In their own words: We are all Creole

Rebecca Henry, founder and director of the Creole Heritage Musuem, Opelousas
Creole. Is it just name? Is it a culture? What is in that name Creole? In what context can the word be used?
Can we as Creoles use the word as a marketing tool? So many unanswered questions. What is Creole? Just how did that word come into being after all these years after being characterized and identified with names such as slaves, Negro slaves, Negrinot, Creole, black and every other derogatory word that could be used. I can recall when Negro was the word used on everything to describe us on birth certificates, school books and other paper trail describing us. That was an accepted definition then, but we were called black, temps would flare up. Then our language was questioned as to what we said. It was said and we were Creole because we spoke broken English, mixed with broken French. What a description.

To top it all off, our personality and image, the color of our skin, eyes, the texture of hair, the shape of our body, our new structure, was compared to the traits of animals, such as monkeys, apes, Creole pigs and even Creole mules. In 1966, James Brown rumbled out "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" and opened a new awareness of who we were, black, not Negro, not slaves and I'm proud to be black.

Should we be proud that other cultures have added Creole to their culture? Has the Creole culture finally become internationally to where everyone wants to write our story? Should we be in the Guinness Book of World Records, the world's largest cookbook? It is not about how many we can write a recipe. It is about how many we can write a story. In this, I am proud to be a Creole woman, who comes from parents who played an insurmountable part of my life, along with a rich heritage culture and traditions that all composed Creole life, music, art, cooking and anything else.

Feel that we as Creoles, have come to terms with all those labels and have risen above them. We are ready to work hard to save the culture from death and make our culture intergenerational again; with the old teaching the young.

Marcella Simien, musician, Memphis, Tennessee
Creole is to recognize another wrinkle in the development of human experience, yet another brush of vibrant color between black and white. As a Creole, I am white, black and many colors in between. I am sensitive to the dialogue between the reason because it is a conversation I have with myself almost on a daily basis. This is not a con-

flict. It is a gift. It means that I can just as easily find the beauty in a Fashionable song as well as one by George Harrison, without self-conscious-

ness.

What I mean is there is no white culture and black culture. There's only culture. This mindset has been essential to my formation as an artist. The aim, and perhaps the result, of art is to transcend and make meaningful the artificial dividing lines we have erected around ourselves: those of genre, gender, race, and the prohibitions and limitations these impose.

Creoles are all about bleaching the big beautiful pot, about evolutions, about feeling. At a dance, for example, feeling the power, the energy there. It's about family, the heart of the Louisiana, the magic of the history, you can feel it as you listen before you.

Creole is that one word that embodies all the good in me, my memories, my life. It is the sharing of generations of people who look back at the past, from any part of the world, the black, the blues, shapes and steers. Creole is the notion of family and traditions that span back hundreds of years. It's fleeting out into a past poem. Imagine your ancestors looking out at the world and saying perhaps the people with these bellow flat of senses god gifts, with laughter and stories from the million miles away. Where that smells of smoke and fire.

In a world where some cultures hide to be Creoles, my being Creole, my contribution is my individuality, while at the same time being open to one's community, to the infinite garment of infinite cultures. Everyone, regardless of color or ethnic origin, is known and particularly in the context of the entertain-

ment field after 1971, it was not until the year 1968 when COCIFA introduced a socio-cultural negation of our problems, culture, which is the prod-

uct of our Louisiana-based traditions, all our cultural heritage, my association with a per-

sonal identity, I know now that the image is real, that the image is real, that the image is real, that the image is real.

The fact that neither our food ways, language and social traditions were known (or remain foreign), to the Acadians, are any threats to Louisiana. No, to us, it did not seem to matter to the politicians and tourism promoters or events to our readers, indeed, if this was the case.

My memories, past and present, of Creole have never had any disregard with a pers-

son's color, there is no physical, or racial qual-

ity. We are all Creoles, we are all a part of a culture, a unique one, that is known particularly in the context of the entertainment field after 1971, it was not until the year 1968 when COTIFLA introduced a socio-cultural negation of our problems, culture.