own Afro-*creole* culture was just when *creole* culture had become more important. It firmly established parallel to the development of the white-*creole* culture by the time the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803. Since there was no clear distinction between the two developments in the beginning "it has not been given the attention it deserves" (Hall 59).

There was an evident split inside the black community of New Orleans, as black *creole*s seemed to be even more eager than white ones to insist on a special identity. Thus "no third group of later immigrants blurred the cultural

distinctions" (Logsdon 202) more than the black Americans. To be black or colored between 1800 and 1860 did not necessarily mean to be a slave. The Afro-American community was split into free people of color and slaves. While there were only 165 free people of color at the beginning of the Spanish period, they numbered nearly 5,000 only 40 years later (Hall 51f).

They ensured with their French background that the city maintained its distinctive French *creole* flavor, added Caribbean influences and strengthened the Afro-*creole* culture (Lachance 105, 112, 127-130). They presented a large danger to those uneducated or unskilled white *creole* folks as Logsdon describes, "Among the West Indian newcomers were even more skilled, better educated, and probably more assertive leaders-both free and slave-than those who had already disturbed the Americans in 1803″ (205).

There was a strict hierarchy in New Orleans: planters and merchants shared the top rank; in the middle were retailers and government officials; the bottom rank was composed of artisans and mariners. Almost two-thirds of the foreign French practiced trades in the middle and lower ranks of this hierarchy and thus contributed significantly to a viable Gallic community (Lachance 125). In addition there was considerable intermarriage between the foreign French and *creoles* which further strengthened them as a united group and Lachance even states ‟without the foreign French, free persons of color as well as whites, who became artisans, shopkeepers, and café ownders, this island of French culture would no longer have existed in 1835″ (130).

There was a sharp division inside the black community as a result of Spanish and French colonial rule as Logsdon and Cossé Belle point out, "The free black creoles of New Orleans had emerged from French and Spanish rule not only with

unusual rights and powers but also with a peculiar assertiveness and self-confidence" (204).

This freedom was under danger now from the American influence. Black Americans moving to Louisiana might have hoped to share the same rights as the black *creole*s, but:

> Instead, the new rulers tried to impose their own American racial order on New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana. In the rural Louisiana countryside, little may have distinguished the severity of the Anglo-American slave order from that of the French or the Spanish. (205)

It was only the slave revolt of 1811 and the British invasion of 1814 that forced the Americans to grant some racial rights. Another main reason underlying this decision was military power:

> For their own survival, they recommissioned white-officered black militia units and almost created a legalized, triparte racial order similar to those of the Caribbean. From 1815 to 1830, state officials did not further reduce free black rights. (Logsdon 207)

As a result New Orleans was characterized by an especially high number of non-slaves, "New Orleans' free people of color numbered nearly 20,000 in 1840" (Hirsch, *Creole* 192). Tregle compares the free colored people of New Orleans with those of Charleston. In Charleston these people, possibly due to their small number, followed an accommodations survival strategy, trying to avoid confrontations while "a good number of New Orleans' free people of color chose another path. A strain of creole radicalism more assertive and independent, with broader horizons and self-confidence, emerged to challenge American racial conceptions and the imposition of Jim Crow" (195).

Since the largest slave plantations of the antebellum South were in Louisiana and with this reinforcement from the Caribbean the number of slaves in

Louisiana was considerable in the antebellum period (Hall 60). In the city of New Orleans, blacks had the majority until 1840, and it was then that they encountered an increasing number of people with other racial backgrounds. In the antebellum period, New Orleans became the second busiest port of immigration in the United States. French speakers were only third in number after German and Irish immigrants. The census of 1860 shows that the total population had grown to 168,675 of whom 38.31 percent were foreign-born. New Orleans thus rivaled the urban centers of the North as shown in the following table:

Table 3. Percentage of Immigrants in Major American cities

City	Total Population	Foreign	% of Foreign
New York	805,651	383,717	47,62
Philadelphia	585,529	169,430	28,93
Brooklyn (N.Y.)	266,661	104,589	39.22
Baltimore	212,418	52,497	24.71
Boston	177,812	63,791	35.88
New Orleans	168,675	64,621	38.31
Cincinnati	161,044	73,614	45.71
St. Louis	160,773	96,086	59.76
Chicago	109,260	54,624	49.99
Charleston	40,578	6,311	15.55

Source : Sir Morton Peto, Resources and Prospects of America (New York, 1866) 18.

On the other hand, the city's multiculturalism clearly set it apart from the rest of the South, where the percentage of immigrants was in general very low as shown in the following table:

Table 4. Percentage of Immigrants in Some American States

State	Native	Foreign
California	52.02	47.98
Wisconsin	64.31	35.69
Minnesota	66.22	33.78
New York	74.27	25.73
Rhode Island	78.58	21.42
Massachusetts	78.87	21.13
Michigan	80.09	19.91
Illinois	81.03	18.97
Virginia	97.81	2.19
South Carolina	98.58	1.42
Tennessee	98.09	1.91
Alabama	98.72	1.28
Georgia	98.90	1.10
Mississippi	98.92	1.08
Arkansas	99.14	0.86
North Carolina	99.67	0.33

Source: Sir Morton Peto, Resources and Prospects of America (New York, 1866) 19.

Logsdon and Cossé-Belle describe the influence this strong immigration had on relations blacks formed with immigrants, "Their voluntary relationships across the color line were, it seems, not so much with the long-resident white creoles as with immigrants, especially those from France, who concentrated in the same areas during the 1830 and 1840s" (207f).

Between 1810 and 1840, New Orleans' growth rate exceeded any other large American city. A documentation from 1843/44 lists, "In 1810 this city had but about 17,000 inhabitants and yet within a little more than 30 years it numbers nearly 200,000 souls" (Whipple 104).

The Civil War not only meant a last and missed chance for the *creoles;* it also changed the meaning of the term *creole* itself:

> In pre-Civil War New Orleans, division had been along ethnic lines- Latin versus Anglo-Saxon, native-born against foreigner. ... Color

> had played no role in the confrontation. ... No reason had existed, therefore, to deny any native-born child classification as a creole, whether white or black, free or slave ... The Civil War changed all that. (172)

As the Civil War raised, and settled, the issue of slavery, race matters became more important than questions regarding place of birth. Using one term to define all Louisiana-born people led to more opportunity for error since the whites feared they might be confused with blacks. Therefore, the meaning of the term *creole* was altered to avoid misunderstandings, "for those so threatened, henceforth to be creole was to be white" (173).

This was not just an informal understanding of the term but it also became officially acknowledged. The Louisiana State Court of Appeals decided in 1906, "when a person is called a 'creole', this evidences the absence of any negro blood" (Dominguez 94). Even former definitions of the term *creole* were denied during the 1920s; instead the meaning was narrowed to the offspring of French and Spanish colonialists exclusively (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 7).

In the post-Civil War period, the white *creoles* continued to rally for their, by now, racist causes and white supremacy. Their propaganda promoted a segregated society with the exclusion of blacks from many places. This was not just an ideology, but put into practice as Tregle points out, "the last years of the nineteenth century ..., established precisely that order of society ..., largely because creole racism made up of a larger consensus within the whole white community" (182f).

Of course, not only whites tried to push their interests and keep the rights already gained. "Divided in the antebellum period by color, culture, law, occupation, and neighborhood, nonwhites in New Orleans faced the challenge" (Hirsch, *Creole* 190). This threat common to all of the different groups provided

a platform for a closer unity. A cultural conflict arose about the holidays to be celebrated, dances at balls etc., which potentially strengthened the *creole* identity (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 9). The puritans from the north, hostile toward any enjoyment and fun, tried to establish their ideological ideas as norms. They felt deeply offended by the life-style of New Orleans with its theaters, dance halls, racetracks and brothels. Mehnert writes that it must have appeared like a modern Gomorrah, only worthy to be extinguished (20).

The *creole* community in the following years was marked by a sharp racial dispute, one denied by leading publishers, over the "value" of blacks. While fighting for their racial supremacy on this front the *creoles* themselves were considered a lower race by the newly arriving Americans:

> Those earlier northern identifications of 'creole' with 'mixed blood' and 'mulatto' now took on infinitely greater significance as newcomers repeatedly demonstrated their continuing misunderstanding of the terms, to the ever growing consternation of the older community. (171)

Since blacks especially were targeted by racist politics, it was up to them to offer strong opposition to the development of a racially segregated society. Black New Orleanians therefore sought alternatives to the emerging Jim Crow order (Hirsch, *Creole* 191). Alongside white *creoles* developing a proud culture, blacks developed one of their own.

While the *creole* element in the black community of New Orleans is well-known and acknowledged, the other major component of the black community of these days is nearly neglected, "The role of black migrants from the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century has too often been forgotten in the story of social and cultural change in the city" (Logsdon 209).

The migration of blacks from other parts of the United States brought about a deep change in the black culture of New Orleans. As slaves or as free men and women, black Americans brought with them a North American culture that was much older than that of the black *creoles* of New Orleans. It was not only rooted in different blends of African traditions but had been subsequently entwined with the life-styles of the different European and Indian peoples whom African-Americans had encountered in North America (Logsdon 211).

The central element of most black people's culture was the "Protestant church and the role of the black preacher." It was not only slavery that was causing a gap between Catholics and Protestants. Cultural aspects were quite influential as well and feeding the conflict, since Protestant ministers disliked more than just the *creoles*' Catholicism. "They also scorned the city's deeply rooted Afro-Latin way of life that offended their Anglo-Protestant sensibilities" (236).

Racial discrimination was producing new lines of division inside the black community itself rather than forging a united front:

> A fundamental difference about race relations also caused friction between the two groups. Creole leaders resented racial separation even in private institutions and constantly nagged black as well as white recalcitrant about any adherence to the color line. Most of the Protestant leaders, however, had responded to racial discrimination in Anglo-America by forming their own all-black institutions where they could find solace and support. The reluctance of most black creoles to adopt Victorian behavior or to accept the norms of the American color line struck some black Americans as a denial of racial solidarity. (236f)

Even more conflicts arose out of the multicultural environment of black *creoles*. This led to objections by black American immigrants that lasted a long

time. Racial questions were getting mixed up with social issues dividing American blacks and *creole* blacks:

> In addition to their commingling in schools and benevolent societies, black Americans and creoles also transcended ethnic boundaries in their social life and entertainment. Black newspapers during the 1870s and 1880s regularly noted this interaction. The well-established creole life-style of good food, dance, music, gambling halls, ritualized festivals, and marching bands quickly caught the attention of the Protestant newcomers. (243)

Despite these internal conflicts, the black community of Louisiana should not be seen as having been weak while fending off white violence after Reconstruction:

> The ethnic division within the New Orleans black community may help to explain some of the factionalism among black New Orleans leaders, but it cannot explain the collapse of Reconstruction in Louisiana. If anything, black Louisianans, despite their divisions, held off the relentless force of white violence longer than black southerners did in other states. (Logsdon 251)

There was a political tendency in the black *creole* community to confine themselves to their own group rather than to seek confrontation with other cultures. Still this was not a radical approach or a complete confinement to the community:

> To be sure, many creole families also turned inward toward their own communities and kinship networks to escape the wave of racial oppression and humiliation that was overtaking the South ... (Logsdon 254)

While the powers pushing for assimilation were quite strong, *creole* cultural traits were not lost over the centuries, "A continuing dissenting tradition in the community of those descended from racially mixed antebellum free people of color has indeed survived" (Tregle 132). As described earlier in this paper,

pressure from outside often brings ethnocentrism to force. It results in the strengthening of cultural traits. In this respect as well, food was a weapon to fight off intruders.

Political and administrative divisions also reflected the demographic racial differences; boundaries seemed to be predominantly inspired by racial lines. Therefore, "it was not accidental that the 1852 consolidation of the three separate municipalities coincided with a new surge of racial repression" (Logsdon 208).

The three municipalities where more or less divided along ethnic lines as Americans mostly settled in the 2nd District (Faubourg St. Mary) while the *Creoles* and new immigrants occupied the 1st District (Quarter) or the 3rd District (Faubourg Marigny). Only the American district developed well after the split of 1836 while the other districts where characterized by decline (Ostendorf, *Creolization* 9). These unequal developments led to social conflicts and sharpened contradictions as stated before.

The Anglo-American repression strengthened nostalgic feelings inside the black *creole* community and had an effect on the leadership of its community. It was not just a conservative look back being brought forward by this new racial oppression:

> But far more important, the repression helped to develop a young leadership class that resisted Americanization and stood poised to create a new order based not merely on French ideas but also on recent applications of those ideas in other areas of the New World. (Logsdon 209)

A comparison of the main groups that came to the United States in the nineteenth century, and specifically to Louisiana, as presented in the following table from 1897, reveals a strong Mediterranean influence in Louisiana:

Table 5. The Number of Immigrants to the United States and Louisiana between 1820 and 1890

	United States	Louisiana
Germans	2,787,776	14,627
Irish	1,871,509	9,236
English	1,008,220	2,555
Italians	182,580	7,767
French	113,274	8,437
Spanish	6,185	889

Source: Hanno John Deiler, Die Europäische Einwanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten von 1820 bis 1896 (New Orleans, 1897) 31.

Although many Germans became quite successful in the restaurant business as we later see in Chapter 5.5 "The Restaurants of New Orleans", German and Irish immigrants were considered unfit for the rest of the American republic, as were leftists and people of color. Ostendorf comments, "Das Ideal der asketischen Republik geriet in Gefahr, denn nun wurde der 'Katholischen' Wollust wieder Tür und Tor geöffnet. Iren galten als Trunkenbolde und Deutsche pflegten ihr Bier sogar am Sonntag zu trinken. Viele Eßgewohnheiten kamen den WASPs 'unsauber' vor" (2003, p. 11).

The flow of Irish and German immigrants subsided after the Civil War but gave way to a new wave comprised primarily of Italians. In 1850, Louisiana already had the largest Italian-born population in the United States (924), but the bulk came at the turn of the century. Of the 3,878 immigrants who arrived in 1890, 2,611 came from Italy, and in the following year, 2,903 more Italians arrived. Of these, only 35 came from the Italian mainland - the rest were Sicilians. Eventually these Italians were to constitute the city's largest white

ethnic minority and their influence helped to set New Orleans further apart from other American cities (Cunningham 23f).

A smaller, but nevertheless significant, turn-of-the-century immigration group was made up of Dalmatians. In Louisiana, they found natural food sources they were familiar with, as these Yugoslavian immigrants were fisher- and oystermen. They brought expertise in oyster cultivation to a place where this type of seafood was already a principle culinary staple (Collin 14).

Due to this continued immigration and despite all the attempts of establishing the Anglo-American culture, New Orleans kept its differences and thus gained the special attractiveness it retains today. The European influence remained strong, as Meriwether reported at the end of the nineteenth century, "The investigator rambling through the shops and factories of dilapidated, quaint New Orleans can easily forget America, and imagine himself on the shores of the distant Mediterranean" (Meriwether 4).

This chapter clearly shows that talking about the *creoles* of New Orleans is a somewhat risky thing. The term is multifaceted and has changed its meaning considerably over time. It is, therefore, not surprising that Alan Richman, a correspondent for the GQ magazine, recently wrote an article about New Orleans:

> Supposedly, Creoles can be found in and around New Orleans. I have never met one and suspect they are a faerie folk, like leprechauns, rather than an indigenous race. The myth is that once, long ago, Creoles existed. Certainly there was a Creole cuisine, a fancified amalgamation of French (mainly), Spanish (just a little), Italian (even less), and African-Caribbean (unavoidable). The African-Caribbean influence was the kind of fortuitous culinary accident that occurs when the swells eating the food don't come from the same background as the workers cooking the food. (2f)

The historical perspective shows that demographic factors as well as the codes of social relations governing the status and social interactions of different groups determine the degree of interference from one group to another. This results in cultural variations and instability which is characteristic for any dynamic *creolization* process. Because blacks constituted the greatest numbers and due to internal cultural conflicts within that group an own Afro-*creole* identity crystallized. Due to their distinctiveness and effective contact with themselves, the descendants of early French and Spanish colonists obtained their strong Mediterranean heritage, revived later by Italian immigrants. From the beginning of this process, the *creole* element was not just a major segment of a continuum of variation that marked the first stage in the process of adaptation to a cultural model; the *creolization* process is a continuum with an open end.

New Orleans continuously attracted a special mixture of people from its very beginning. At the middle of the nineteenth century, as following visitor described it:

> The population partook strongly of the character of the latitude it was in, a medley of Spaniards, Brazilians, West Indians, French Creoles, and breeds of all these mixed up with the negro stock. I think ... taking it altogether, I never saw such a piratical-looking population before. (Featherstonhaugh 140)

Another visitor to New Orleans at the end of the nineteenth century described this impression as well:

> The creole civilization differed totally from that in any Northern city; it looked at life, literature, wit, manners, from altogether another place; in order to understand the society of New Orleans one needs to imagine what French society would be in a genial climate and in the freedom of a new country. Undeniably, until recently, the Creoles gave the tone to New Orleans. And it was the French

> culture, the French view of life that was diffused. ... French was a study and a possession not a fashionable accomplishment. (46)

Mere demographical numbers and historical facts, however, sometimes present a rather distant view of times past and miss what everyday life really was about. The true needs of people and how they survived are hardly understood this way. Statistics may provide a frame of understanding for the broader context; however, focusing on food draws attention directly to the subject of people and their daily survival. The development of the markets in New Orleans therefore is presented in the next chapter.

5.2 The Markets of New Orleans

From small-scale trading efforts as described in Chapter 4.2 "Food Exchange in the Lower Mississippi Valley", markets in New Orleans evolved, providing the city with food. Hardly any other place had such markets. New Orleans was unique, because of where it was situated. One hand reached the packinghouses of Chicago and the other touched the tropics. The city thus had access to both, the protein of the American prairie and to fresh vegetables and exotic fruits from Central America. In addition, it was surrounded by a perennial market garden and had a supreme abundance of seafood throughout the year. At the farmers disposal was land "of inexhaustible fertility, being entirely free from roots and rocks," where "the settler has only to turn the soil with his plow in order to secure a crop the first season", as the State's Immigration Association of Louisiana Bulletin advertised in 1888. A traveler from the North described the immense availability of food deriving from this fertile soil in 1852:

> The fig grows in abundance; the sweet orange succeeds with a little care; and the grape is successfully cultivated. ... The peach is said to be delicious, and the crab apple grows wild in the woods. ...

> The gardens furnish celery, cabbage, sweet and common potatoes, peas, beans, and many of the northern roots. Strawberries grow in profusion, with a littlest care. ... The poultry is excellent; ... Oysters are abundant; and the redfish grouper and trout could command a high price in our markets. Wild fowl are numerous, and venison cheap and abundant. ... The gopher turtle makes a delicious soup, and the country is blistered with its hills. ... The bear is frequently captured and deer are common. The opossum, raccoon, hare, squirrel, grey fox, and wild and tiger cats exist in great numbers; and the panther is occasionally shot; wild ducks, brandt, snipes and curlew frequent the ponds and marshes, and the quail is found in every field. The wild turkey is taken in great numbers. (Clinton 38f)

In 1812, Major Amos Stoddard, a member of the New York Historical Society, commented on the change that took place in regards to customs and economic behavior:

> Indeed, during the existence of the French colonial government, the Indian trade almost wholly occupied the attention of the people, who were more disposed to provide for present necessity than to discover the means of future good. Louisiana involved France in heavy expenditures; and perhaps the despair of remuneration was among the causes, which induced her so easily to cede the country to Spain. ... (The Spaniards') exertions, though in some degree successful, did not produce all the desired effects; and they saw with regret, that the inhabitants still retained their habitual indolence, and an unconquerable predilection for the Indian trade, which was always precarious and unprofitable, and did not increase the aggregate wealth of the colony. ... They resolved about the year 1787 to encourage the industrious citizens of the United States to remove into the colony...This gave a spring to agriculture and commerce. (294f)

After the War of Independence, "a complete range of French specialties" (Tannahill 253) was available in New Orleans. In addition the goods produced in

the slave gardens were being sold on a Sunday market at the end of Orleans Street. The traditional dishes were thus enlivened by black influences that "injected an entirely new gusto into the self-conscious world of classical French cooking" (253). "Slaves became a self-supporting group, participating in the New Orleans market economy" (Johnson 42).

Soon slaves performed this small-scale marketing of foodstuffs on a bigger scale. Opportunity to do this arose as many slaves were also sent to town to sell items for their masters:

Fig. 5. Woodengraving 1871, *Negro Hucksters Returning from Market*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

These slaves used the chance to market the products of their own gardening, hunting and gathering as well. On Sundays, their free day, a regular market developed. A traveller to New Orleans in 1836 observed:

> The slaves of the plantation owner and the farmer have Sunday for themselves, and most of them make use of this to go to the market in New Orleans where they sell fruit and vegetables grown on their own plot, or hand-finished material, which they had made in their free time. (Wrede 58)

The open ground in New Orleans where the slaves gathered to sell their goods as early as the 1730s and 1740s stretched along the edge of the City Commons at the end of Orleans Street. This place was first called "Place des Negres" and became later known as Congo Square. At times, whites became concerned about the slaves' economic activities. Laws to restrict this practice of trading were passed towards the end of the eighteenth century, but they were not strictly enforced. This laxity might be explained by the fact that the town population depended on food from outside and the participation of blacks provided a larger quantity and wider array of foods for everybody than otherwise would have been available (as the following description indicates):

> In the neighborhood of N. Orleans, the land is valuable for the cultivation of sugar, & there is so little of it that were it not for the vegetables & fowls & small marketing of all sorts raised by the negro slaves, the city would starve. (Latrobe 47)

New Orleans' first food market was an informal, open-air facility located on the levee in the area above present-day Jackson Square. In 1784, the city put up the first market building on the corner of Chartres and Dumaine Streets next to the river. This site later became known as the French Market. The French Market eventually became the biggest and best-known one. A traveler in 1847 describes it:

> The markets are held every day of the week, without exception; and business commences with the earliest customers about three o'clock in the morning. There is no fixed time, but that hour is the most usual. The 'French Market' is the greatest one; and taking into

> consideration both the amazing variety of produce, and the equally great variety of human character and dress there assembled, it presents perhaps as fine and curious a picture as, in the same way, can be found in any part of the world. (Hooton 172)

This variety of produce and people is reflected in the following picture:

Fig. 6. Drawing, *One sees delicious types in these markets*, in Edward King, The Great South (Connecticut, 1875) 48.

The French Market became the city's first public market, but as the community grew, new food centres sprang up to serve the emerging neighbourhoods. Beginning with the St. Mary Market in 1822, there developed a citywide system of public markets that numbered thirty-four separate units at its height just before 1920. The following print shows some of these markets:

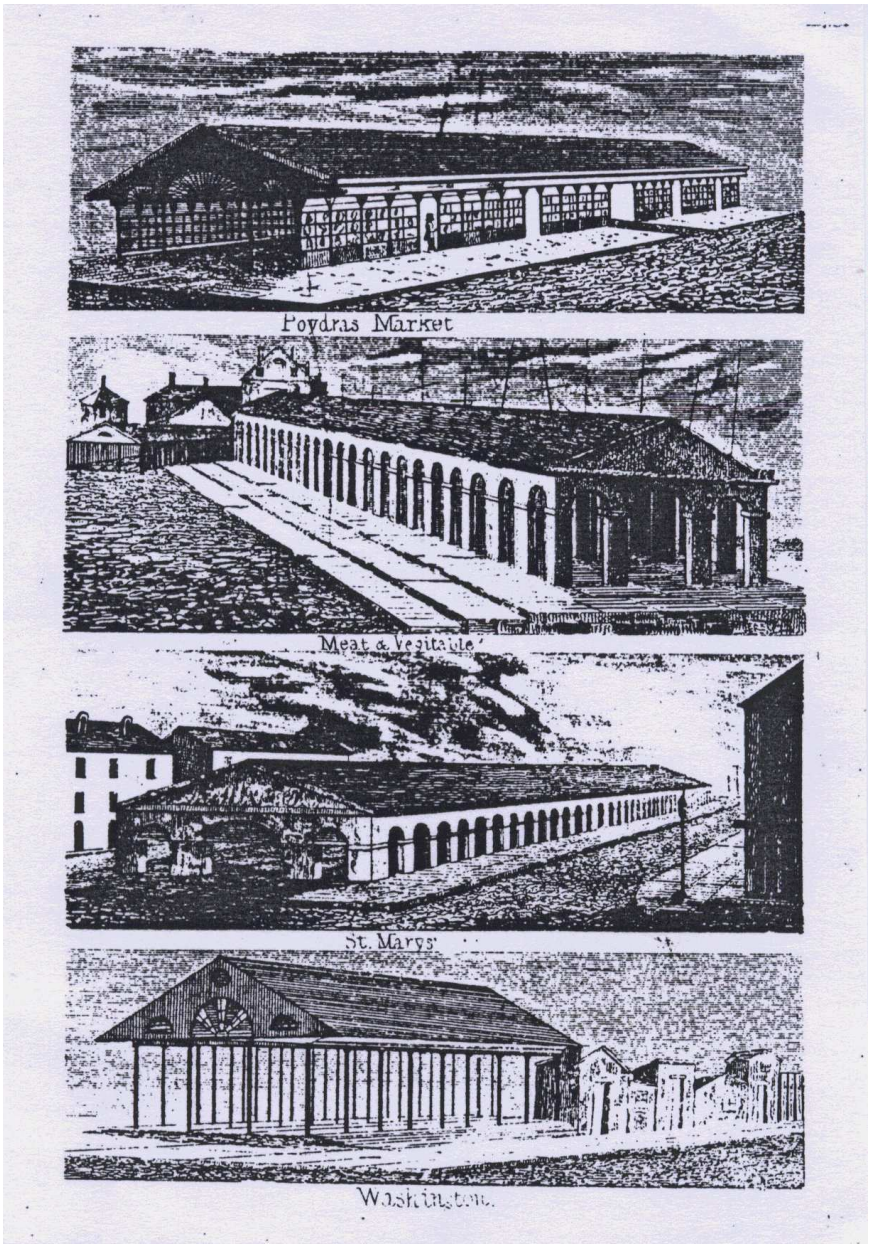

Fig. 7. Engraving 1838, *Markets*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

While the French were not allowed to settle in the Indian territories, there still was an exchange of foods with the Indian population as described before. "Those living near New Orleans or near French outposts up the Mississippi and Red rivers and along the Gulf Coast increasingly participated in local town market economies" (Johnson 39).

New Orleans had an open Indian market at the Place Bretonne until 1867, when a building was constructed at that spot (Johnson 39f). Later, in the 1880s,

about fifteen to twenty Choctaw women "spread their wares in the French Market on Wednesdays and in the Place d'Armes on Saturdays, as some continued to do, more and more irregularly, into the 1920s, when they finally vanished" (40).

Despite the emergence of new markets, the French Market remained the most important one. The interior of the French Market served retailers, and there were actually three distinct and separate marketplaces located in this one market: the Meat Market, the Vegetable Market and, between these, the Bazaar Market. In the first, meats were sold, in the second, vegetables of all kinds, as well as fish, game, fruit and flowers, with each having their own separate departments and, in the Bazaar, every possible article of dry goods could be bought.

Hattie Horner, who visited New Orleans during the World Exhibition, was more impressed with the French Market than with the fair grounds:

> To go away without having seen the French Market is equivalent to not having seen New Orleans. ... By and by I worked my way to the first opening on the left, and going in found that I was in the first of the five great divisions - the meat-market. Around every pillar that helps to support the roof, wide stands are built. Meats of all description, fresh and nicely cut, are displayed, and here the noble butcher, to the number of hundreds, howls in his own particular language the universal virtues of his own particular meats. Crossing the open space between this market and the next, I entered the Bazaar.
>
> The fruit, flower, and vegetable markets are in two large structures and are the most quiet and pleasant of them all. Poultry is sold with the fruit, flowers with both fruit and vegetables. All the fresh vegetables known to us in the West appear all sorts of poultry, along with green peas, beans, laurel and bay leaves, apples, oranges, lemons, bananas, figs, and pineapples.

> The last division is the great fish market, and it would require pages to name the varieties of fish, both salt and fresh water, that may be seen. ... At the end of this market just at this season is much game - wild ducks, geese, rabbits, woodcocks, etc. (46f)

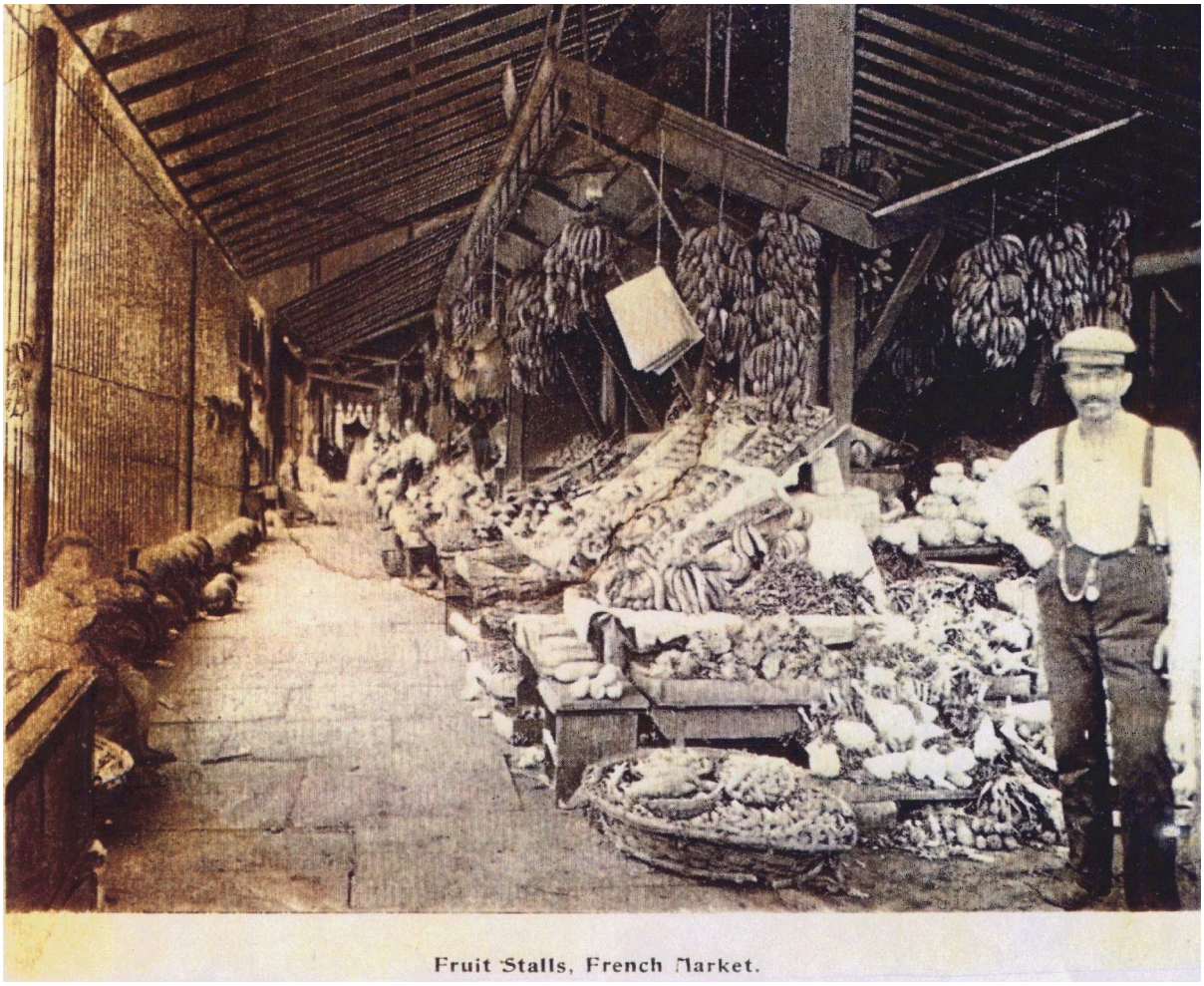

Fig. 8. Photo ca. 1900, *Vegetable Market*, Joseph Logsdon, New Orleans.

Each market was separated from the other by a street, and during market hours these spaces were also covered with stands and vendors who offered various items, such as the Indian file vendor:

> In a long passage, between two of the market buildings, where hundreds of people pass hourly, sits a silent Louisiana Indian woman, with a sack of gumbo[25] spread out before her, and with

[25] The term gumbo refers here to file which is made of powdered sassafras leaves. File is a thickening agent long used and introduced by Indians and became important as such in Creole gumbos. In comparison to the gumbo described in footnote 10, file gumbo does not contain okra.

eyes downcast, as if expecting harsh words rather than purchasers. (King 47)

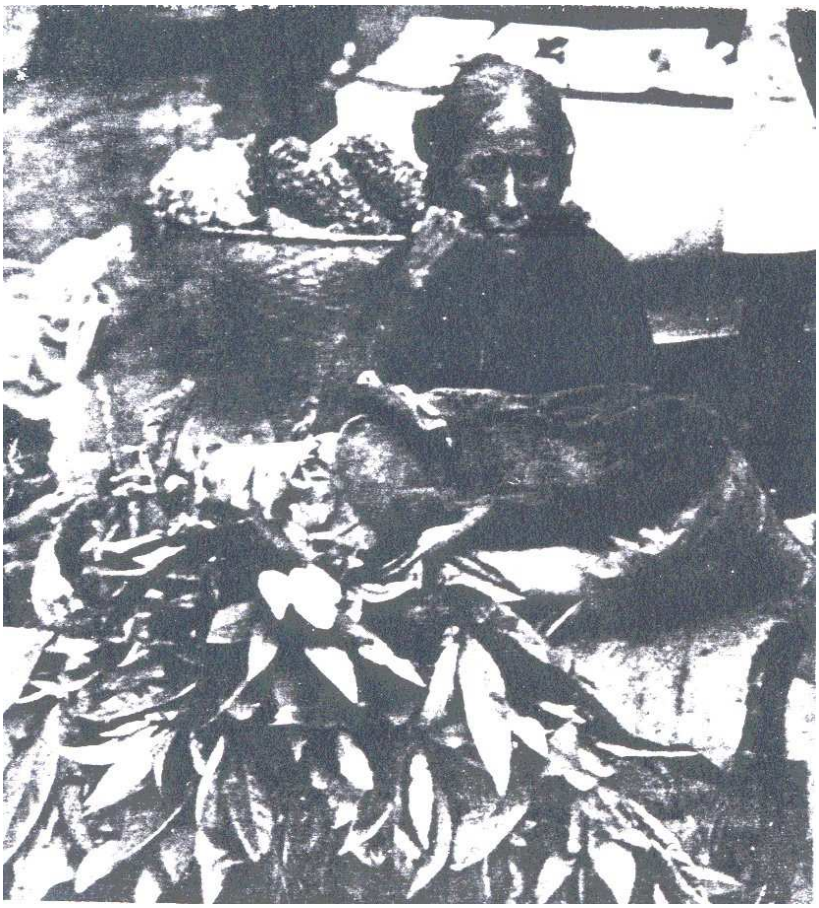

Fig. 9. Photo, February 1891, *File Vendor*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

Business developed in and around the market as this description from 1875 reveals:

> Small merchants thrive along the levee. There is the old apple and cake woman, black and filthy, blundering about the wharf's edge; there is the antiquated and moss-grown old man who cowers all day beside a little cart filled with cans of ice-cream; there is the Sicilian fruitseller, almost as dark visaged as a negro; there is the coffee and sausage man, toward whom, many a time daily, black and toil-worn hands are eagerly outstretched; and bordering on Canal street, all along the walks leading from the wharf, are little booths filled with negroes in the supreme stages of shabbiness, who feast on chicken and mysterious compounds of vegetables, and drink alarming droughts of 'whiskey at five cents a glass'. (King 55)

The riverside of the market not only served small merchants, but also farmers, who landed their goods there:

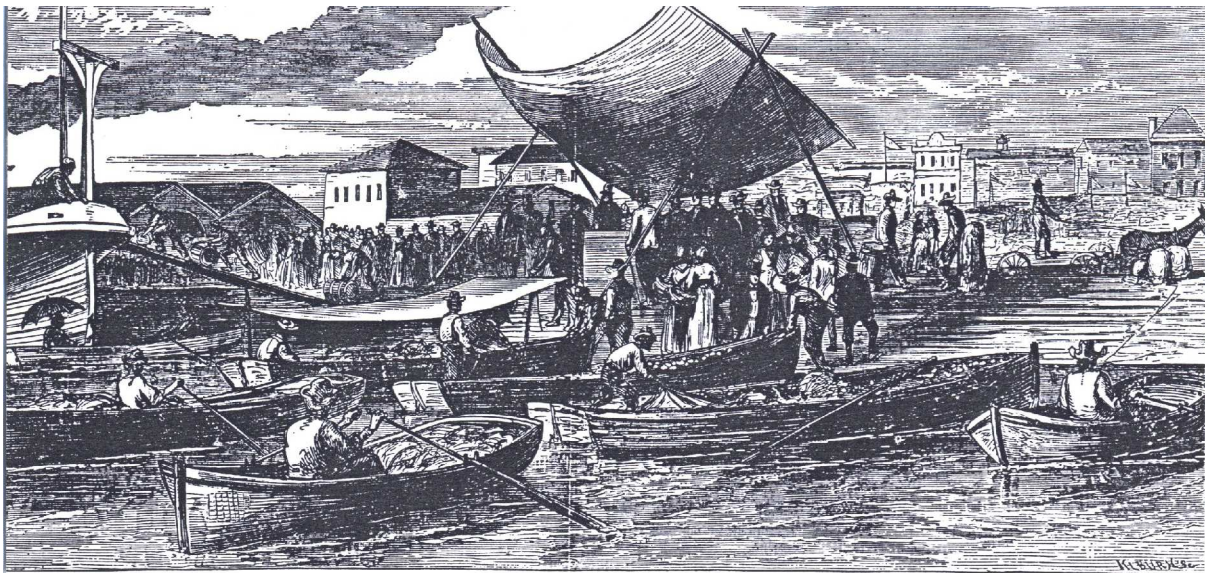

Fig. 10. Newspaper print, July 22, 1871, *Sicilian Fruit-Sellers*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

The market's river location was right for the receipt of goods from nearby and far away. Riverboats off-loaded a variety of agricultural products from throughout the Mississippi Valley, an activity recorded by a visitor to the city in 1847:

> Amongst the various and curious features which the Mississippi about New Orleans presents, is one peculiar, perhaps, in extent if in nothing else, to this place alone. I allude to the 'Flat-boats', as they are termed, which, from various remote distances up the river, bring down Western produce of all such kinds - from a potato to a peahen - as the cypress swamps are incapable of producing.
>
> When the proprietor of a flat-boat has disposed of his landing, he disposes also of the boat itself; which now possesses no other value than that which the timber whereof it is made can give. It has served its purpose, it cannot return up the stream, and is of no other use than so much old plank. Having done this, the man himself returns home on board one of those numerous steamers which, day and night, may be heard at a mile's distance, puffing and blowing like so many weary leviathans, as they pass and repass between the Crescent City and the Far West. (Hooton 169f)

New Orleans position at the junction of the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf of Mexico was the main reason for a city being there in the first place, and it again proved advantageous since merchants could participate in the wealth of the new commercial agriculture that had begun to flourish in the American South and in the Midwest.

As the only major port for the whole of the Mississippi Valley, New Orleans held a monopoly over the Mississippi Valley trade until railroad construction in other cities of the American mid-continent broke this monopoly at the end of the century. The railroad, it turned out, did, however, not totally replace the river as a valuable transportation system, especially for bulk cargo. Thus the city was able to maintain an assured economic base for a long time. The Southern Homeseekers' Guide put it this way in 1898:

> All nationalities, all civilizations, all religions met and mingled to make the city of New Orleans, and all facilities for the manufacture and distribution of the world's supplies seem to exist in the bend of the great river that marks the site.
> And in this race for commercial supremacy and in this sharp competition, this great railway system will be an active, earnest and aggressive ally. (253, 263)

Business was booming, although only in trade, not in manufacturing. In addition to enjoying a near monopoly over bulk cargo from the central and upper Midwest by the end of the century, the city's position at the mouth of the Mississippi made it an important harbour for shipments from Europe. The Sicilians started a shipment business with citrus fruits.[26] Ships were travelling between Palermo, Sicily, and New Orleans with cargoes of lemons, oranges, and

[26] The Arabs had once brought lemons and sugarcane to Sicily, which had been introduced to them by the Persians.

other citrus fruit. From there the cargo was transported to the Midwest via railway. On the return passage grain and other products were exported to Italy.

This fruit trade brought many Sicilian immigrants to New Orleans. These immigrants had ties to farmers in their home country and thus started a lively trade importing and distributing of fruit. One of these immigrants was Joseph Vaccaro. Vaccaro started off working in the rice fields on the Magnolia Plantation outside of New Orleans and later grew oranges that he sold from a stall in the French Market. When an unusual cold winter in 1899 destroyed the orange crop, Vacarro desited to import tropical fruits from Central America. This was the beginning of what became the colossus 'Standard Fruit and Steamship Company' (Denker 16-18).

Latin American connections proved very profitable. New Orleans became the prime port of entry for coffee beans and bananas. Its long lasting importance is described by this account from 1933:

> New Orleans ist bis heute im wesentlichen Handelsplatz geblieben. Die industrielle Entwicklung tritt zurück. Die wichtigsten Handelsartikel, die von New Orleans hinausgehen, sind Baumwolle, Tabak, Zucker und Reis, die Erzeugnisse des südstaatlichen Hinterlandes. Herein kommen die Produkte Mittel- und Südamerikas. (Fehling 148)

The specific economic vision made New Orleans a kind of Latin foothold on the North American shore. As one consequence, a number of Spanish-speaking neighbourhoods developed across the city and the Latin American population added to the cultural variety in New Orleans (Lewis 48-51).

As early as 1850 New Orleans had the largest Italian population on the North American continent comprised mainly of fruit merchants. Between 1880 and 1910 50,000 more Sicilians passed through the port of New Orleans and

strengthened the Italian - or lets better say Sicilian - influence. These immigrants grew "artichokes, chicory, zucchini, eggplant, and bell peppers. Sicilians planted "cucuzza", a long, pale green squash eaten during the summer, and "cardoon", a thistle related to the artichoke" (Denker 19). These farmers formed a crucial link to the food trade in town. According to Sicilian tradition which puts a strong emphasize on family ties they sold their fruits and vegetables to kin or countrymen. Thus the Sicilians, who had started to ship citrus fruit to New Orleans, became the dominant group in the fruit market, "which began to resemble a Palermo bazaar" (Denker 20).

Mildred Cram, a visitor to New Orleans at the beginning of the century, was obviously surprised by the many Italian vendors:

> We went over to the French Market, hoping to capture a little of the local colour that every other traveler has encountered among the vegetable and fruit stalls of the old Halle de Boucheries. But the Creole has abandoned the market to the Italian small grocer. Natives of Reggio, Calabria and the Abruzzi answered my feeble French questions with blank stares or torrents of absolutely unintelligible Calabrese. (Cram 311)

Italians were not as sensitive about race as other groups of the population and, comparatively, they lacked prejudice. They, therefore, got along well with the black *creole* vendors who used to dominate the vegetable market before the Italians took over. This photograph from 1967 still documents that blacks and Italians worked side by side in the market:

Fig. 11. Photo, April 1967, *The Market Vendors Charles D'Gerolamo, Lee Mumphry and David Thompson (left to right) Displaying Vegetables*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

By the turn of the century, distinct ethnic groups ran the different market sections. Italians developed the fruit business. The men who operated stalls in the Meat Market were Gascon butchers from France who enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the butcher business of the city (Leathem 5; Zacharie 12). The advertisements below reveal the French influence by the names:

Fig. 12. Newspaper print, ca. 1900, *Butcher's Ads*, Public Library : Louisiana Collection, New Orleans.

The following photo shows the French flag hanging over one of the stalls:[27]

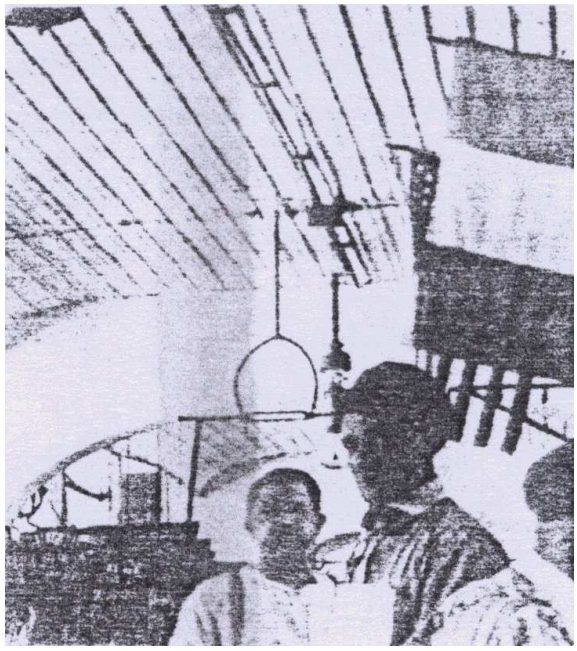

Fig. 13. Photo, ca. 1900, *Meat Market*, Public Library : Louisiana Collection, New Orleans.

Another important institution in and around the markets were the coffee houses. Before the Civil War, the city directory already listed more than 500 coffee houses in New Orleans, which met a variety of needs and coffee was not the primary beverage they served. Coffee stands that had first opened to serve the market workers attracted other visitors to the area as mentioned by a traveler's account:

> To provide for the various wants of this early-stirring population, the neighbouring taverns are thrown open; and in the market itself numbers of pretty and clean young female slaves attend, with excellent tea and coffee in brightly-polished urns, cups and saucers that look new from the hands of the potter, and bread-and-butter hot and cold, all set upon one of the whitest of cloths spread over a stall, and, as a whole, served up in a manner to which the most fastidious could not object. (Hooton 171)

[27] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many of the Market's businesses advertised in a variety of business directories and cookbooks.

All the city's neighbourhood markets had their coffee stalls, some with marble-topped counters and stools for the convenience of their patrons. Lafcadio Hearn, in his Historical Sketch Book (1885), describes a coffee stall at the entrance of the French Market, its owner and his customers:

> The keepers of these stands are semi-neat looking, too. Their shirts are as white as the marble tops of the tables, their buttons as bright as the little cups and saucers, and their countenances fresh and healthy-looking as the steaming dishes of bacon and greens...They are acknowledged as the elite of market society by the common consent of their humbler neighbors, of the vegetable and poultry trades...They seem to feel a pity for those poor vegetable sellers; for some of them were once vegetable men themselves and they can appreciate the position. They are proportionately urbane as their customers are respectable. They pour out their coffee in dignified silence for the poor market men and women who come up and lean their elbows on the marble tops of the tables. When monsieur from the steamboats, or his desk, or his loafing place at the corner, comes up to get his breakfast, the coffee-vendor is all politeness. (Hearn 11)

As Hearn indicates, some coffee stands sold more than coffee. They also provided cheap meals for the working class. In an earlier "New Orleans letter," of 1878, he estimates that half of New Orleans ate at the markets, where coffee stands provided a cup of coffee, a plate of doughnuts and a long loaf of French bread for a good ten-cent breakfast, and fifteen cents bought plenty of meat, vegetables, coffee and bread for dinner.

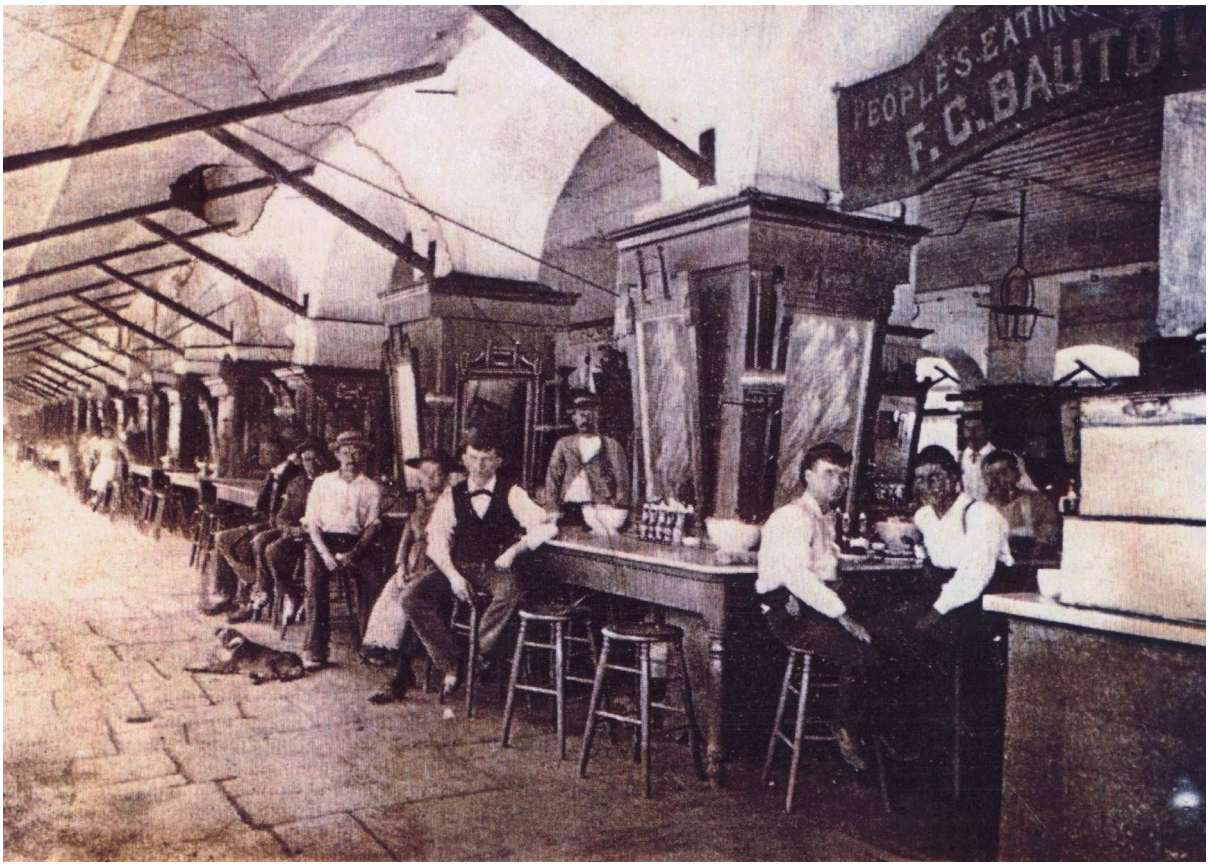

Fig. 14. Photo, ca. 1900, *Eating Stands, French Market*, courtesy: Prof. Joseph Logsdon, New Orleans.

Some of the coffee stands, with more exceptional cooking, expanded their menus and premises and became well-known as good places to eat at. ‟Begue′s″, ‟Esparbé's″ and ‟Maylie′s″ being prominent among them "represent the transformation of coffeehouses into revered eateries in the late nineteenth century" (Leathem 4) although neither exists today. These places and their history are good examples for how public eateries evolved from a home-style cooking. Women who liked to cook and who wanted to make a living with it fed workers on what they were used to prepare in their homes.

Madame Begué is such a prominent example. An early traveler describes her:

> A fat, comfortable woman in a blue print dress and large white apron. ... By birth German, the good Hausfrau had studied the culinary art from her early days. Married to a Frenchman who was evidently an epicure, she and her husband by their united efforts

made one of the most famous little eating-houses in the world. (Stanforth 3)

Fig. 15. Photo, ca. 1900, *Madame Begué*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

Madame Begué, née Elizabeth Kettenring, was born in Bavaria in 1831. Part of the German immigrants to settle in Louisiana, Fräulein Kettenring came to live with relatives in New Orleans. Elizabeth's brother Philip Kettenring (by some accounts, her uncle) wielded a butcher's knife in the French Market that ran along Old Levee Street (now Decatur Street) between the French Quarter and the Mississippi River (Harmonson 10).

Elizabeth Kettenring arrived in the port of New Orleans in 1853 and soon encountered the man who was to become her first husband, Louis Dutrey. Dutrey (Anglicized from the French Dutreuil) was born in the Gascon village of Trouley-Labarthe, in the Hautes-Pyrenees section of Southwest France (Fertel 2).

As mentioned before, Gascon families enjoyed control of the French Market's butchery trade, providing meat to both local restaurants and households. Within a decade, Dutrey and Kettenring were married and in business together, and in 1863 opened Dutrey's Coffee House at 207 Old Levee Street across from the French Market (now the corner of Decatur and Madison where the restaurant Tujague's currently resides). Louis presided over the front of the house, as host and bartender. Elizabeth was given the task of managing the kitchen. Not much is known about the early life of Elizabeth. Thus it is unknown how or where she gained her cooking expertise. J.S. Harmonson, who wrote the introduction to her second cookbook, Mme. Begué's Recipes of Old New Orleans Creole Cookery, described her as skilled in the "art of German cooking," upon her New World arrival (Harmonson 10). The French Market undeniably was the most fertile ground for one with a passion for food.

Originally, Dutrey's customers consisted almost exclusively of French Market vendors and customers, especially Gascon butchers. Since the market opened for business well before dawn, the people needed nourishment before midday lunch. Coffee and food could be procured, mirroring the tradition of the 'second breakfast' found in Germany. Principally, *Brotzeit* a Bavarian meal eaten an hour before noon and consisting of cold foods: bread or pretzels, sliced meats or sausage, and a beer (Anderson 27).

In September 1875, Louis Dutrey died. Hypolite Begué, another French butcher replaced him as host. Apparently, Elizabeth Kettenring-Dutrey's passions for French butchers lured her to the younger Monsieur Begué. After their union in 1881, their eatery was rechristened Begué's (Fertel 3).

When the 1885 World's Fair increased the nation's interest in the city (the next chapter focuses on that), the fortunes of the new couple surged (Kendall

457). Begué's restaurant was 'discovered'. Her cooking was so superb that the fame of it soon spread outside the confines of the market halls, and city folk and tourists alike began drifting to her table. In a few years, she had established an institution that "elicited national acclaim" (Leathem 4) between 1882 and 1906.

Taking advantage of this notoriety, Elizabeth and Hypolite developed the multi-course late breakfast. Customers reserved the restaurant's thirty exclusive seats weeks in advance and soon it became well known that one could not experience New Orleans without tasting the flavors of Begué's.[28]

Elizabeth Begué's recipes were a mix of tastes and cultures she was familiar with: an abundance of the available local ingredients, a bit of German fattening, and the simpleness of the Gascon omelet. Madame Begué began her daily offers by serving an eleven o'clock breakfast to the market workers. In fact, a late breakfast was all one could eat at Begué's. A guest reports in 1905:

> These breakfasts are given in the upper story and are unique. The meal is served in courses, but there is no ceremony and the commonest guest is the equal of the highest. Seats must usually be engaged ahead several days. The cooking is superb. (Richardson 153)

Another one wrote in 1913:

> Finally - and upon the stroke of eleven - the breakfast. It shall not be described here in intimate detail for you, dear reader, will not be sitting at the Madame's hospitable table as you read these lines. It is enough for you to know that the liver is unsurpassable. (Hungerford 250)

The feasts extended throughout midday, lasting three to four hours, and consisting of six courses and chicory coffee. Four to six egged omelets

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[28] In Saratoga Trunk (1945), Ingrid Bergman, upon her character's arrival in New Orleans, exclaims, "First to the French Market [...] then Mme. Begué's for breakfast." With Gary Cooper, she dines on omelet soufflé, among other dishes.

comprised the foundation of each breakfast, not the *chef-d'oeuvre*,[29] but rather the *chef-d'oeuf*. These omelets were stuffed with robust ingredients: Gulf oysters, slices of veal, fried potatoes.

Visitors and guidebooks seldom failed to recommend her cooking. In 1900, the Southern Pacific Railroad published a collection of recipes inviting tourists and travelers to dine at one of these famed restaurants in New Orleans. Mme. Begué and Her Recipes (subtitled Old Creole Cookery) aspired to stir the appetites of anyone who read it enough promptly to buy a train ticket to the Crescent City:

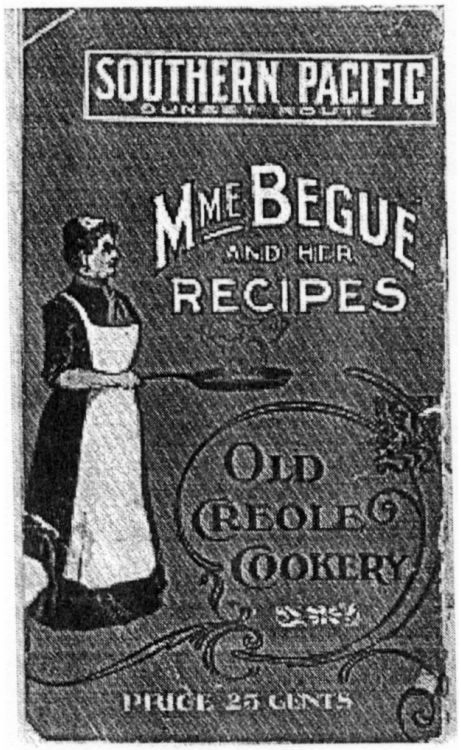


Fig. 16. Booklet, 1900, *Mme Begué and her Recipies*, Plater Collection, Newcomb Archives, New Orleans.

[29] That would be *Liver à la Begué* – "Secure a fine bit of calf liver, fresh and of good color. Skin well. Have quantity of lard in frying pan, well heated. Slice liver in thick slices. Place in lard and let cook slowly after seasoning with pepper and salt. Let lard cover liver. Simmer on slow fire, and when cooked drain off grease and serve on hot plate" (Mayo 54). In fact, all of Begué's omelet recipes called for frying the central ingredient in lard and seasoned with simply salt and pepper. The use of frying lard (and not the more familiar to Louisiana cooking, French derived butter or Mediterranean olive oil) in nearly every dish exhibited the chef's German heritage conserved in this New Orleans kitchen.

After broadening the scope of clients from butchers and drovers of the French market to tourists, the breakfast had to undergo certain changes to address non-garlic eaters as well (Leathem 6). Thus again, while tourists got a deep impression of *creole* cooking, their preferences also had an impact on the way of cooking. *Creolization* is always a two-way process.

Madame Begué died one century ago, as I write this thesis, in October of 1906. Her husband Hypolite remarried, and the restaurant remained open for another generation. Elizabeth Begué's fame was noted in several national publications; the travel essayist Felix J. Koch writing for The Boston Cooking School Magazine offered an emotional canonizing: "Madame Begué is dead" Koch pines, "No more Epicurean breakfasts in the Quartier Latin for the *bon-vivants* of the nation" (226-227).

After the Begués died, the name of the place changed to "Tujague's," and it still carries this name today. The quality of the cooking has changed, but it still holds on to some of the special features of "Begué's," such as serving hearty inexpensive meals of enormous quantity and the tradition of no menu for lunch - serving food course after course without a menu.

Downtown office workers, however, continued to enjoy a recognized morning coffee break when work would stop and everyone would gather nearby to drink coffee. In the mid-1920s, the French Market coffee stands became chic. "All night long Decatur street is thronged with automobiles," wrote a reporter for the Morning Tribune in 1928:

> From 11 to 3 is the most popular time for society, who drop in for coffee after the theatre and following parties. Along toward the fag end of this period is when the artists generally break loose from their studio parties and stroll out for a bit of refreshment. Cabaret performers and nightclub patrons favor even later hours. They

> occur from about 3 to 5 o′clock. From 5 o′clock on most of the coffee drinking is done by truck gardeners and office people on their way to work.

In the twentieth century the number of coffee houses even increased. Most of them were concentrated downtown, with a few outposts of beatnik individualism such as the "Penny Post Coffeehouse", now the "Neutral Ground", "Croissant d′Or" and its predecessor, La Marquis, popular for their pastry as well and "Kaldi′s Coffeehouse and Museum." The "Café du Monde", which is located at the foot of the market, has been there since 1862, and today serves coffee and beignets around the clock. Richard Collin, a romantic on the subject of New Orleans food traditions, wrote:

> ...the visitor to the city should not miss the experience of drinking steaming café au lait with the freshly baked beignets within a stone′s throw of the Mississippi River in the heart of a great city. It is one of the truly memorable experiences New Orleans has to offer. (12)

During the twentieth century, and due to new technology and modern marketing techniques, the public market system had to give way to food stores. Modern supermarkets replaced the public facilities as the main source of fresh food for New Orleanians. Today, delicatessen shops and a small market still provide a wide array of food items. Thus, the French Market remained an institution for locals and visitors alike.

As this chapter showed the markets were run by people as diverse as the products that could be bought there. In addition a diversified economy developed very early in and around the French Market complex. The importance this great availability of food products had for the quality and variety of the cookery The Book of the Picayune pointed out in its 1903 edition:

> New Orleans only, of American cities, has achieved a cookery of its own. Its creole dishes are distinctive; neither French nor American nor combinations thereof; something rather savoring of the people and the place. Here tropic, sub-tropic and temperate comestibles abound, affording, for the delectation of the local devotees of gastronomic cult, a rare plenitude of culinary resource - fish and oysters, delicate game birds, fruits and esculents, unknown or little known in other parts of the country. (60)

The impact this had on the development of the cuisine in New Orleans is also described by a foreigner - Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein's cook and companion:

> In New Orleans I walked down to the market every morning realizing that I would have to live in a dream of it for the rest of my life. How with such perfection, variety and abundance of material could one not be inspired to creative cooking? We certainly do overdo not only the use of the word but the belief in its widespread existence. Can one be inspired by rows of prepared canned meals? Never. One must get nearer to creation to be able to create, even in the kitchen. (131)

The various ethnicities introduced their food via the market to the others where it was readily accepted and incorporated into the evolving cooking tradition. New Orleans′ markets made obvious that ethnic food exists solely from an outside point of view. It "is a label that many Americans apply to those foods from cultures most clearly demarcated as 'foreign'" (Inness 4). In New Orleans such foods on the one side constituted "strong markers of cultural and regional identity, conveying special feelings about belonging and place" (Inness 5) and at the same time were welcome commodities to cook with and to incorporate them into an evolving cuisine.

5.3 Industrialization and Immigration

Industrialization brought about a two-fold process, resulting in both fewer and more choices. Many new ethnic groups entered the country bringing new diversity and at the same time the mainstream food market urged conformity. Gabaccia notes, "Corporate food business fostered standardized foods and national connections, while migrations repeatedly introduced new sources of culinary diversity" (6). It was the influence of the recurring human migration both from outside the country as well as within it, and also of the changes in the production and marketing of food that continued to *creolize* the current cuisine of New Orleans.

Industrialization by no means translated into a richer, healthier diet for all. Again there was a pronounced difference between the rich and the poor since industrialization "had the effect of worsening rather than bettering the diet of the poorest classes" (Tannahill 332). In Friedrich Engel's report about the laborers and poor from England in 1844, which did not differ much from the situation in the new industrial cities of America, "we find the animal food reduced to a small bit of bacon cut up with the potatoes; lower still, even this disappears, and there remains only bread, cheese, porridge and potatoes, until on the lowest round of the ladder, among the Irish, potatoes form the sole food".

In general, industrialization brought about an increase of the middle class because there was a growing need for lawyers, engineers, architects, clerics, etc. The diet of this middle class was positioned in the middle between the poor and rich. In contrast to the paupers, Tannahill writes, they "were not forced to eat what was cheapest but were able to exercise some choice" (296). Their choice was not basically different from the rich people's food but "an economy-conscious reflection of what people ate on the next level up the social scale"

(296). As explained before, it is the middle class that is most important for the development of cuisines.

The urban middle class that emerged during the Industrial Revolution had enough money to purchase ingredients but no land to produce their own food and was therefore "in the market for as wide a variety of socially acceptable foods as the world could provide" (Tannahill 306). This bidirectional process also gave birth to the rise of a global food marketplace that did not however, produce culinary homogeneity.

At the same time, essential changes took place in the homes of affluent Americans that distinguished themselves sharply from immigrants:

> Houses were beginning to have indoor plumbing and electricity, and more than one room for eating. The dining room was formal, while there might be a separate, less formal breakfast room for just the family. Middle and upper-class meals were breakfast, dinner, and supper. There were other meals for women: the 'ladies luncheon' and high teas. Two things made this increase in the standard of living possible: tin cans and refrigerated railroad cars. (Civitello 197)

It was the Industrial Revolution that was pulling rural people to the cities and so the need for cheap food supply increased tremendously because these people "had no direct access to foodstuffs, to primary production" (Goody 350). This need was met first by markets and now also with canned foods, since "canning of the food was the most significant step in the development of an industrial cuisine" (343). These foods, although not the best choice for a tasty dish, still enormously improved the diet of urban working class people in quantity, quality and variety (338).

Canning began in America in the 1820s with lobsters, oysters, and salmon. It finally "took-off in the mid-1860s when Blue Label canned foods, founded in

1858, started advertising nationwide; items like Borden's condensed milk (1857), Burham and Morrill's sweet corn (c. 1850), Burnett's vanilla essence (1847) and various brands of soup were already available everywhere" (Goody 351). By 1882, tomatoes, corn, beans, and peas were the most popular canned foods of the at least 51 kinds available" (Civitello 197f). Cans also conquered the countryside and changed the farmers' diet as well.

In New Orleans, local food items found their way into cans, too, and thus found a nationwide distribution:

Fig. 17. Postcards, *Can labels*, New Orleans.

As the Industrial Revolution changed production and consumption of food in the United States "New systems of transport, distribution and corporate organization increasingly linked the country's many regions into a single national

marketplace" (37). The introduction of the railway provided a means for transporting large amounts of food through the vast country (Goody 347).

"The nineteenth century also saw the creation of food corporations of national dimensions" (Gabaccia 55). While previously the main part of food was produced in the household or obtained in the local area, industry brought not only new methods of canning, freezing and chilling, but also a nationwide distribution system that led to delocalization (Goody 340; Tannahill 281). "The phenomenon of delocalization" was described by Fieldhouse as "a trend away from self-sufficiency and community to mass production and globalization" (9).

Industrialization also brought new waves of immigrants to the United States. These immigrants did not always encounter a warm welcome nor did their cuisine. In a study about the period from 1884 to 1922, when strong anti-immigrant feelings were present, Alice Ross reports that the majority of already established Americans - their ancestors of course being immigrants themselves only few generations before - were sticking to the mainstream American cuisine rather than experiencing the 'ethnic' food of newcomers (Civitello 170).

Following the First World War anti-immigrant feelings got even stronger. Immigrants were ranked according to ethnicity. The Johnson Act of 1921 defined a certain quota for each group. For the first time in American history, laws were imposed to preserve the ethnic mixture already present in American society and to prevent it from being changed by additional immigrants (Ostendorf, *Multikulturelle* 19).

New Orleans still remained an important immigration port. An especially high percentage of Sicilians arrived. Among these immigrants were Giuseppe Uddo and his wife, the daughter of Giuseppe Taormina. They were traditional food

peddlers and thus worked in a, by the Taormina family run, food import business in New Orleans.

As stated before, immigrants strongly held on to their traditional food habits. Many Sicilian dishes, however, could not be prepared without traditional ingredients from their home country. The trade with items such as anchovies, capers, olives, salted chickpeas, cheese and many others therefore flourished. Uddo developed the business first importing foods from Italy and later on starting a plant in California that manufactured tomato paste. "The plant was the first in the United States to make the product, which had previously been available only from Italy" (Denker 22).

Giuseppe Uddo's business was not an immediate success story, but due to his ambition and his Sicilian reliance on family network, the enterprise grew and Uddo became head of a food company that later would merge into the Progresso Italian Food Corporation, in 1927.

While ethnic food can express cultural background and mostly gives a feeling of familiarity for the first generation of immigrants, this feeling might be different for the second generation. By the 1930s, immigration from Europe had nearly stopped for almost 15 years. Thus immigrant societies did not get Old World infusions anymore. Many second generation immigrants had formed families of their own and more and more were deprived of the networks of family and social ties that had helped to preserve traditional food habits. They were forsaking the cuisines of their parents' homelands and trying to eat like Americans (Levenstein 28). Berzok notes, "Alongside the desire of the children of the immigrants to forge new American culinary patterns, there was a simultaneous wish to leave old pattern behind because of their painful, conflictual associations" (88).

Despite the fact that Italians and especially southern Italians were especially tradition oriented a decisive change in their dishes took place, too. Progresso Food very clearly reveals this transition. Uddo, in searching for a broader business base, started the production of ready-to-serve Italian food. This way first the Progresso soup *minestrone* was born, which was followed by many other typical Italian dishes such as *pasta fazool*.[30] Progresso marketed cannelloni, pinto, chickpeas, and black beans and changed the American diet (Denker 24). To meet the taste of second and third generation Italians and the one of non-Italians these 'Italian' dishes were adapted to the all-American taste. This way even dishes like *spaghetti and meat balls* that were not even of Italian origin, became known and accepted as 'Italian' food nationwide (Ostendorf 2003, p.3).

As cultures evolve and various sectors of its population and their respective cuisines gain acceptance over time, as in the case of Italians in America, these cuisines cease to be "ethnic" and become "mainstream." It has to be remembered that many dishes and techniques considered typical American dishes that are not considered ethnic by any means by the average American of today, have an ethnic origin.

Oddly enough, although the war was fought against Italy and Germany, it was just shortly after the end of World War II that Italian cooking and particularly the food of southern Italy conquered the mainstream palate - the "white-bread, middle American culture, which has been called 'the culture of no culture'" by that time (Schell 210).

---

[30] As for Europe, pork and beans "were the mainstay of the Middle Ages" (358). Beans already were well known to the Greeks and the Romans and are mentioned in their literature (Simoons). Beans played an important role in diets throughout antiquity and no other plant or animal produced more socio-religious customs than beans (Andrews 290), even though they were forbidden by people like Pythagoras due to physical as well as psychic and sacred causes (Guthrie).

Levenstein points out that the Italians were the one major immigrant group that held out best against the Americanizing process. The Italians not only managed to ‟retain many of their distinctive food tastes; they were able to watch them become part of the mainstream″ (29). For one thing this was possible because food plays a very central role in expressing their very strong Italian family ties. They therefore tried especially hard to hold onto their food traditions. For another, Italian immigrants were familiar with the food trade and they were willing to evolve versions of the various cuisines of their homeland that fit the American taste and thus became popular with others.

During the 1920s, Americans had begun to accept the Italian ‟signature dish, spaghetti and tomato sauce″ (Levenstein 29). Other popular foods of the Italian cuisine, mainly pizza and pasta, also ceased to be considered ethnic food as such, but rather an integral part of the American mainstream cuisine. The situation was quite different only a few decades prior when macaroni still "horrified meat-and-potatoes-eating Americans. If the pasta wasn't bad enough, that sauce of olive oil and garlic and tomatoes would surely kill you. And pizza - that same tomato sauce, but on bread″ (Civitello 233f).

This way the Italians succeeded in retaining much of their culinary heritage and at the same time substantially influenced that of mainstream America. What′s most important to note is that the Italian food prepared in the United States was after all not the same that it had been back in Italy. Ostendorf describes this:

> *All dente* war eine sizilianische Tradition, die sich in den USA nicht halten ließ, allein weil der Hartweizen für die Pasta fehlte. Olivenöl wurde ein Opfer der langen Transportwege und der Tendenz, schnell ranzig zu werden. Knoblauch war in den USA verpönt und hatte allein wegen der hereinströmenden Juden einen negativen

> Beigeschmack. Er wurde von den Italienern diskret fallengelassen. Der Pizzateig konnte mit amerikanischem Mehl nicht reproduziert werden. Hingegen gab es in den USA Zutaten im Überfluß, was sich auf die tieferen, saftigen Beläge auswirkte. Das ursprüngliche Veal Parmigiana wurde im Sog der amerikanischen Steak-Kultur immer größer, die Pannade pappiger und der Käsebelag intensiver. Fettucine Alfredo ist eine reine amerikanische Erfindung und in Italien unbekannt. Dieses Phänomen der strukturellen Amnesie wird auch als *nostalgia without memory* bezeichnet und kennzeichnet alle ethnischen Gruppen in den USA. (2003, p.8)

Italian dishes were *creolized* in the sense *creolization* is used in this paper and in this way something new emerged that fit the American palate. Many typical ethnic dishes of today did not come from the original homeland but rather developed in the United States on the basis of what existed before. One decisive difference was the availability of a greater volume and a greater variety of foods and therefore ingredients for the immigrants to cook with.

Immigrant eating habits in America were also deeply influenced by the exchange with other immigrant groups. The various kitchens enriched each other on the one hand and also decisively influenced American cuisine on the other. This way, many foods became a close part of American mainstream cuisine.

Berndt Ostendorf, discussing Joel Denker's book The World on a Plate. A Tour through the History of America's Ethnic Cuisine, writes, "eine Nationalisierung erfordert jedoch Kompromisse, das heißt eine Anpassung an die dominante Tyrannei der Erwartung ist vonnöten" (2003, p.2). He further states that according to Denker food had to become Americanized in the first place in order to find nationwide acceptance. Then, in a next step, it can become ethnically

revitalized by a later generation. Denker considers this loss and revival to be a normative dialectic of the assimilation process (Ostendorf 2003, p. 3).

Gabaccia contends that America's, "culinary and ethnic history has been shaped by regionalism" (7) as well as by the many different groups of immigrants, "each ethnic group retaining customs, festivals and food traditions with great pride and yet with a stamp that is unmistakably American." Still, mainstream American cuisine does not really have a good reputation and seems to offer few adventures. Its cuisine is characterized by foods designed for in-between-meal eating, by "foods and beverages that were guaranteed not to nourish" (Mead, M., 1997, p. 15). This is the reason why ethnic food is so attractive; Schell observes, "*All-American* seems to us like a perfect synonym for boring, generic, and bland" (212).

Not only ingredients and foodstuffs were altered, but also preparation of food "too responded in significant ways to technological changes" (Goody 345). From the early nineteenth century on, "Flexible heat undoubtedly marked the beginning of a revolution in the kitchen. [...] The solid-fuel iron range came into general use in middle-class homes in the 1860s, and the gas version twenty years later" (Tannahill 322).

Mass marketing of foods during the industrial revolution was a sign of the widening gap between consumer and producer. It "stimulated customer demand for consistent quality and stable prices" (Tannahill 330) and, in part, led to a standardization of quality at a more mediocre than excellent level and resulted in an increase in additives in mass marketed foods. Products such as Coca-Cola, Gold Medal flour and Van Camp's canned beans "were marketed on the basis of purity, convenience, quality and reliability" (331).

Beginning in 1920, special retailers joined the traditional country stores by starting businesses and new wholesalers got involved in the food trade as well (Gabaccia 59; Goody 350). Many local food products disappeared from the shelves of country stores. A visitor to Louisiana in 1937 comments on this phenomenon that had devastating effects on regional eating traditions, ‟The village shops have nothing local or fresh to sell; for miles round the city the little shop windows are filled with nothing but canned goods and packed articles exorbitantly priced. ... The women are unable to cook″ (Ford 234). On the other hand, mass marketing caused the enrichment of the available diet by bringing in exotic fruits like bananas from Latin America.

The food of the entire American nation was deeply altered by the emergence of cans, and of frozen and ready-made foods as well as the new mass marketing. The influences of the Industrial Revolution made it gradually possible that the process of preparing food could be regarded unnecessary, as something to be avoided whenever possible. "As early as the 1940s, advertising was reflecting the image of cooking as a nuisance. By the '50s, it was viewed in the light of technology as an 'arm's-length' relationship with food″ (Murray Berzok 92).

The demands of the industry led to an increased employment of women that was even more necessary when many men were serving in the Second World War and the Korean War. Time became precious and so cooking became considerably faster. "Increasing numbers of women in the workforce, struggling with home and family duties, has decreased time for meal preparation. In turn, this factor has led to the increase in production of processed, frozen and fast foods″ (Barer-Stein 13).

For the women who still had to do most of the cooking, their job became easier with ready-made products. "A great deal of domestic work was now done

before the food ever entered the kitchen. Many foods were already partly or fully processed and even sold in a ready-to-eat form" (Goody 353). An advertisement for Campbell's soup from 1942 pictured the woman as a good wife, careful mother and military helper at the same time - thanks to the efficiency of cooking with canned foods (Shapiro 215). Rather than preparing food from single ingredients, women now just arranged meals from pre-cooked and pre-fabricated foods.

Boredom spread not only with taste but also with preparation. There is hardly any risk in opening a can or a package of frozen food. The process of cooking became dismantled of all its erotic aspects, it became meaningless and - though the preparation time decreased - the remaining time spent on cooking seemed to be even more boring. Ready-made foods changed the central cultural custom of cooking and alienated many women from housework:

> Now cookery could be seen, in the light of technology, as a brief and impersonal relation with food. And food itself could be understood as a simple necessity, one that ought to be manipulated and brought under control as quickly and neatly as bodily functions were handled by modern plumbing. (Shapiro 216)

Marketing of mass products was also done via home economic classes. At the end of the nineteenth century these classes were established in all American colleges. Catherine Beecher was a nineteenth century pioneer of this new kind of women's education. For her there were but three spheres of work that were appropriate for women: domestic, nursing and education. She placed a significant importance on domestic education:

> Again, a housekeeper has charge of the selection and preparation of the food on which family health and enjoyment so much depend. To prepare her for this duty she should be taught what kinds are best for the young and what for the aged; how each should be cooked to

> secure most nutriment and least waste; the relative value of buying wholesale or retail; the best modes of storing food and of preserving it from vermin or decay; what dishes are at once economical, comely, and inviting and how a husband's earnings can secure the most comfort and enjoyment with the most economical outlay. A woman needs training and instruction in this department of her duties as much as her sons need similar instruction and training in agriculture or watch-making, when that is to be their profession. (194)

With great effort and ambition, she fought for the establishment of schools that would send out in her sense well-educated women and trained teachers who could, in turn, train children in the whole nation the practice and science of domestic economy (Goodsell 138).

The damage that was done by home economists to the development of a creative and joyful national cuisine is difficult to estimate. Ostendorf calls it "die staatlich verordnete Abwehr des Genusses" and further writes, "Die amerikanische Eßkultur wurde während der monopolistischen Verwaltung durch die Home Economics für die Wissenschaften unsichtbar, zudem wirkte eine pädagogisch stabilisierte Eßkultur nicht länger auf die Sinne" (2003, 13).

In New Orleans, Harriet Boyer, an assistant professor at Newcomb College, was in charge of the domestic science program from 1910 to 1918. Boyer's discipline focused on the study and teaching of the many aspects of food preparation, from purchasing to canning to the choosing of proper equipment. A collection of letters responding to her correspondence offer detailed information on the subject. According to these letters, in New Orleans and its surrounding parishes, home economic classes were offered starting around the second decade of the twentieth century. The zeal to streamline the diverse kitchens to a certain

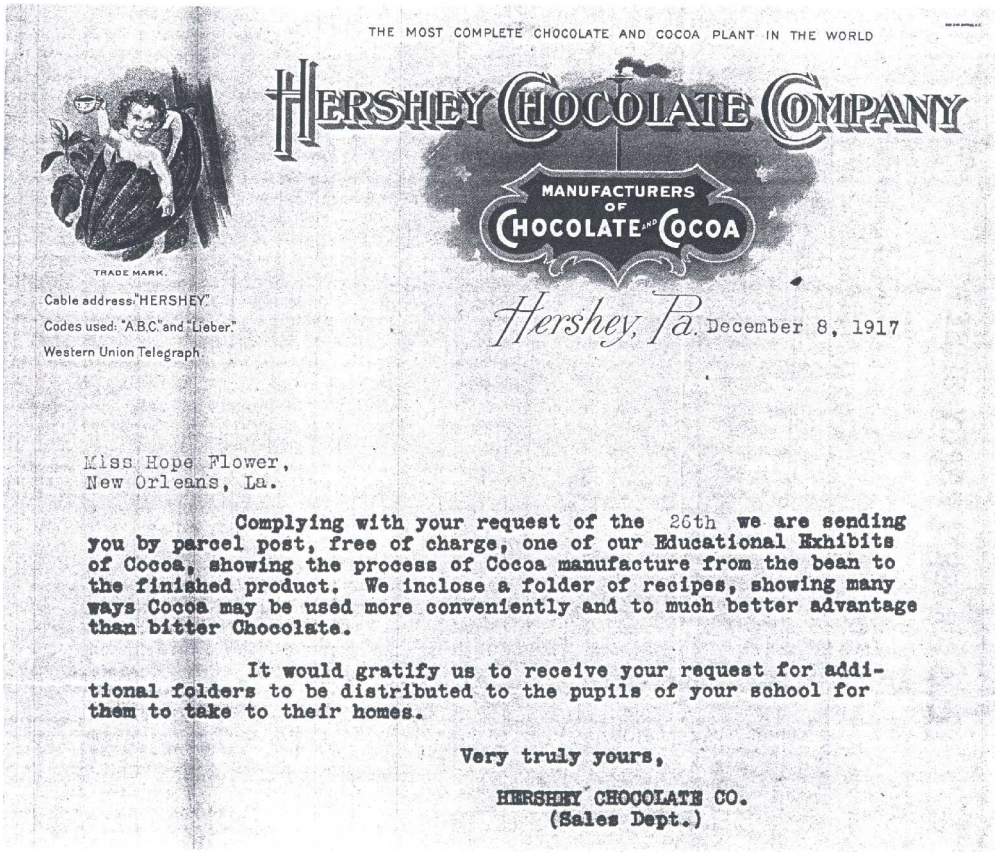
national standard is documented in the following letter from Boyer dated November 11, 1911:

> This is the general outline that I intend following for all the grades, simplifying the theory and practical cooking itself to suit the grade. (3)
>
> Through this these classes will get knowledge of the common foods, or foods which they handle every day, with the proper preparation thereof, and new and more wholesome ways of utilizing those foods, which the housekeeper on the farm has at hand.
>
> ... great results are expected from this, and in a few years, perchance mare time can be devoted to a work which is so essential to the girls of today, who will be the homemakers of the future generations (9)

Especially since cooking has long been regarded as one of the chief goods in the community, this homogenizing movement had a strong destructive effect on immigrant cooking. On the one hand, a great deal of effort was made to change the immigrants′ food habits and streamline them according to the American palate. The *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* suggested in one of its articles from 1942 that Italian families desiring better health should be taught to substitute olive oil with butter, lard, corn or soybean oils; to use more milk, eggs, and American type cheese; to use potatoes, correctly cooked and served with butter; and so on (686).

On the other hand, domestic science programs introduced some immigrant foods to a broad audience. The preparation of ″Macaroni and Cheese″ and ″Spaghetti and Tomato Sauce″ was part of the schedule. These dishes rapidly became common on middle-class tables, although with its soft boiled noodles, mild cheese and garlic-free spicing more closely resembling an American version than Italian (Levenstein, 17).

A collection of letters sent to Miss Boyer at Newcomb College, New Orleans, from the new nationwide operating companies shows how influence was taken this way on food habits. The companies provided the classes not only with free samples of their products but also with recipes of how to use them, as the following example from the Hershey Chocolate Company shows:



THE MOST COMPLETE CHOCOLATE AND COCOA PLANT IN THE WORLD

HERSHEY CHOCOLATE COMPANY

MANUFACTURERS OF CHOCOLATE AND COCOA

TRADE MARK.

Cable address "HERSHEY."
Codes used: "A.B.C." and "Lieber."
Western Union Telegraph.

Hershey, Pa. December 8, 1917

Miss Hope Flower,
New Orleans, La.

Complying with your request of the 26th we are sending you by parcel post, free of charge, one of our Educational Exhibits of Cocoa, showing the process of Cocoa manufacture from the bean to the finished product. We inclose a folder of recipes, showing many ways Cocoa may be used more conveniently and to much better advantage than bitter Chocolate.

It would gratify us to receive your request for additional folders to be distributed to the pupils of your school for them to take to their homes.

Very truly yours,

HERSHEY CHOCOLATE CO.
(Sales Dept.)

Fig. 18. Harriet Boyer Papers, *Letter from Hershey Chocolate Company*, 1917, Newcomb College New Orleans.

This chapter showed that the effects of industrialization and immigration were no hindrance to the continuum of the *creolization* process in New Orleans. In the United States of America where an inherited common traditional food culture is absent food traditions were invented, rejected, marketed and abused. In New Orleans strong regional traditions had evolved from colonial times. The *creolization* process stayed alive and despite economic globalization and mass

marketing or massive migration of peoples and ideas, in New Orleans no boring or universal cuisine evolved.

5.4 Creole Cooking

What is unique about New Orleans is that it had a mixed society from the very beginning as was shown in the previous chapters. There were large numbers of ethnically diverse immigrants with especially strong Mediterranean and black influence. People of many diverse backgrounds continued to arrive and no ethnic group ever became strong enough to dominate the rest. Where ethnic groups interacted, a cultural process started. As a result of this process, people were forced to mingle with each other and by doing so they created a new unique culture and with it a new *creole* cooking tradition evolved.

Most immigrants brought a rather simple style of cooking. Fishermen and farmers like the Acadians or Germans were hard working people with many children. Their food had to be nourishing and its preparation not very time consuming. Most dishes were therefore the hearty, "all-in-one-pot" type. These country people knew how to butcher, and their way of making sausages and their use of blood is still well known today. Many groups brought knowledge of seafood, such as fish, crabs, crawfish, shrimps and oysters and others knew about game, such as alligator and duck.

In general, the evolving cooking styles were inventive - they had to be or people would not have survived. The various groups of immigrants often did not find the spices and herbs, the vegetables, the meats of their homelands. Local ingredients had to be used instead and were combined with traditional cooking skills, thus forming a *creole* cooking style. The limitations of the ingredients available motivated culinary genius in people who otherwise might have never

discovered what they had. The *creole* dish bouillabaisse[31] is a good example for this high degree of adaptability:

When the first Frenchmen came to Louisiana they brought a great love for bouillabaisse to a place that had none of the ingredients necessary for making it. There was no *rascasse* - a Mediterranean fish - in southern Louisiana; there were no eels or lobsters. But the Frenchmen (*creoles*, by then) found that they could get crabs from Lake Pontchartrain, and oysters, shrimp, red snapper and pompano from the Gulf of Mexico They could still make a fish and shellfish stew even if they had to use different raw materials. (Feibleman 15)

The rules of *creole* cooking thus were defined mainly by practice. The cooking style encompassed "a creative improvisation not unlike that found among traditional New Orleans black jazz musicians. Their genius relies largely on experience" (Burton xvii). The genius *creole* cook needed fantasy as well as the ability to deal with shortcomings. Richard Burton a famous chef of today

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[31] Creole Bouillabaisse:

"1 qt. fish stock; ½ stick butter (...); 6 tbspl olive oil; 2 large white onions, finely chopped; 1 or 2 carrots, chopped; 2 bay leaves; 1 bunch green onions, finely chopped; 2 bay leaves; 1 bunch green onions, finely chopped; 3 cloves garlic, minced; 1 tbsp. minced parsley; 2 tbsp. flour; 4 whole ripe tomatoes, peeled and roughly chopped; 3 cups chicken broth; 1 lb. shrimp, peeled, cleaned, and deveined; 2 doz. raw oysters; 1 cup oyster water; 1 kb, crabmeat (claw); 1 lb. peeled crawfish tails; 4 small soft shell crabs, salted, peppered, and browned in 2 tbsp. butter and 2 tbsp. oil, then cut in half crosswise; 11/2 tsp. salt; 1 tsp. cayenne pepper; ½ tsp. black pepper; 1 tsp. powdered thyme; ¼ tsp. ground allspice; ¼ tsp. ground cloves; 1 tsp. chili powder; 4 lbs. filleted fish (at least 2 kinds as red snapper, redfish, trout, or drums, cut into 3-in. pieces); ½ cup dry white wine; a pinch or two of saffron.

First, make a fish stock with the bones and heads of the fish you have filleted. Put the fish in 2 quarts of water, along with the bay leaves, the green tops of the green onions, and a chopped carrot or two. Let this boil slowly for 20 minutes and your stock is made.

In a large, heavy pot melt the butter, add the olive oil, and sauté the onions, green onions, celery, garlic, and parsley over low heat for 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the flour and cook 5 minutes longer. Add the tomatoes, salt, cayenne and black pepper, thyme, allspice, cloves, chili powder, 1 quart of strained fish stock, and the chicken broth. Bring this to a rolling boil and then lower the heat to a simmer. Cook for 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, rub the fillets with salt and black pepper and bake in a 350-degree oven for 15 minutes. After 25 minutes, add the shrimp, oysters and their water, crawfish, crabmeat, and fried soft shell crabs to the pot. Allow to cook for 5 minutes, then add the wine and saffron. Add the baked fillets and cook for 5 more minutes, correcting the seasoning" (Soniat 70).

describes the *creole* cooking as, "Experimenting, trying to develop new and tasty recipes and being able to produce something fine under duress – all these are characteristics of chefs I admire" (5).

The evolving cooking tradition had a highly important oral tradition. In the absence of written documents and cookbooks in early times cooks believed in what they knew themselves. Recipes were therefore not something fixed and static but rather a platform for everybody's own artistic performance. Besides this, there is a golden rule of New Orleans cooking: there is never only one way to do anything. To put it differently, there are at least 100 different ways to prepare one and the same dish (Feibleman 38) or as Richard Burton put it, "Two important things to remember about cooking are taking pride in your work and not being afraid to experiment" (Burton 25).

At the turn of the century New Orleans was a city reborn. The post-Civil War yellow fever epidemics and Reconstruction period had ended. New Orleans enjoyed a burgeoning metro population and new economic possibilities as home to the nation's second busiest port. 1885 was the year of "The World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition" in New Orleans.[32] The Exposition enlivened the city with an influx of visitors eager to dine on the famed local fare. This exposition would not normally be worth mentioning, as it was unsuccessful, possibly because "when the eventful day came to throw open the gates to the public, the Exposition was in a sadly unfinished condition" (Fairall 12) and due to the "total lack of sound business principles, and the almost unbelievable confusion that attended it" (Hardy 4). But it also had the important side effect of starting a cultural awareness in New Orleanians. Indeed, the effect this had on

[32] The exposition was reviewed by Clive Hardy in his master thesis, "The World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition," submitted to the Department of History of the Graduate School of Tulane University, New Orleans in 1964.

the city seemed to be the most important legacy of the exposition as the visitors more often commented on how different New Orleans' culture was from the rest of America then on the contents of the exposition itself that was designed as a platform to reach the Latin American market (10).

The growing cultural sensitivity expressed itself in many ways. In culinary terms it found expression in the first two cookbooks about *creole* cooking, La Cuisine Creole and Creole Cookery that were published in 1885. Both books give "a collection of culinary recipes from leading chefs and noted *creole* housewives, who have made New Orleans famous for its cuisine," as the introduction of La Cuisine Creole avows.

La Cuisine Creole was written by Lafcadio Hearn, a notable and highly honoured figure in New Orleans' society around the turn of the century. He had come from Cincinnati in the year 1877 and became a colourful outsider people liked to invite to parties because he was an astute and charming conversationalist. Edward Alexander, toastmaster at the inaugural dinner at "Antoine's," characterized Hearn in a speech in the following way:

> He was fond of calling himself a Latin. I do not think he was a Latin. I think he was a Hellenist, more than a Latin ... Why? Because he was an apostle of beauty. He worshipped beauty. He wrote more beautiful than most great writers. (The Lafcadio Hearn Society of New Orleans 24)

This characterization might explain why Hearn very quickly became fascinated with the unique culture of this *creole* city. As both an accomplished writer and journalist, but also as an outsider, he captured the essence of this remarkable culture in his writing. He recognized the brilliance of the local cuisine and in 1885, in an attempt to capitalize on the world exposition, he wrote La Cuisine Creole.

The Christian Woman's Exchange edited the second book, The Creole Cookery Book. This organization was founded on April 1, 1881, by a group of notable ladies of New Orleans' society whose desire was to help women in need through charity. For this purpose, they founded, for example, an employment bureau in 1883. Under the direction of Mrs. Henry J. Leovy, The Creole Cookery Book was compiled and to be sure, it was no accident that this cookbook was finally published in the same year (1885) that "The World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition" took place (Dufour 6, 13f).

Social interaction characterized the new urban middle-class families that arose in New Orleans in the nineteenth century. Women orally exchanged recipes with one another across regional and ethnic boundaries and were eager to experiment with them. This exchange of recipes, or "over-the-fence cooking," had various implications. In a society where even dining outside ones own social group was a relatively delicate matter, recipes moved where people could not, and this process frequently became the first stage in the process of *creolization*. This oral exchange of recipes was also the elementary process for the production of cookbooks. The wish to memorize the new, as well as the traditional, gave authors the incentive to collect recipes and it is no surprise, therefore, that in many introductions the contributors are thanked for sharing their recipes with the author. (Both cookbooks and the newspaper articles provided valuable firsthand sources of information for this thesis.)

Recipes thus became commodities we are entitled to possess when they are taken up into the cookbook industry; foods this way became 'developed' and new cooking styles could arise and be spread via books. Cookery books were not new at all, but now they were having a much bigger impact on the population. The printing of cookbooks and the growing literacy of the population, for the first

time created a readership beyond priests and professional scientists (Schön 25). The historical impetus for the production of the earliest cookbooks has come from royal or aristocratic milieus in Europe because these were the ones that could afford complex cuisines and had access to the special resources required for production and consumption of written texts.[33] Cookbooks during Industrialization were mostly designed for the middle class household and were mainly used on local levels (Tannahill 325).

A decisive change can be detected in the content of cookbooks; previously, the books were quite careless regarding the amount of various ingredients. Examining the recipes in these two early cookbooks, a striking feature is the inaccuracy of measurements, and also the large quantity of ingredients used. The directions for making dishes are quite vague and in many cases, if the person was not familiar with the desired result, nearly impossible to follow. Directions such as "cook for a long time," "throw a handful of ...," "add water," "season to taste," "bake soft," and "bake in a quick oven" certainly make every modern cook wonder. These directions clearly show that cooking at the turn of the century was primarily a matter of trial and error and needed profound experience. The trouble with cookbooks was that they were "not scientific". One could hardly trust many of the directions they gave. A good example of this is given in Hearn's La Cuisine Creole when he instructs the readers on how to cook

[33] In the second half of the eighteenth century, cooking literature came into its own, with the most popular works even being distributed in the *Bibliothéque bleue* - the library of cheap reading matter, [...], that found its way all over France" (Tannahill 239) and also were present in the libraries, that developed by the end of the seventeenth century first in Paris but soon spread all across France (Chartier 123).

noodles, "Have a pot almost full of boiling water into which you have put a little salt. Drop the noodles in and boil them for five to six hours" (136).[34]

In 1861 however, Isabella Beeton published her Book of Household Management. "Mrs. Beeton was the first writer to make a serious attempt to include an estimate of costs, quantities and preparation times" (322). When, in the year 1896, Fannie Merritt Farmer published her work, The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book, finally "the precise measuring system that became so typical of American cooking was well and truly launched" (324).

Cookbooks started to tell unusual cultural tales. They combined the sturdy pragmatic virtues of all manuals with the vicarious pleasures of the literature of the senses. As do other written texts, they enlarged the knowledge of the reader but they also directly affected eating habits. Cookbooks, as did restaurants, allowed people from one group to explore the tastes of another. They took on a special role in terms of passing on the grammar of dishes. Ethnic cookbooks made a very significant contribution to current American cuisine in establishing and perpetuating methods of food preparation and teaching their readers how to make the strange familiar by showing them how to replicate unknown dishes. This experience widened the culinary horizon of people and added a whole new dimension to cooking. It was the middle-class that was the most interested in other cuisines and in mixing them with the ones they were already familiar with.

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[34] The home economists changed this inaccurateness with dramatic improvements in the areas of time efficiency and standardization, and cookbooks reflected this development. In the 1930s, a series of master theses were written at Louisiana State University in the Department of Home Economics in an attempt to standardize and preserve old regional recipes.[34] One of the authors explains the intention: "The recipes must be standardized to make the preparation possible and practical for those who are not familiar with the foods. Many young women cannot cook and already some of the fine and unusual dishes have been lost by not having accurate recipes preserved. Definite measures and methods may be depended upon to give results that are the same as those obtained by the Creole cook. In order that these recipes may be preserved for future generations the author wishes to contribute toward the preservation of the same" (Pope 3).

Next to these cookbooks recipes in New Orleans started to become published in the local newspaper The Picayune. Women journalists were not a novelty in the 1880s, but the number of female journalists was not large, and in the South, the field of newspaper journalism was less populated with women than elsewhere in the nation. Again even in the South New Orleans was a town especially suspicious of women who tested the *creole* tradition of society, which dictated that the woman remain at home. This deplorable state of affairs was denounced by a lady who had grown up in the city:

> No doubt there were myriads of cabarets and eating places for men on pleasure or business bent. ... There were no restaurants, no lunch counters, no tea rooms, and ... no woman's exchange, no place in the whole city where a lady could drop in, after all this round of shopping, take a comfortable seat and order even a sandwich, or any kind of refreshment. (Ripley 62f)

In one of the famous restaurants, "Maylié's" and "Esparbé's" only three women had been served from the 1880s to 1923, even though the chef was a woman herself (Leathem 11).

It was all the more remarkable then, that the first woman in the United States to own and operate a daily metropolitan newspaper herself was New Orleans' very own Elizabeth Jane Pointevent Nicholson. Eliza - as she was commonly called - was born in Pearlington, Mississippi in 1849, and as a young woman published poems in New Orleans and New York newspapers under the pen name of "Pearl Rivers." At the age of 23, she married the 64 year-old owner of The Picayune, Colonel A. M. Holbrook. When Holbrook died, Eliza, then only 26 inherited the newspaper. Although the paper was deeply in debt, she accepted the challenge to run it. Her greatest support at that time was the paper's business manager, George Nicholson, whom she married two years later. Under

their united effort, The Picayune flourished again and increased in size and circulation (Gehman 36f),

One of Nicholson's biggest contributions was to enable other women to earn a living in the profession of journalism. Nicholson expanded the Sunday edition with society news, fashions and household hints, and it was here that she utilized women reporters. Martha R. Field, who was known by the pen name, Catherine Cole, was the first female reporter whose career flourished under Nicholson's sponsorship. Field joined the Picayune staff in December 1881. Her Sunday column, at first entitled "Tea Table Talk," included various features of interest to women, such as music, society news, literature, fashion and others.[35] The title was shifted to "Ma-Julie's Household" on March 19, 1882, and then to "Woman's World and Work" on June 7, 1885. This new title much better represented Catherine Cole's own feminist attitude. She was a women's rights activist and she used her column both to expound her interests and to advocate women's causes. In 1887, she expressed this attitude by writing that "women and the press are the most powerful combination on earth" and that she wanted her female readers "to use [her column] as their public organ of speech and the vehicle of their thought."[36]

This column featured, among other topics, recipes, menu suggestions and different articles about food. "Woman's World and Work" had a profound influence on the cooking and eating habits of New Orleanians. Contrary to restaurants and cookbooks, the newspaper offered a medium in which everybody had the chance to contribute to the making of New Orleans cooking, by contributing own recipes.

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[35] Field's first column titled "Tea Table Talk" appeared 11 Dec., 1881: 5.
[36] Cole 31 May, 1887; Cole 16 April, 1893; Gilley 233-248; Bridges, *Eliza Jane* 263-278; Bridges, *A Study* 297-300.

After the Civil War, white women in New Orleans had found themselves running their own households. They were forced to manage kitchen duties that once fell to black women, since servants were too expensive for middle-class housewives. It seems evident that women simply had to teach themselves how to prepare food in order to keep up with what was expected of them (12 February, 1892: 22). This idea, however, was not as natural as it may seem. In La Cuisine Creole, Lafcadio Hearn wrote:

> Now to attain perfection in any line, care and attention are requisite, careful study a necessity, and application the moving force. Hence, cooking in all its branches should be studied as a science, and not be looked upon as a haphazard mode of getting through life. Cooking is in a great measure a chemical process, and the ingredients of certain dishes should be as carefully weighed and tested as though emanating from the laboratory. Few female cooks think of this, but men with their superior instructive reasoning power are more governed by law and abide more closely to rule; therefore, are better cooks, and command higher prices for services (1).

Catherine Cole tried to convince her readership that any woman could be a good housekeeper and cook as well. She provided her readership, from 1882 onward, recipes and menu suggestions because she believed:

> There is no reason why every housekeeper and cook should not have knowledge of the chemistry of cooking and of the healthfulness of different articles of food. (15 November, 1885: 7)

Cole herself was an excellent cook, a fact proven by her winning a Thanksgiving menu competition at a New York newspaper in 1892, in which 2000 competed. About herself, she said that next to writing "her other profession is surely that of a cook" (December, 1892: 22).

The lack of white women in the cooking profession was evident and was criticized in the local newspaper The Daily Picayune several times. On January 3, 1892, the article "Women Caterers" was published which included:

> The wonder to me is that caterers for working women are not more numerous. ... The women's exchange has done a great deal and their success, no less than that of the amateur caterer in question, proves that a company of women could go into the professional catering business and make money at it.

This article hints at the fact that catering, at the turn of the century, was a primarily black affair.

This commercial activity flourished in New Orleans and was nearly exclusively occupied by Negro women. To these women emancipation had brought freedom but also unemployment. These former slaves had worked as cooks for families, who, impoverished by the Civil War, could ill afford the full-time service of a cook. At the same time, many white women, used to having servants, were both inept at meal preparation and disinclined to make daily market errands. This convergence gave birth to a catering business still flourishing today (as one can see by the many caterers listed in the Yellow Pages of New Orleans), although it is not an exclusively black affair anymore. More and more creative young people enter this business and offer specialties to a public interested in new culinary adventures.

The initial idea behind the catering business was that one cook would prepare the food for several families in her own kitchen and deliver the meals, ready for serving, to each family at its appointed dinner hour. The menu for all families served by one cook on one day was the same. It only differed in the portions according to the number of family members to be served. Families expecting

guests for dinner, of course, also could order a special menu for the occasion. The following drawing illustrates how it was delivered:

Fig. 19. Drawing, *Caterer Delivers a Meal*, in Leon Grandjean, New Orleans Characters (New Orleans, 1976).

Different containers, one for each dish of the menu, were put on top of each other and carried by means of a detachable handle. The bottom was usually a charcoal brazier that kept the meal warm. Male members of the cook's family generally made delivery.

One of the most famous black caterers in the nineteenth century was Nellie Murray. She was born in Baton Rouge, and her mother was the cook for the *creole* governor there. For many years, she had been the chief chef for Annie Howard in New Orleans. When Howard decided to go on an extended tour

through Europe, she took Murray as her lady's maid. During that trip, Murray learned about many different European cuisines. Her impression of them, in comparison to New Orleans' cuisine, was published in an interview on December 4, 1894, in The Daily Picayune:

> But, to begin with England. Well, the cooking there is simply horrid, horrid, horrid! In Germany the cooking is good, but it is after the German style. ... Everything is good, solid; but few fancy fripperies. I am in love with Paris and her dishes. ... There is no place outside of Paris where people know how to cook, except New Orleans.

She also explained what this experience meant to her as a cook and her explanation reveals the huge amount of creativity and yet strong sense for tradition in the character of New Orleans' cuisine:

> Of course, I learned to prepare many new dishes, for I had my eyes open. ... I am a cook of to-day, and we have taken all that was good of my mother's and the best of ours, and I think that is the secret of success. (The Daily Picayune 4 Dec., 1894)

This article and another one from Cole the year before show the still high degree of oral tradition cooking in New Orleans had at that time:

> Beyond a doubt the crowning affliction of the moment, in New Orleans at least, is the question of servants - particularly of cooks. ... It is curious that no white country girls can be induced to come to the city to enter domestic service. ... Women must somehow go into the school business and train cooks. (The Daily Picayune 12 Feb., 1893)

Cole's recipes and suggestions offered housewives utilitarian function. The recipes did not represent a 'canned' world with electric stoves and other alien equipment without respect to the regional food habits. She further encouraged women with articles such as "What to Eat" (24 September, 1882), "How to serve Luncheons" (29 April, 1883), "Table Economy" (4 October, 1885), "How to Cook"

(15 November, 1885), etc., and, in one of her articles praised the Bishop's daughter in Jackson, Mississippi, for organizing a cooking club (22 May 1892). This once again proved the high esteem good cooking had in New Orleans:

> The club was and is a great success and it is said that when one of its members marries, the club presents the bridegroom with a certificate of the bride's proficiency as a cook. (20)

Cole suffered from a paralytic condition and left the Picayune staff in the early 1890s. Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmer picked up Cole's work and began a column called "Sunday Salad," using the pen name "Dorothy Dix" on June 2, 1895. When Eliza Nicholson died one year later, Gilmer became editor of the women's section, a position she held until 1901 (Bridges 1974: 299f).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when oven thermometers and stoves featuring temperature indicators entered the kitchens, new cookbooks were published providing the housewives with exact measurements and simple oven instructions.[37] Numerous texts were written on *creole* cooking, of which probably the most important was The Picayune Creole Cook Book, published in 1901. (Many New Orleanians untill today consider The Picayune Creole Cook Book as the bible of *creole* cooking.) The introduction to The Picayune Creole Cook Book encourages:

> ladies of the present day to do as their grandmothers did, acquaint themselves thoroughly with the art of cooking [and] the many excellent and matchless recipes of our New Orleans cuisine [...] gather[ed] from the lips of the old creole negro cooks and the grand old housekeepers who still survive, ere they, too, pass away, and creole cookery [...] will become a lost art. (The Picayune Creole Cook Book 6)

[37] Fannie Merritt Farmer, who wrote the widely distributed Boston Cooking-School Cook Book in 1896 became known as the mother of level measurements. She was the first one who stressed in her book that "correct measurements are absolutely necessary to insure the best results" (*American Heritage* 293-297).

Another important individual that has been decisive in shaping the *creole* cuisine in this respect was Mrs. Lena Richards, "In 1937 Mrs. Richards opened a cooking school, and two years later published her famous New Orleans Cookbook. In 1947 she started the first and only television show in New Orleans featuring a black cook" (Burton xix).

These printed matters and the opening of cooking clubs and schools were the official peak of an informal tendency towards increased culinary awareness. The standardization resulting from these cookbooks and the press was the turning point for New Orleanians, because it transferred their oral cooking traditions into the cultural art form of a cuisine that New Orleans still relies on today. Naturally the different groups inhabiting New Orleans and its surroundings all had their own cooking styles that resembled their heritage and their current life style. In the process of New Orleans becoming the metropolitan centre in terms of economic and cultural affairs it also centralized the cooking affairs. The different home-cooking styles of the 'periphery' contributed to the creation of a metropolitan cuisine. This was not a one-time process but a continuum - the process of *creolization*.

The different cooking styles influencing the evolution of New Orleans cuisine all had their own 'grammar', but drew from the same ingredients available. Together they formed a new style with certain characteristics hinting at the different cultural influences that formed it. Since a strong French influence existed from the very beginning, an important cookbook has to be mentioned in this context: Le Cuisinier Francois, written by Francois Pierre de la Varenne and published in 1651. La Varenne is generally acknowledged to be the founder of French classical cooking. He was the first great saucier to use savoury reductions of natural cooking juices bound with flour and butter mixtures, which

essentially means that he invented stock and *roux,*[38] two basic elements of almost all traditional *creole* dishes (Le Cuisinier Francois 35-53; Larousse Gastronomique 612). La Varenne simplified menus, bringing logic and order to the dishes, and his book documented the strides made in French cooking due to Italian influence.

Another characteristic of the *creole* cuisine is that it makes use of a lot of spices, "We probably use more seasoning than they do elsewhere" (Burton 6). This is of no wonder considering the important meaning the chili pepper already had in that region in pre-Columbian times. Two other rare items are the Indian file and African okra. Both items serve as thickening agents and refer to Louisiana's colonial history.

Crawfish, too is rather prominent. This creature already had impressed the Native American population and in the Louisiana Houna tribe some people even were named after this animal, "One branch of the Choctaw was known as the *Chakchiuma*, 'the red crawfish', another the *Shatkje-ohla*, the 'crawfish people'" (Pitre 18). Crawfish aquaculture remains concentrated in the southeast corner of the state where many of the large Cajun minority still calls Louisiana 'the Motherland'" (80).

Another food that has strong ties to its African heritage is rice. Rice is a basic side dish to most *creole* food and it is used in main dishes such as jambalaya which has close relations to the Spanish *paella*. Rice became popular in several ways. The many variations of rice desserts give evidence of that. New Orleans' cookbooks typically feature a number of recipes for rice puddings. The Christian Woman's Exchange cookbook has a rice blanc mange and plain rice pudding

[38] *Roux* is made out of equal parts of oil or lard and flour which are fried together and constantly stirred until a brown color is reached. *Roux* gives soups, sauces and stews a kind of creamy texture with a smoky flavor and dark color. Traditional New Orleans recipes often start with the words: "First you make a *roux* ..."

(143, 165). Lafcadio Hearn has a recipe for both rice pudding and rice custard, as well as rice milk for children, and baked rice cakes (132, 203, 207). The 1900 Picayune's Creole Cook Book lists many sorts of custards, fritters, puddings, dumplings, ice creams, and meringues made with rice (140, 142, 205, 212, 247). The Picayune's authors specifically attribute the rice dumplings to the "old Creole cook" (178-179). Celestine Eustis gives a recipe for plain rice pudding, so named, one assumes, to show that it was for every day use, and even a way to use leftover rice (160). There is another sweet rice dish, sometimes called snowballs, sweetened popped rice, eaten like popcorn. These are said to have come to New Orleans from Haiti with refugees in the very late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Land 208-212, 227).

Bananas Foster is a dessert much cherished by many New Orleanians as their favourite. Bananas Foster's popularity is interesting if one considers that before the 1880s, most New Orleanians, like other Americans, had never seen a banana (Jenkins iii), although plantains were a regular dish. As a result of the regular shipments of bananas via Vaccaro's Standard Fruit and Steamship Company to New Orleans (described in Chapter 5.2) bananas became an early ingredient in the *creole* cuisine (Jenkins 17). In 1866, a reporter for Harper's Weekly noted that bananas could be found at the French Market (526), however, the scarcity of banana recipes in any written form before 1900 seems to emphasize their rarity. New Orleanians were probably among the first Americans to taste bananas thus showing the strong Central American influence on its cooking. In 1900, The Picayune's Creole Cook Book gives recipes for banana pudding, banana meringue cake, and fried bananas (192, 239,263).

One of the main features of *creole* cooking is that it mainly resembles a poor people's way of cooking. This is well reflected in the way remnants and leftovers

are handled. A famous chef of today stated, "One of the truly admirable traits of *creole* cooking, ... , was that nothing - I repeat nothing - was ever wasted. ... Any leftovers were sure to find their way into the next day's meal" (Soniat 32).

Bread pudding[39] offers a long history and provides a final insight into the identity and the process of *creolization*. Written bread pudding recipes appear in the very first New Orleans cookbooks, but the transition of this humble dish to a starring role would take almost 100 years. Indeed its uniquely New Orleans incarnation is a modest one that, for the most part, is no different than bread pudding found in countless other places around the United States. Many New Orleanians themselves express some surprise that the 1997 edition of The Joy of Cooking lists among four bread pudding recipes one entitled "New Orleans Bread Pudding" (Rombauer 1022-1023).

Both the Christian Woman's Exchange's The Creole Cookery Book and Lafcadio Hearn's La Cuisine Creole give bread pudding a singularly uneventful place in their listings (179, 204). Hearn, indeed, makes it sound like a comfort food: "Butter some slices of bread ..." he begins, "and lay them in a dish, with currants and citrus between.... Then pour a quart of milk with 4 well-beaten eggs, and sugar sufficient to taste and bake" (204).

By 1900, bread pudding had a more complicated identity, as both a plain and fancy dessert. By this time, the first edition of The Picayune's Creole Cookbook takes pains to tell that there is no French word for pudding, a phrase often

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[39] Bread Pudding with Amaretto Sauce: 1 loaf of French bread (stale), 1 quart of milk, 1/2 cup of sugar, 6 eggs, 1 cup raisins, 1 Tbsp vanilla, Splash of amaretto
In a large bowl, soak bread in milk; add sugar, raisins and vanilla, followed by eggs. Mix lightly and place in well buttered baking dish. Bake at 375 for 30-45 minutes.
Amaretto sauce: 1 stick butter, 1 cup powdered sugar, 1/4 cup amaretto or other liqueur, 1 egg yolk. Over low heat melt butter and sugar, stirring constantly. Add amaretto and egg yolk. Heat slowly for one or two minutes to set egg. Pour sauce over pudding.

repeated by the French themselves (204). However, the anonymous authors here do add a bit of elegance to the suggestion that bread pudding be accompanied by brandy or lemon sauce (204, 221, 208). Since they took pains to place themselves more closely to the French than did compilers of earlier recipes, they were probably following what Escoffier had called (in various books written between 1886 and 1934) Pudding au Pain à la Française. This differed from Pudding au Pain à L'Anglaise, a recipe not that different from Lafcadio Hearn's version of some buttered slices of bread spread with currants and sultana raisins. Pudding au Pain à la Française, on the other hand, calls for four whole eggs, six egg yolks, four egg whites, milk, vanilla, sugar and bread crumbs (Escoffier 765). Linking themselves to the French in the early 1900s was important, for what was discussed in Chapter 5.1. New Orleans recognized the importance of the French heritage to its image.

At about this time, as we have seen, cookbooks started to become popular. Fannie Farmer, for example, spread the fame of bread pudding, and though hers was a plain one, others quickly followed with more fanciful meringue and/or various sauces (392). As part of this national trend, Celestine Eustis in her book on *creole* food of 1901 gives no recipe for a simple bread pudding, probably assuming it was known to all, and certainly not worthy of an expensive sauce. She does, however, give a recipe for a meringue pudding made from stale breadcrumbs and a fancy dessert version of French toast called custard bread (61).

In cookbooks from the 1910s through the 1970s, bread pudding continues to be added, especially in its more dressed up versions. For example, Mary Moore Bremer in 1932 gives a Butter Scotch Bread Pudding, and a year later, The Gourmet Guide to New Orleans includes chocolate bread pudding but not plain

bread pudding (Scott 103). The Depression and World War II seem to have brought little influence on the appearance of bread pudding recipes. The following three decades witnessed continuing inclusion of bread pudding as a plain family dessert, sometimes dressed up with sauce, but add the twist of its having become a convenience food, made with canned pineapple or fruit cocktail. Bread pudding does not appear at all on restaurant menus during the period 1880-1950, but begins to creep back in during the 1960s and 1970s - just as New Orleans restaurants began to promote tourism around food.[40]

I propose then that bread pudding remained and still remains a standard in New Orleans because of its adaptability to various sauces and variations and because, in its very plainness, it echoed New Orleanians' love of home cooking. Hearn writes, "The Creole housewife often makes delicious morceaux from things usually thrown away by the extravagant servant."

Bread, eaten every day, contributed the leftover ingredient needed for bread pudding. The centrality of French bread both to dining in New Orleans and to bread pudding recipes from New Orleans is indisputable. The following picture shows a traditional Cajun bread oven from the early twentieth century:

[40] The menus from 1880 to 1970 housed at the Historic New Orleans Collection, the Newcomb Archives, and the New Orleans Public Library show that bread pudding begins appearing on restaurant menus in the late 1950s.

Fig. 20. Photo. *Bread Oven*. Courtesy: Melanie Boulet, Larouse.

Bread consumption in New Orleans exceeded any other place in the United States. This may also have contributed to the retention of bread pudding on the tables of the city (Baudier 8).

The work of theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu is helpful: bread pudding can be easily cast as a symbol of the home and thus, of economic and linguistic importance. Recall that to Bourdieu, food was the "archetype of all taste." The popularity of certain foods, their consumption and their recipes revealed internalized ideas about where a person, or a group of people, fit in a social structure. Bourdieu also differentiated between "tastes of luxury" (something he also called, as did Sidney Mintz in writing about sugar, tastes of freedom) and "tastes of necessity" (174).

Bread pudding falls between these two. That is, it began early as a taste of necessity and became a taste of luxury, but retained some of its homeliness. It is sold today in New Orleans grocery stores, even in chains like Winn Dixie. Thus, with the addition of a variety of sauces, some bread pudding recipes dress up a homely dessert quite easily – a trick that has been consistent in New Orleans food overall since the beginning. This is yet another marker of where New Orleans' cuisine came from, what Richard Collins call the haute dining with its French love of delicate seasonings and the "other the poorer and earthier cooking, with its emphasis on cheapness as well as on robust spicing" or what Mary Land says is the difference to *creole* cooking, "the mating of haute cuisine and bonne femme with a dash of Tabasco ... to back of town cooking" (Collins 13).

Bread pudding moves easily between the fancy restaurant, the grocery store deli, and the home kitchen table because New Orleanians find in it something that speaks to their identity as thrifty descendants (in spirit, if not in fact) of many different world cultures - who happened to eat very good bread. And this, as noted in the Introduction, is one of the key roles of New Orleans food – to maintain ties with old and esteemed traditions, while being open to new influences and thus creating something better.

This close look at some of New Orleans' most favourable dessert dishes reveals once more the very essence of what *creolization* of food in New Orleans is all about: namely a high degree of tolerance toward new things, a huge amount of creativity and yet a strong sense for tradition.

New Orleanians' reactions to such transformations are seemingly taken in stride, perhaps because as Feibleman argues, to New Orleanians, anything that turns out well is acceptable in food (38). New Orleanians have had a clear idea

of fancy, high end restaurant styled food, but also have retained their love of simple dishes.

Recipes reflect shifts in the boundaries of edibility, the proprieties of the culinary process, the logic of meals, the exigencies of the household budget, the vagaries of the market and the structure of domestic ideologies. They presuppose the effort of specialists to standardize the regime of the kitchen, to transmit culinary lore, and to publicize particular traditions guiding the journey of food from marketplace to kitchen, and to the table. Standardization is a necessary and important step towards the establishment of a cuisine and it represents the turning point when an oral tradition is transferred into a cultural art form that is valid outside just one kitchen and beyond one generation. Just as catering services, cookbooks and journalism all contributed to this process as described in this chapter restaurants on their own pushed it to a level beyond home-style cooking. Linguists differentiate in private and public spheres and point to the different development of language in this area. In terms of development of food culture this differentiation is helpful, too, since food developed different in the home than in restaurants and different in the countryside than in New Orleans.

5.5 The Restaurants of New Orleans

Next to the publishing of recipes in cookbooks and newspaper columns that addressed the cook at home there was another important development around the time of the World Exposition in New Orleans in culinary affairs. It was the getting public of restaurants this chapter deals with. From home cooking regional traditions evolved. Restaurants relied on these traditions and carried

them on into a cuisine that gained fame among the travelling public and locals alike.

Home cooks created the *creole* dishes in the first place. The skill of chefs in restaurants transformed them into a culinary art form and continued the creation process. Restaurants formed pools for inspiration and were also responsible for consistent quality and long-range performance. Many of today's famous *creole* dishes were created then and found widespread acceptance outside restaurants as well. The fame of restaurants sometimes overshadows the important influence of home cooking.

At the World Exposition only few foreign participants displayed culinary goods, like chocolate from Britain and wines from France as well as coffee from Brazil (Hardy 41-44). This was accompanied by a horticultural exposition of exotic fruits that, according to one report, numbered 20,000 plates (52f). In fact it was not an out of country export of goods, but rather an inner country exchange of foods and cuisines that still marks this event until today.

Again the Exposition itself hardly contributed anything to this effort. The food on sale at the exposition was ill regarded. After protests led to a reduction in price from 25 to 15 cents for sandwiches on sale they were still denounced as reasons for dyspepsia, having "every indication of Chinese manufacture and a long sea voyage".[41] There is no report about the food being sold in the "cheap saloons, eating-rooms, booths, tents and stands" erected by independent entrepreneurs opposite the Exposition grounds across Exposition Boulevard or St. Charles Avenue (76). Although the food sold in those places didn't earn fame, at least it did not spark off protests or complaints, as far as we know.

[41] Mascot, December 27, 1884, quoted from (Hardy 61f).

The Exposition itself was quite impressive for its visitors - whereas the food offered was not. As a consequence many took refuge in the restaurants in the city, thus encountering a distinguished cuisine of high standard previously unknown to them. This way, the exposition helped the local citizenry to realize that it was profitable to publicly display items of their culture. These things had always been taken for granted but now they were received appreciatively by visitors. Suddenly the citizens of New Orleans became aware of their own unique and rich food culture. For the restaurants it meant a major chance. The exposition was key in attracting the visitors who would spread the fame of New Orleans restaurants to a national audience.

The visitors of course needed places to stay over night, too. In New Orleans, restaurants developed along with hotels. Zacharie's 1885 New Orleans Guide informs us that restaurants opened at that time, such as "Antoine's" and "Arnaud's", which had rooms upstairs, taking in boarders by the month or week and serving two meals a day (Stanforth 2). In 1842, Gerstner noted, "Erst in den letzten Jahren entstanden mehrere sehr gute Hotels in New-Orleans‟ (346). These hotels, as another visitor in 1868 observed, "are not merely designed for the accommodation of passing travellers; they are rather gigantic boarding-houses, to which passing travellers have free access″ (Macrae 390).

In New Orleans' hotels, food obviously played an important part. Regular guests, boarders and diners all came to the hotel to partake in splendid meals as the same traveller reported in 1868:

> To show that I am not speaking at random, let me give the ordinary bill of fare for dinner in the hotel where I stayed at New Orleans, and where, I think, the charge was three and a half dollars a day. And let the reader remember that the guests are free not only to choose a dish out of every course, but to order as many dishes in

each course as he pleases - could, in fact, if he had a stomach like Apicius, partake of them all, and pay nothing extra.

Dinner.[42]

Soups. - Ox-joint; vermicelli.

Fish. - Baked red snapper, with brown oyster sauce.

Boiled. - Leg of mutton, with caper sauce; sugar-cured ham; corned beef.

Cold Dishes. - Corned beef; roast beef; mutton; ham.

Roast. - Beef; loin of lamb; pig, with apple sauce; loin of pork; loin of mutton; loin of veal.

Entrés. - Beef à la mode; calves head, with brain sauce; croquettes of rice, with lemon sauce; calves feet à al Pascaline; veal and ham scalloped with mushrooms; macaroni, with Italian sauce; oyster patties.

Vegetables. - Irish potatoes, mashed or boiled; hominy; rice; beans; spinach; cabbage.

Relishes. - Worcestershire sauce; mushroom catsup; walnut and tomato catsup; pickled beets; mixed pickles; pickled cucumbers; Cumberland sauce; lettuce; cheese; Harvey sauce; beefsteak sauce; John Bull sauce.

Pastry and Pudding. - Gooseberry pie; bread pudding, with brandy sauce; Pethivier pie; Genoese perlies; biscuits Milanais; annisette jelly; English cream.

Dessert. - Raisins; filberts; almonds; pecans; oranges.

Coffee. (391)

In many hotels a free lunch was offered as well:

> A bar-room in New Orleans will hold a thousand people. ... In such a bar-room there is set out every day, free to all comers, a lunch composed of soups, fish, roast joints, fowls, and salads, with bread and cheese. You eat as much as you like, and the dime or the picayune, which you give for the mint-julep or sherry-cobbler, pays for all. (Nichols 131)

Foreigners were amazed at the profligate eating and drinking habits of New Orleanians, yet even the free lunch represented more of a culinary adventure than just a mere feeding of masses, at least from the perspective of tourist:

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[42] The terms breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper refer to meals eaten at different times of the day by various nationalities. According to Macrae "Breakfast went on from seven in the morning to ten; dinner from two to half-past four; supper from seven to twelve" (Macrae 392).

> Here it was, as I observed before, that my first initiation into the mysteries of New-Orleans life took place. The room occupies the ground floor of the hotel, and is capable of accommodating from four to five hundred persons without inconvenience. When I entered, the place was considerably full: people were lounging about in all direction, evidently waiting for a favourable opportunity to approach the bar, which was crowded with hungry disputants, before whom were displayed all the delicacies of the season and out of season, from turtle soup, wild turkey, and hot venison, down to calves' feet à la vinaigrette, pâté de foie gras, and macaroni au fromage gratté. When the length of the table (which is about 60 feet) is taken into consideration, some idea may be formed of the numerous quantity of dishes required to fill up every gap, and yet this is done every day, during the hours of eleven and one o'clock, and of the very best materials that either foreign or domestic markets can supply. (Tasistro 69)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the fame of New Orleans' restaurants and their superb cooking already was a firmly established fact as this report from 1913 shows:

> But in New Orleans, an appreciation of good cookery is an appreciation of the art of a real profession. And of her restaurants there is an infinite variety - La Louisiane, Galatoire's, Antoine's, Begue's, Brasco's - the list runs far too long to be printed here. (Hungerford 250)

This statement and the next one, from 1916, reveal that each place was unique and that the outstanding quality of the food was more important than anything else:

> The restaurants and eating houses of New Orleans are famous, and deservedly so! The typical New Orleans restaurant is a bare room with pine tables and a sanded or saw-dusted floor. Not much for looks are they, but the food they serve is most delicious. Old Antoine's, indeed, has a reputation for quality even in far Paris; at

> the Café la Louisianne one may get Bouillabaisse that reminds the epicure of Marseilles. (Hammond 122)

Traditional restaurants such as "Antoine's" and "Galatoire's"[43] still cultivate the image of understated old-restaurant décor today. They have kept their interior design as simple as it has always been and maintain their reputation solely on the quality of the food they serve. The picture below shows Galatoire's ground-floor dining room with its tile floor, bright lights, cloth napkins, mirrored walls, and brass coat hooks:

Fig. 21. Interior of Galatoire's, New Orleans. Personal photograph by author. 1995.

Another outstanding *creole* restaurant became "Corinne Dunbar's." Corinne Dunbar was born in 1879 as one of ten children. Her father, Frederick Loeber, had come to New Orleans from Germany in the late 1840s and married Catherine Humbrecht, a Cajun. After her graduation from Newcomb College in 1899, Corinne married George Washington Dunbar, who, despite his Anglo-Saxon name, came from an old *creole* family. The Dunbar family had been active in the development of the New Orleans food industry, operating a produce company as the advertisement below shows:

[43] Galatoire's won the James Beard Award for outstanding restaurant in America in 2005.

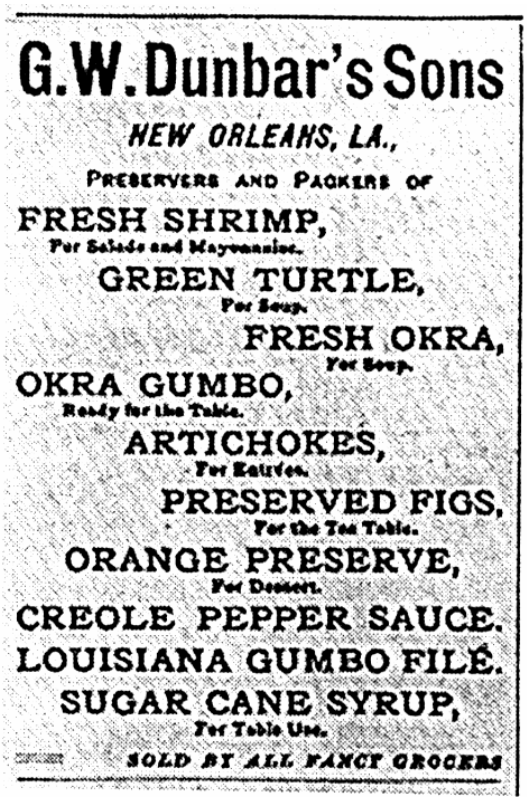


Fig. 22. Advertisement. "Table Talk", 1892.

In 1935, due to an extended illness of her husband, Corinne Dunbar decided to open a restaurant in the downstairs portion of her home at 1716 St. Charles Avenue. Corinne Dunbar managed her business supervising everything from shopping to service and she relied upon her long time black household cook Leonie Victor, to turn out the cuisine for which the restaurant became famous for.

From the beginning, Corinne Dunbar sought to create an atmosphere of elegance, one more akin to dining in a gracious home than a typical restaurant. The atmosphere was that of being guests at a private home as the following photo shows:

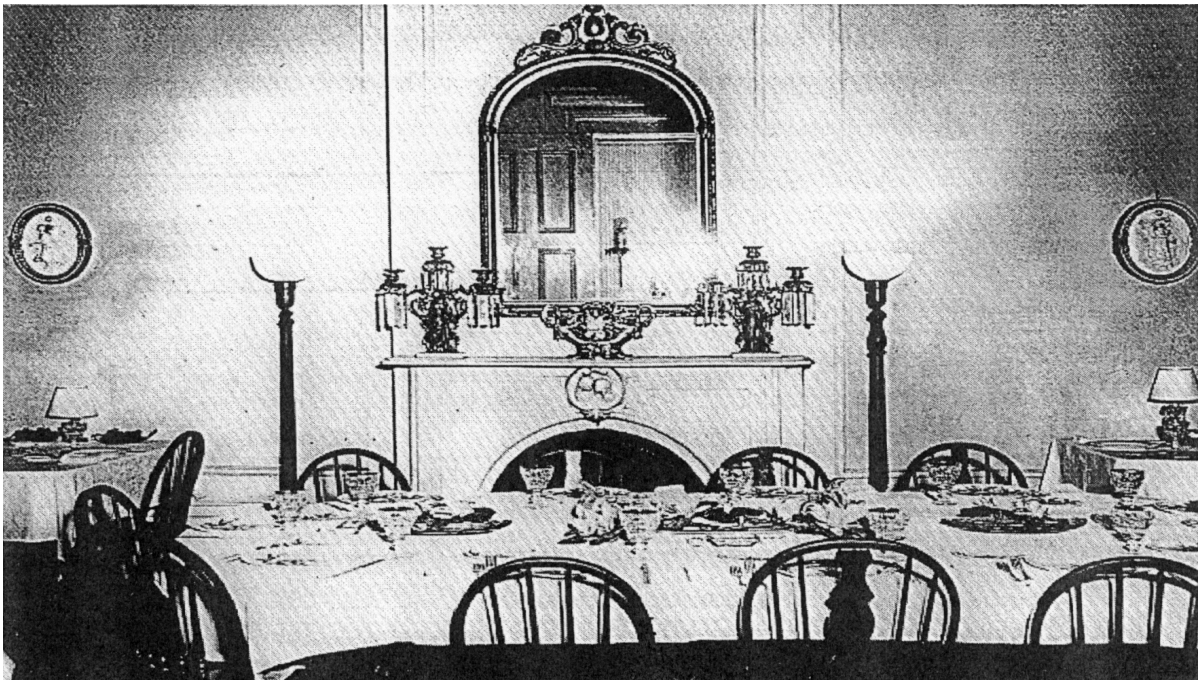


Fig. 23. Photo. *Dining Room at Corinne Dunbar's*. Collection of Cherie Banos Schneider, New Orleans.

Her homey setting became popular with women, especially for luncheons. This was especially attractive during a time when most places serving lunch, particularly saloons, were considered off-limits for women with claims to respectability, especially if they were unaccompanied by men. As early as 1876 "Acme Oysters" opened a ladies' saloon on Royal Street in the French Quarter. In the 1880s the Christian Woman's Exchange introduced its downtown lunchroom for working women. The next photo shows a set of tiles in front of the present-day "Croissant d'Or" on Ursulines Street, as a remnant of the once common practice of keeping women separate at dining:

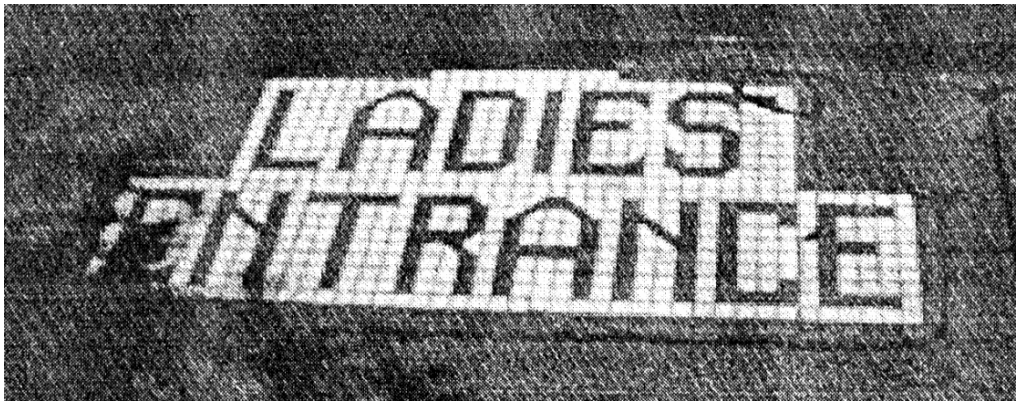


Fig. 24. Photo. *Ladies Entrance*. Newcomb Archives

As in the case of chefs, white women had the possibility to cook in family-run restaurants. One of them was ‟Begué′s″ as described in the Chapter 5.2 ‟The Markets of New Orleans.″ Marie Esparbé, who cooked at ‟Maylié″ and ‟Esparbé's″ from the late 1870s until her death in 1923 (Leathem 4) was another prominent such women. Her restaurant first was a coffee shop for the market workers at the Poydras market and later served as meeting point for the Butcher′s Benevolent Association after it moved across the street around 1878 (9f).

Each restaurant of New Orleans made a claim for uniqueness and specialty (and still does so). While French cooking swayed the upper classes - which still can be seen on menus that are printed in French, such as at "Antoine's″ and ‟Galatoire′s,″ German cooking had the biggest impact on the middle classes. Words such as *Sauerkraut, Pretzel, Schnitzel* and *Sauerbraten* were soon widely adapted as menus and cookbooks such as The Picayune Creole Cook Book, first edited in 1901, show. The following part of a menu from "Fabacher's," founded in 1880, which offers dishes such as ‟Braines and Eggs German Style″, or sandwiches with ‟Head Cheese″, ‟Liver Sausage″, ‟Westphalia Ham‟ or ‟Smoked Tongue″ and ‟Kaiser Sandwich″ provides further evidence of the German

influence (apart from the strong French, Spanish and Italian[44] influence it gives evidence of):

EGGS & OMELETTES

Westphalia Ham and Eggs.....75	Crab Meat Omelet.....50	Omelet, a la Creole.....40
Broiled or Fried Westphalia Ham..60	Poached Eggs on Toast.....30	" Potato 25
Ham or Bacon and Eggs.....40	With Bacon 40	" Spanish 50
Eggs, Boiled 2.....20	Omelet, Truffles 60	" Onion 30
" Fried 2 20	" Bacon 40	" with Preserves 40
" Scrambled 20	" Plain 3 Eggs.....30	" with Rum 50
" On Toast 30	" Parsley 35	" Souffle, 20 min. for 2.....1 50
" Shirred 2 25	" Tomato 35	" Caeese 30
" Bunwa 30	" Kidney 35	" Jelly 35
" St. Dennis 60	" Green Peas 40	" Chicken Liver.....50
Omelet, Ham 40	" Asparagus 50	Brainee and Eggs German Style....40
" Mushrooms 60	" Oysters 35	Country Ham and Eggs.....40
	Scramble Brain and Eggs.....35	Country Bacon 40

SANDWICHES

Club Sandwich 30	Anchovies on Toast.....40	Corned Beef 15
Smoked Tongue 15	Boiled Ham 15	Caviar Sandwich 25
Roast Beef 15	Cheese Sandwich 15	Mutton 15
Veal 15	Turkey 25	Kaisen Sandwich 25
Pork 15	Chicken 25	Head Cheese 15
Egg 15	Sardines 15	Liver Sausage 15
Broiled Ham 15		

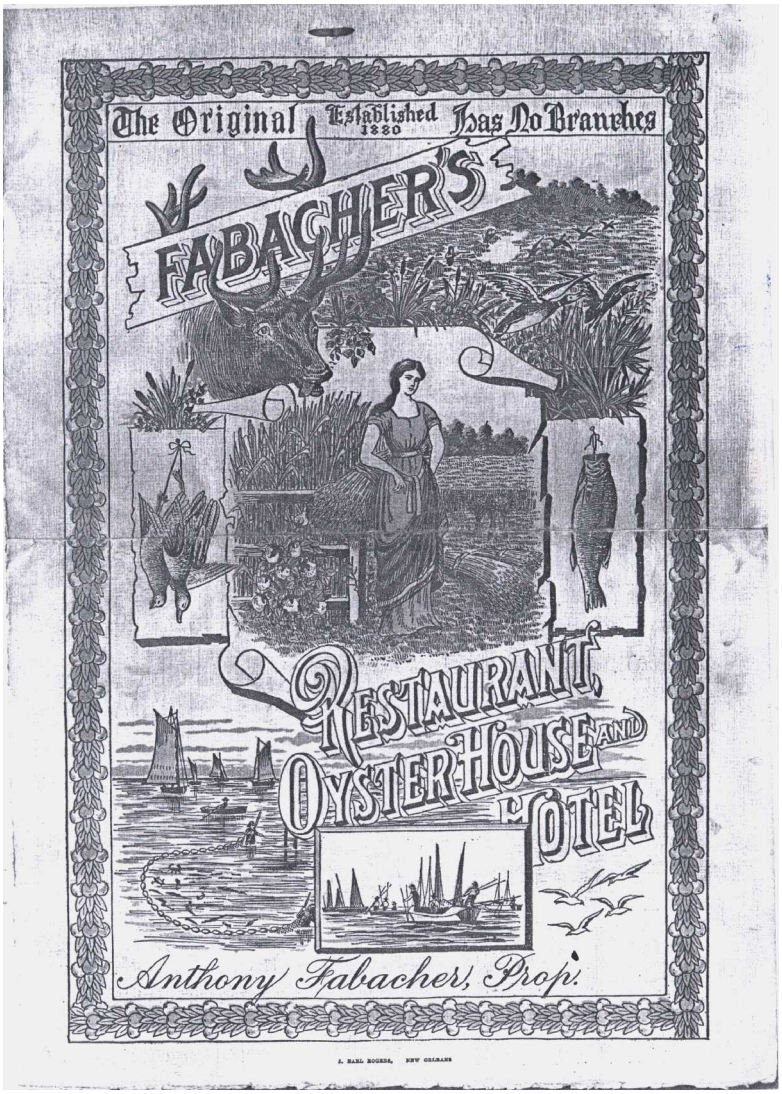


Fig. 25. Menu, ca.1900, *Menu from Fabacher's*, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[44] Anchovies and sardines are Sicilian stable items.

Whereas in other parts of the United States, the German heritage was subliminated by the Americanization crusade following World War I, in New Orleans, politics and cultural heritage were kept separate. A visitor to "Kolb's" a German restaurant in St. Charles Street in 1917 that closed some years ago, observed this phenomenon:

> Inside, an atmosphere redolent of the new Germany, an American interpretation, by Germans, of the Hofbrauhaus; outside, war extras still limp and wet from the press, selling like hot cakes! The indescribably hoarse shouts of the newsboys drifted in to us and made strange discords with the steady flow of German that poured out of the swinging, eternally banging kitchen doors! (Cram 271)

In tandem with the high level of immigration at the turn of the nineteenth century, the number of ethnic restaurants grew by leaps and bounds. The Italians, for being one of the most famous examples, specialized in pasta and pizza and catered to the non-Italian trade. Due to the vivid trade that had developed between New Orleans and Sicily early on as described in Chapter 5.3, Italian restaurants had access to all kind of food items from the regions they came from.

Some of their most favourite foods, however, such as octopus and squid they could not get at the mouth of the Mississippi. Creativity was applied to replace the seafood needed. In New Orleans, these immigrants found other seafood of high esteem and they made shrimps, oysters and crawfish part of their dishes. Instead of preparing "Spaghetti di mare" with clams, squid and octopus, Italian immigrants invented "Spaghetti and oysters" and other delicious dishes (Collin 70f).

Here again it becomes clear that *creolization* is "a useful concept for the understanding of cultural genesis in a culture-contact situation. It refers to ...

the achievement of a functioning, dominant ‘grammar’” (Ostendorf, “Creolization and Creoles” p. 1). This grammar did not imply rigid rules but invention, openness, and cross-cultural borrowing. Recipes like “Spaghetti with alligator sauce”, “Coon’s Shrimp Spaghetti Etouffee”, “Poule D’eau (Coot)”, “Gumbo with Wieners”, “Creole Hamburger Casserole” or “Hot Dog Chili” give evidence for that (Down the Bayou 244-254).

In addition to the very strong European and especially Mediterranean influences on restaurants in New Orleans, black heritage played a major role, too, if not the most important of all:

> French, Spanish, Cajun and Italian – all these ethnic groups live in New Orleans – but they are not running the kitchens of the best restaurants in the city. The single, lasting characteristic of Creole cuisine is the black element. (Burton xv)

Sherman Crayton, himself a black chef, began his cooking career at "Arnaud's" restaurant in 1936 as a dish washer and worked his way up until he became chef at the "Vieux Carré" restaurant in 1963 and describes the odds and ends of *creole* cooking:

> Finesse is important in the preparation of food, especially Creole food, which is special. They say it is a mixture of Spanish and French, but the only people who seem to know all about it are neither Spanish nor French, they're blacks. (Burton 53)

These black chefs have mostly been reared in New Orleans; still, "They are not 'creole' in which the term implies native-born.” These chefs also do not have the typical *creole* names, but indeed they are branding the style that is known as the *creole* cuisine of New Orleans, because, "Nevertheless, they are the masters of the New Orleans cuisine - it is because of them that it exists today, and they are the very best at what they do” (Burton xvii).

In a 1880s edition of Harper's New Monthly Magazine, the talent of the black cook was thus described:

> The Negroes are born cooks, as other less favored beings are born poets. The African ... gradually evolved into an artist of the highest degree of excellence, and had from natural impulses and affinities, without any conscious analyses of principles, created an art of cooking for which he should deserve to be immortalized. And how is it possible to convey to this dyspeptic posterity of our ancestors, to a thin-blooded population whose stomach has been ruined by kitchen charlatans, sauce and gravy pretenders, kettle and pot druggists, any idea of the miracles of the old creole cooking ...? It was not imitative; there was no traditionary lore about its origin; it had no ancestry; it sprang from itself. (American Heritage 240)

For sure the art of cooking is not a special gift of black culture in comparison to other cultures, but as the historical context revealed black women traditionally worked as cooks for families and black men nearly exclusively occupied the profession of restaurant chefs in New Orleans. There still is a predominance of blacks as master chefs of *creole* cuisine until today. The famous restaurant critic of New Orleans, Richard Collin, even argued that is the reason why soul food is, for the most part, foreign to New Orleans because one can consider the entire *creole* cuisine as a form of refined soul food (Collin 13).

Creole Feast, which tells the stories and recipes of sixteen famous black cooks, includes just five women, but in comparison to their male counterparts, these women never reached the position of a chef in one of the famous restaurants. Black women did, however, achieve considerable fame as cooks in family-run restaurants, where the mother or wife often was the one that stood behind the stove. Two contemporary examples of this are the two landmark restaurants, "Dooky Chase" and "Chez Hélène."

The ethnic revival that emerged around 1970 was an extension of the cultural, class and political conflicts of the late 1960s that were mainly fostered by the well-to-do and well-educated class. Similar to Black Power, the New Left and Women's Liberation, the ethnic movement expressed dissatisfaction with the establishment. Representing a fear of being "melted" into a predictable mold, it created a new cultural awareness that found its expression in dietary habits as well; this is due in part to the fact that a "sense of ethnic identity may depend very much on a distinctive culinary tradition" (Douglas, *Culture* 79).

When Cajun food became fashionable in New Orleans in the 70s ingredients and techniques were brought to the city by cooks such as Paul Prudhomme. While Cajun food in the country remained the food of farm people and fishermen, in the city the dishes were refined to approach the taste of high cuisine. This way the Acadian cooking art was *creolized*, too and became part of New Orleans cuisine (at least in regard to restaurant food in New Orleans). The Cajun influence further refreshed the French character of the restaurant cuisine in New Orleans.

The boredom that was associated with "all-American" cuisine was reflected in the use of ethnic foods, in "the 'new ethnicity' " (Murray Berzok 97), and in the opening of ethnic restaurants for the mainstream customer. Ostendorf, therefore calls the ethnic revival a battle cry for the liberation of the senses (2003, p. 14). Fuchs puts this phenomenon into the overall context of the 1980s in America, "increased ethnic consciousness and visibility and, at the same time, growing interaction with outsiders and the crossing of ethnic boundaries" (Fuchs 327). Heldke in this context accuses herself of food colonialism, as performed before by some artists and painters in a "search of ever 'newer, 'ever more 'remote' cultures they could co-opt, borrow from freely and out of context, and use as the

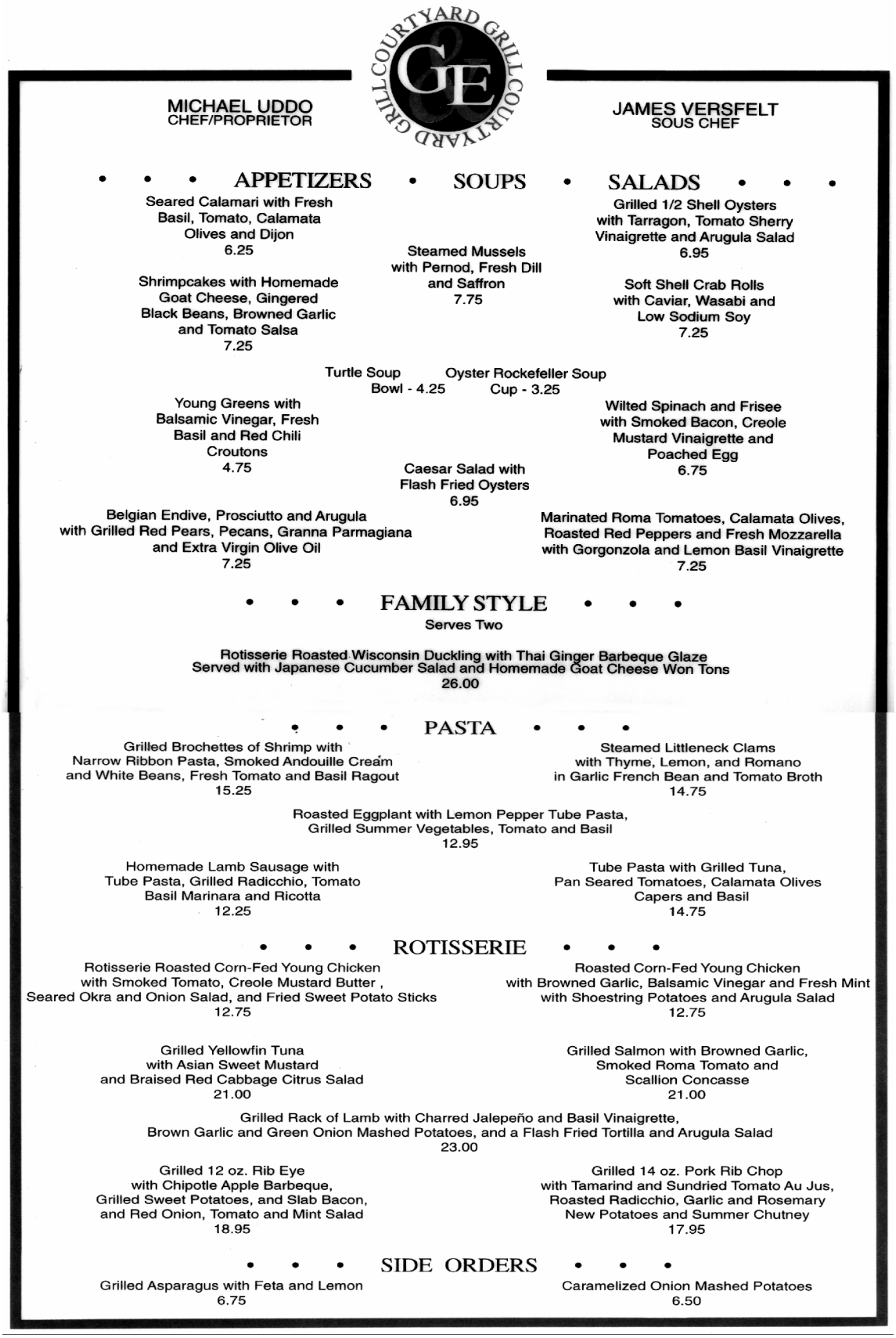
raw materials for their own efforts at creation and discovery" (177). Fieldhouse describes the latest changes in this matter, "Despite trends toward greater homogeneity of food supply there are also signs of increasing interest in and acceptance of ethnic foods" (10).

Ethnic foods represented tradition, roots and continuity, but also stood for new creativity because revitalization does not only mean going back to one's roots. It implies reinforcement as well as change and this fosters the emergence of something new. Douglas comments on this process, "Where ethnic identity is a vital issue, ethnic foods are revived, new items are recruited to the old tradition, and some distinctive pattern is established" (29).

This culinary neo-ethnicity caught on among different social classes, including members of the second- and third-generations of immigrants. These individuals remembered their historical ties to a specific region or land. Affluent and well-educated gourmets that searched for a new culinary experience and middle-class suburbanites found a kind of touristy fascination with such allegedly "foreign foods" (Belasco 3-6). The ethnic revival, however, did not revive what different ethnicities cooked in the United States:

> Bei der Wiederentdeckung des Ethnischen drehte es sich in den seltensten Fällen um die Vorstellung und Anerkennung der real existierenden und gängigen Küchenpraxis der ethnischen Subkulturen in den USA. Denn diese genügten nicht den neuen Kriterien guten Kochens und sie wurden vor allem von jenen Kritikern, die sich an der *haute cuisine* orientierten, als ‚korrumpiert' links liegen gelassen. ... Statt dessen propagierte sie den Reimport der ‚echten' ethnischen Tradition aus den Ursprungsländern. ‚Echtheit' wurde zum wichtigsten Kriterium. (Ostendorf 2003, p. 16)

A prominent New Orleans′ restaurant can be mentioned in this respect: the ″G&E Courtyard Grill″. The G&E was named for Giuseppe and Eleanora Uddo, who founded (as described in Chapter 5.3) an Italian food emporium in New Orleans that evolved over the years into Progresso Foods. Their great-grandson Michael Uddo was a chef who opened the G&E with the idea of blending the Sicilian country cooking of his ancestors with current New Orleans styles. The menu shows his approach by offering items such as ″calamari″, ″gorgonzola″, ″arugula″, ″roasted red peppers″, ″sundried tomatoes″, ″capers″, and many other typical Italian food items. Unfortunately the restaurant closed after a few years in operation in the 90s due to conflicts with the landlord:



G&E COURTYARD GRILL COURTYARD GRILL

MICHAEL UDDO
CHEF/PROPRIETOR

JAMES VERSFELT
SOUS CHEF

APPETIZERS • SOUPS • SALADS

Seared Calamari with Fresh Basil, Tomato, Calamata Olives and Dijon
6.25

Shrimpcakes with Homemade Goat Cheese, Gingered Black Beans, Browned Garlic and Tomato Salsa
7.25

Steamed Mussels with Pernod, Fresh Dill and Saffron
7.75

Grilled 1/2 Shell Oysters with Tarragon, Tomato Sherry Vinaigrette and Arugula Salad
6.95

Soft Shell Crab Rolls with Caviar, Wasabi and Low Sodium Soy
7.25

Turtle Soup Bowl - 4.25 Oyster Rockefeller Soup Cup - 3.25

Young Greens with Balsamic Vinegar, Fresh Basil and Red Chili Croutons
4.75

Caesar Salad with Flash Fried Oysters
6.95

Wilted Spinach and Frisee with Smoked Bacon, Creole Mustard Vinaigrette and Poached Egg
6.75

Belgian Endive, Prosciutto and Arugula with Grilled Red Pears, Pecans, Granna Parmagiana and Extra Virgin Olive Oil
7.25

Marinated Roma Tomatoes, Calamata Olives, Roasted Red Peppers and Fresh Mozzarella with Gorgonzola and Lemon Basil Vinaigrette
7.25

FAMILY STYLE

Serves Two

Rotisserie Roasted Wisconsin Duckling with Thai Ginger Barbeque Glaze
Served with Japanese Cucumber Salad and Homemade Goat Cheese Won Tons
26.00

PASTA

Grilled Brochettes of Shrimp with Narrow Ribbon Pasta, Smoked Andouille Cream and White Beans, Fresh Tomato and Basil Ragout
15.25

Steamed Littleneck Clams with Thyme, Lemon, and Romano in Garlic French Bean and Tomato Broth
14.75

Roasted Eggplant with Lemon Pepper Tube Pasta, Grilled Summer Vegetables, Tomato and Basil
12.95

Homemade Lamb Sausage with Tube Pasta, Grilled Radicchio, Tomato Basil Marinara and Ricotta
12.25

Tube Pasta with Grilled Tuna, Pan Seared Tomatoes, Calamata Olives Capers and Basil
14.75

ROTISSERIE

Rotisserie Roasted Corn-Fed Young Chicken with Smoked Tomato, Creole Mustard Butter , Seared Okra and Onion Salad, and Fried Sweet Potato Sticks
12.75

Roasted Corn-Fed Young Chicken with Browned Garlic, Balsamic Vinegar and Fresh Mint with Shoestring Potatoes and Arugula Salad
12.75

Grilled Yellowfin Tuna with Asian Sweet Mustard and Braised Red Cabbage Citrus Salad
21.00

Grilled Salmon with Browned Garlic, Smoked Roma Tomato and Scallion Concasse
21.00

Grilled Rack of Lamb with Charred Jalepeño and Basil Vinaigrette, Brown Garlic and Green Onion Mashed Potatoes, and a Flash Fried Tortilla and Arugula Salad
23.00

Grilled 12 oz. Rib Eye with Chipotle Apple Barbeque, Grilled Sweet Potatoes, and Slab Bacon, and Red Onion, Tomato and Mint Salad
18.95

Grilled 14 oz. Pork Rib Chop with Tamarind and Sundried Tomato Au Jus, Roasted Radicchio, Garlic and Rosemary New Potatoes and Summer Chutney
17.95

SIDE ORDERS

Grilled Asparagus with Feta and Lemon
6.75

Caramelized Onion Mashed Potatoes
6.50

Fig. 26. Menu, 1995, *G&E Courtyard Grill*, New Orleans.

The process of *creolization* implies several characteristics: a strong sense of tradition, a high degree of tolerance toward new things and a huge amount of creativity. In regards to tradition, however, *creole* cooking was never as traditional as it was pragmatic and creative. Tradition in this context should not be confused with fine food just as "cuisine" as a term is not associated with specific ethnic groups or cooking styles, but with a larger culinary process possessing a logic and dynamic of its own. This definition accounts for the incorporation of new foods and cooking methods into established culinary forms and explains why so many different features are considered to be part of *creole* cooking (Gvion-Rosenberg 61f).

The menu from "Mike's on the Avenue," a fashionable lunchtime restaurant for business crowd in the 90s, illustrates the amount of creativity and reveals that constantly new cultural influences participated in the *creolization* process in New Orleans. Dishes such as, "Crawfish Spring Rolls," "Crab and Avocado Sushi Roll" and "Crawfish and Sea Scallop Cakes," are outstanding examples of creative and inventive cooking implying elements of different cultures. It gives evidence of a new strong Asian influence. This is due to the fact that the most recent significant immigration group has been comprised of Vietnamese. Like the Haitians nearly 200 years earlier, the Vietnamese were finding in Louisiana familiar conditions: a similar climate, French-speaking residents, Catholic religion and a fishing industry. In 1995, they comprised 1.9% of New Orleans' population of roughly half a million (Louisiana Almanac 1995-96 161-163).

LUNCH

APPETIZERS

Homemade Chinese Shrimp Dumplings

Crawfish Spring Rolls

Crab and Avocado Sushi Roll

Smoked Turkey Quesadilla

SALADS

Grilled Gulf Shrimp and Crispy Asian Salad

Apple and Maytag Blue Cheese Salad

Creole Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Mike's Caesar Salad

ENTREES

Crawfish and Sea Scallop Cakes

Flash Fried Oyster Burrito with Chili Aioli

Grilled Thai Chicken

Creole Mustard Rubbed Grilled Filet and Andouille Gravy

Pasta Roses

Crawfish Relleno

Bamboo Steamed Vegetables and Mushroom Dumplings with steamed shrimp

Pasta of the Day

Fish of the Day

Mike's Prix Fixe

DINNER

APPETIZERS

Homemade Chinese Shrimp Dumplings

Crawfish Spring Rolls

Black Bean and Shiitake Mushroom Quesadilla

Flash Fried, Cornmeal Crusted Oysters

New Orleans Barbecue Oysters

Blackened Tuna Napoleon

Shrimp and Scallop Moo-Shu

Sushi of the Day

SALADS

Exotic Greens Salad

Maytag Blue Cheese Salad

Mike's Caesar Salad

ENTREES

Louisiana Crawfish and Scallop Cakes

Grilled Filet Mignon with Country Mashed Potatoes

Honey Soy-Glazed Crispy Duck

Mike's Shellfish Stew

Pork Loin Chop

Panned Veal and Smoked Tomato Sauce

Mike's U-12 Barbecue Shrimp

Pomegranate and Rosemary Grilled Lamb Chops

Noodle Pillow

Pre-Theatre Dinner (6:00 pm - 6:30 pm)

Fig. 27. Menu, 1995, *Mike's on the Avenue*, New Orleans.

Black people's food as a whole was also considered to be ethnic, even though blacks originate from quite a variety of different African ethnic groups and cultures that mixed in America to form the American black culture. Eating played a prominent role in this culture, too, as "soul food became one preserver of black culture" (Hughes 273) and as described in Chapter 4.3.[45]

The purpose, besides satisfying hunger of course, of ethnic food is to bring to mind, to refresh the memory of something foreign or past. What we today encounter as ethnic food is in fact *creolized* food that developed in a periphery looking backward to where it originated. It differs substantially from the food

[45] From the point of racism, sub-Saharan black people are the most different from the white race (Harrison 51). Their food is very exotic. Interestingly, this food has become quite fashionable and accepted in America: "Eating soul food for white America represents a food cultural plunge, and it epitomizes the acculturation of white America through black food practices" (Hughes 276). It represents a good example for what fashion can do.

that it is supposed to represent. It is important to remember that *creolization* is an open-ended process that takes place wherever different cultures meet. It is impossible to find a precise definition for ethnic American cuisine taken into account the process described above, and the complexity of culinary and social historical aspects involved.

Eating ethnic in its pure sense is the expression of peoples′ search for their identity. Consumers of ethnic food can be viewed as a special group of people, as Schell describes:

> We share a belief that the ability to eat various ethnic foods is extremely meaningful. We think such ability says a lot about us, and we speak condescendingly about Americans who are not conversant with ethnic food. (208)

It is important to notice, however, that the term ‘ethnic food′ just like food itself changes over time. There is a "tendency to cross cultural boundaries in order to eat ethnic food″ on the one hand while others try to make a living from selling any food the people like to eat. "The production, exchange, marketing, and consumption of food have generated new identities - for foods and eaters alike" (5).

The great chefs still get inspired not just by the food they find in the market, but also by their relationships with their clientele. Although, there are many places where restaurants typically cater to tourists' tastes only and do not reflect the great variety regional markets provide, in New Orleans this is not true at all. There exists an obsession with food in the city and locals go out to dine in restaurants regularly. Food critic Alan Richmann just recently commented in an article in GQ on this contribution of locals to their restaurant culture. He wrote that restaurants:

> besides becoming stultified, they would suffer mightily without neighbourhood regulars. The citizens of New Orleans might not be the most energetic Americans − I believe their morning exercise regimen consists of stumbling out of bars − but they are joyful, expressive eaters. No restaurant can flourish if the only people who knock on its doors are tourists who bring little to the table besides credit cards. (10)

The crucial role restaurants and their visitors have played for was already very well described by Will Coleman in his late-nineteenth-century Historical Sketch Book and Guide to New Orleans:

> To its first-class restaurants, in olden times, New Orleans owed its peculiar and pet reputation as an unsurpassed 'eating and drinking city' at least in this country. French tastes and customs dominated in Nouvelle Orleans. French culinary artists found an excellent field to exercise their talents. These skilful professors were patronized by a large and thoroughly appreciative audience, wealthy people used to European cultures and the best wines. New Orleans still preserves its reputation for good cooking. The great restaurateurs and chefs have died, but they have been replaced and the old recipes are still in use. (84)

The many chefs whose talents continue to make New Orleans' food famous, like Emeril Lagasse for example, have come to the city from other places and thus one cannot consider them *creole* in the sense in which the term implies native-born. But, what distinguishes these cooks as true representatives of New Orleans' cooking art is their cooking style, which encompasses a high degree of creative improvisation and their ability to borrow from other cultures similar to that found among traditional New Orleans jazz musicians as was discussed in the chapter "Creole Cooking".

In New Orleans, restaurants are the incubators where chefs perform their art and so their workplaces are the birthplaces of many new wonderful dishes.

Creativity is an outstanding characteristic of those chefs. Their talent allows them to experiment and to develop new and tasty recipes. Louis Evans, who was chef at the famous Hotel Pontchartrain in the 1970s, described the special skills of *creole* cooks, "Two important things to remember about cooking are taking pride in your work and not being afraid to experiment. ... One of the best parts of this business is creating recipes and trying to improve on them" (Burton 24f).

Restaurants are, however, also responsible for consistent quality and long-range performance of a cuisine. This is why work in a restaurant can be disappointing to great chefs, because consistency and routine are great threats to an artist. Anni Laura Squalls, a famous pastry cook at the Pontchartrain Hotel until 1985, explained the problem of consistency:

> I had no experience to speak of when I started, so I had to work out a recipe in my mind first. I think a good cook ought to do that anyhow, but I had a problem doing it in a restaurant because if I made up my own recipe, nobody could duplicate it. If I wasn't there, they were in trouble, and in a restaurant, consistency is important. So I started scribbling it all down. But I still had ideas about the food I was assigned to cook, and every time, it seemed, I'd change the recipe they gave me or the one in the cookbook I used. And I wouldn't tell anybody - I'd just change it and if anybody asked me, I'd insist the recipe was the same. I didn't want anybody to be angry with me for not using the recipe I was given. (18)

New Orleans' restaurants have played an essential part in the creation of a cuisine, in that they have decisively stimulated a constant public discussion and competition. Restaurants, furthermore, were arenas for the transcendence of ethnic difference and for the exploration of the culinary other. Food boundaries dissolved much more rapidly than marriage boundaries, so that the extent of

cross-cultural mixing that took place in a restaurant was higher than what was seen as appropriate at home, and each of these could have been different in the context of travel, where anonymity was assured. Restaurants this way paralleled, in their offerings, the cookbooks in the sense that both allowed women from one group to explore the tastes of another. In a society with strict racial boundaries, recipes moved where people could not and this way food *creolized* faster than people.

This *creolization* process needs to continue or New Orleans' restaurants will just become a mere tourist attraction for a commemoration of something past. With respect to the latest developments in New Orleans after the hurricane "Katrina", Alan Richmann puts it like this:

> Restaurants could be the saviours of New Orleans, providing they produce innovative rather than repetitive food. They risk becoming meaningless if restoration means transforming the city into a low-density Creole theme park where food is one component of a commemoration of the past. (10)

What cannot be missing visiting a New Orleans restaurant is at last "a good cup of Creole Coffee! Is there anything in the whole range of food substances to be compared with it?" This is how the first chapter of The Picayune Creole Cookbook begins, which devotes 2-1/2 closely written pages to the proper making and healthful benefits of the same. By the time those words were published in 1901, coffee had been shipped to and through New Orleans for almost 150 years and residents had acquired a taste for a uniquely dark roast. According to the anonymous editors of the cookbook, black coffee is a powerful aid to long life and relieves the sense of oppression brought on by a heavy meal. It was the custom, they said, to have black coffee in the early morning and afternoon, although *café au lait* was the city's favourite breakfast drink.

The characteristics of Louisiana coffee are that it is roasted to a very dark brown, ground fine, used liberally and dripped slowly, using only a tablespoon or two of water at a time, through mesh or muslin to produce "a thick liquid strong enough to stain a china cup," she said (Reed 24).

The combination of coffee and chicory, while not unique to New Orleans, enjoys a great popularity there, as opposed to other parts of the United States. Many people date the use of chicory to the Civil War, when the price of coffee soared due to Union blockades of ports, but Europeans (first Italians and later Germans) have been adding chicory to coffee since 1769, not long after coffee became a fashionable (and expensive) drink on the Continent (Larousse Gastronomique 250). "It prevents caffeine poisoning which would frequently occur if a person drank an excess of coffee, correctly made. But coffee addicts do not admit to the slightest addition of chicory in coffee, and they are justified," claims the Larousse Gastronomique (285).

A spectacle to appeal to the dramatic spirit of New Orleanians is the making of café brulot as a visitor wrote in 1938:[46]

Coffee as black as a bayou,
Fruit that is golden for soul,
Brandy and spices and fire,
And magic is done in a bowl.
Draught of the gods, never wasting
A moment in cheering you up.

---

[46] "The formula itself is of no great value unless you are willing to follow the method with infinite patience. Ingredients: 1 cup cognac, 3 pieces stick cinnamon broken in bits, 50 whole cloves, 45 pieces of loaf sugar, thin peel of half an orange, small sliver of lemon peel, 1 quart strong dripped coffee (made from French roast coffee with chicory added).
A brulot bowl of copper covered with Sheffield plate, manufactured with tray, is necessary for making this coffee.
Steep mixture in brulot bowl for several hours until sugar is dissolved. Pour small amount of alcohol in tray of bowl and set afire, stirring brew until it catches flame. Then pour in very slowly the steaming coffee." (Smith 190f)

Smelling like heaven, and tasting
Like paradise poured in a cup.
(Smith 190)

Café brulot recipes vary in the amount of spices and sweetening they call for. Some use different liqueurs, or oranges instead of lemons. Most recipes, however, do not recommend setting fire to the platter, but only to the bowl, or even to a ladle of liqueurs that can then be poured into the bowl. And one should keep in mind the story, possibly apocryphal, of the French Quarter restaurant that burned when a flame escaping from the café brulot leapt undetected into the draperies where it reasserted itself after the restaurant closed. Some recipes note that a chafing dish can be substituted for a brulot bowl, and Christopher Blake comments that the whole business can be accomplished in the kitchen and heated in a coffeepot without flaming it.

And now it has a life of its own just like many of New Orleans' food. Let it be, when you drink it, just another reminder of the way New Orleanian food was *creolized*. How cooks have chosen to live − amidst an ingrained, often necessary, frugality linked with a grand and memorable culinary tradition.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Humans are the only species in nature that are not simply dominated by the information of their genes. We have the ability to acquire knowledge that can be passed on from generation to generation by the culture we create. Cultures serve people as guideline codes. The first chapters showed that every culture defines what may be considered "food" and "non-food". The anthropologist Mary Douglas pointed out, that "The selective principles by which humans choose their dietary sources are not likely to be physiological but cultural" (Douglas, *Culture* 75).

The definitions of what food is, vary from culture to culture and sometimes even from individual to individual, and are therefore quite arbitrary. Their capricious nature does nothing, however, to diminish their strength or effectiveness. As food, along with air and water, is the most basic of all needs, anything dealing with food is by definition and association quite powerful in itself. People are bound to the rules their culture gives them. There are instances where people starved to death because their food supplies ran out, despite the fact that they were surrounded by a cornucopia of what they considered "non-food," but what others would consider "food."

This means that even once we've reached the point at which we can look at a forest and know that it is full of food, this knowledge is worthless if our culture never told us what is edible in that forest, and is therefore food. We are driven and constrained by the rules of our inherited culture, and our own choices of what we can and cannot eat are equally limited. Even the amount we eat is influenced by culture, which may result in extreme disorders such as obesity and anorexia.

We tend to limit ourselves by adhering to fixed and static cultural rules, although we do have the ability to pry open the bars of our self-made cage. To facilitate this process, we need to be prepared to cross the borders of our own culture to explore others. Getting to know other cultures can help us overcome the restrictions created by our own culture. This holds true for "civilized" as well as "primitive" societies.

The close examination of social interaction in the lower Mississippi Valley in colonial times proved that cultural boundaries can be successfully crossed. The development of a regional food tradition in and around New Orleans showed for one thing people's resistance to let go of something familiar and for another their ability to incorporate something new into their existing traditions. The pressure of need, more than free will, gave rise to change and opened up the opportunity for something new to evolve.

In order to understand the cultural configuration that developed in that specific region, the continuing nature of the contact situation had to be examined. It showed that populations of different proportions, living by different social codes and with significantly different historical backgrounds were involved.

The early colonial history of the lower Mississippi Valley provided a field of open social interaction. The establishment of European communities created a situation of cultural contact. Wherever people of different cultural background interacted, a new piece of culture evolved for the subordinate groups involved and at the same time its members were forsaking parts of their native culture.

Indians, Europeans and Africans were involved in an early food exchange. Even before the War of Independence in and around New Orleans, the different segments of society played an important role in producing, trading and preparing food. This cultural interaction resulted in what is explained here as *creolization*

process – a dialogic encounter of cultures that does not result in merging or mixing but primarily in the effort to retain one's own unity by opening towards the other. This way both sides are mutually enriched.

The degrees of closeness of contact among each other and between the different groups and the basic cultural uniformity of each group correlated with the degrees of *creolization*. A selection process took place among the different social groups. Those who were good at cooperating did better than those who did not or were not able to.

Developments can never be seen as singular happenings but are always interwoven in a broader context. The nature of local economic development; the absence of colonial institutions allowing all colonists to participate; the relative proportions of different social groupings, particularly of slaves and freemen; the distinction in privileges established by New Orleans to separate *creoles* from others; and the sexual and mating codes among the different groups, resulted in the rapid emergence of new identities and heavily influenced the *creolization* process.

Admittedly, there was growth of different *creole* identities. African *creole* cultures were created by importing slaves from West Africa. The French, on the other hand, tended to see themselves as Europeans in temporary exile. Early on this colonial society, however, whether willingly or because it was forced to, realized that the adaptation of the other's cultural food traditions was useful and in this way a new regional food tradition evolved. It was most important that the different ethnicities that arrived all added to the new regional cooking tradition. Cross cultural acceptance, however, was based more on individual endeavours than on the collective social status.

The various ethnicities that shaped the multicultural society of New Orleans did not all enjoy the same rights and respect. There were significant differences in respect and recognition of the cultural other particularly with respect to social standing and religious practices and beliefs. The conflicts *creoles* had to face, both initially and again later when incoming Americans challenged their social position, showed the impact social status and religious beliefs have in a cultural contact situation. Strong refusals occurred to becoming acculturated to the 'other' way. This was also shown in the duality of blacks wishing to participate in the *creole* way, but yet wishing to preserve something of a separate *creole* identity.

Whereas in other places it was usually only the gourmet elite that was able to afford and enjoy the pleasures of the palate, in New Orleans the most exquisite local and foreign food items were widely available to its population, mainly due to the city's significance as an important market place in a surrounding of natural abundance. This facilitated producing exquisite dishes - in homes and in restaurants alike.

As a consequence a city with a cuisine of its own evolved with an impressive number of famous restaurants and dishes well known around the world. Can another city claim such fame for its dishes? But what exactly makes it so famous? Other places have delicious food, too. Certainly, New Orleans' cuisine can be praised for its distinctiveness and historical significance as this thesis showed. But what is it exactly that people try to cherish and preserve, when they praise *creole* food?

New Orleans cuisine is not just different because one can find Indian, African, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Caribbean or Asian influences in it - one can find these tastes in other places in America as well. Its distinction is the fact that

all these cultures borrowed and learned from each other in the process of cultural interaction and created a new unique cuisine.

Creolization is a process that works in two ways: for all immigrants, traditional foods and ways of eating formed a link with the past and helped ease the shock of entering a new culture; thus many insisted on holding on to their traditions despite pressures to change. Family traditions were highly valued by most newcomers and with them cooking traditions. Immigrants grew otherwise unavailable vegetables and herbs in their backyards, they opened market stalls and, later, stores so that ingredients were available. In addition, they opened restaurants so that it became more convenient to get certain foods. They added their own cooking tradition and at the same time started mixing it with others. Immigrants managed to adapt their food to the new cultural environment and, at the same time, kept up their special distinctiveness.

This process of creative *creolization* was so powerful that none of the cooking styles that arrived were able to resist the influence for long. The *creoles* of New Orleans were urban people and their cuisine was urban as well. Many of the immigrants, such as the Acadians for example, were fishermen and farmers with a rustic life and a rustic style of cooking. When Cajun food came into the city, their rural cooking was *creolized* and absorbed by an already refined New Orleans restaurant food culture.

At the beginning, the *creolization* process might be understood as an adaptation to a cultural model that emerged where the plural colonial society broke down and an integrated one ensued. Some still use the terms *creole* and *creolization* to refer to such a cultural model. This, however, is a too narrow view of *creole* and *creolization.* Therefore, this thesis understands both terms as a continuum process that by no means ended during colonial times.

To this day New Orleanians take elements from others, experiment with them and then claim them as their own. In this way, different cultural influences are *creolized*. New Orleanians borrow from all cultures regardless of the social standing and create something newer and greater. It is this *creolization* that made New Orleans' cuisine special. Its taste therefore has no reference to any one single culture - it is simply *creole*.

Clearly, specific sociological, attitudinal and demographic details did matter tremendously in colonial as well as later times. But it is the analysis of particular historical events that sheds light upon the formation of culture. The 1885 World's Exposition in New Orleans was unique in that it made locals aware of their very own and exceptional culture. In this contact situation New Orleans' culture revealed itself fully and profoundly to its own members. The encounter with outsiders helped to overcome the boundaries of knowledge that people had of their own culture. While offering its special cuisine to the world, it gained a lasting reputation for it.

Until the twentieth century there used to be major differences between groups, however, at the turn of the century a sense of individual uniqueness arose. People started looking at each other as individuals rather than members of social or ethnic groups. This individualistic approach brought a much-enhanced recognition in some cases, as the example of writers or cooks in New Orleans showed. Individuals such as Lafcadio Hearn and Madame Begué started to play important roles in the development of the food culture in New Orleans.

This clearly shows that the process of *creolization* is not a spontaneous random act deprived of any individual achievements. Individuals were not determined by the process of *creolization*, but to the contrary, they determined the process. We all are part of social networks that shape our lives, since

"individual behavior is influenced through relationships if the individual interacts with others" (Rogers 83). Identity is formed through the contact with others and gives a feeling of community and a basis for self-esteem.

Nowadays it seems that New Orleanians have lost the knowledge of how their very own famous cuisine was created. The 83 year old Leah Chase, owner of the restaurant "Dooky Chase", commented in an interview about the destruction of "Katrina" last fall:

> 'The big fancy places uplift us,' she said. 'We can't uplift the big ones, but the big ones can uplift us. Some think that God was prejudiced, he saved so many of the big ones, but I think he knew what he was doing. If we were saved and they were lost, we couldn't replace them. They can make us better, but we can't make them better.' (Richman 7)

This comment shows the lack of understanding that it is indeed the other way around. Family food traditions produce regional food traditions in the process of social interaction. A centre like New Orleans can draw from these regional traditions and a metropolitan cuisine evolves. A lack of understanding is a severe hindrance to the continuum of the *creolization* process. Therefore, it is of no surprise that many critics state that "Too many luxurious restaurants were desperately trying to attract business by serving meals that fulfilled some illusory idea of what traditional cuisine should be" (Richman 1).

If people understand the process of *creolization*, they might welcome diversity more easily. The history of New Orleans shows that people are able to change and adapt when changes are demanded in their psychology, their worldview, their ethics, their institutions and their foodways. The process of *creolization* did not produce an all-American average citizen characterized by only minor differences depending on the individual's personal, ethnic or cultural background,

nor a single national cuisine. Instead, a strong new identity was formed which New Orleanians are rather proud of.

When people reach the point at which they see the food of others as edible and delicious, they are able to reject the notion that "food" is only what we know about. As a consequence, other rules become less powerful at keeping a person within his or her cultural setting. The realization that cultures attempt to retain control is a powerful observation. Redefining what we mean by "food" means ending our dependence on others. When people start questioning their own culture, new ways of thinking skyrocket. That is, if we do not limit ourselves by our own cultural constraints, the process of *creolization* can go on in everyone. The development of food in New Orleans is a great example of this process. If we are brave enough to open ourselves to new cultures, to new experiences, to new customs, we will learn a lot from each other and become *creolized* ourselves.

Chapter 7. Appendix

7.1 Abbreviations

BC	Before Christ
BMI	Body-Mass-Index
Ed.	Editor
Fig.	Figure
Jg.	Jahrgang
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
No.	number
Nr.	Nummer
p., pp.	page, pages
SCIRP	Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy
Suppl.	Supplement
Trans.	Translator
U.S.	United States
USA	United States of America
vol.	Volume

7.2 Illustrations

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