Until relatively recently, Cajuns were looked down upon by many. Many Cajun children were asked, "Are you a Cajun?" They were insulted by non-Cajuns as "Yes, Mr. I'm an American. And you?"

Why were these people termed as an "oppressed" people under this country's growth? The Cajun was known for his French accent and the peculiar expression when he spoke English. They were still and were called "coons" by non-Cajuns - a word in common in some people's conversations now, that they even use in "patois" society."'

John M. Roosvelt once said that to be a sufferer, one must have a sense of self. The Cajuns have a better sense of themselves. The Cajun meets with this realization, and how much he is to preserve and publish his culture and traditions. The Cajun is a widespread move in Acadia to keep his native French tongue, Cajun architecture, and certainly Cajun culture.

Cajun culture is still dominant here even though the Cajun is outnumbered. A pure Cajun is a relatively rare animal. Many people who moved here from Louisiana and the South call themselves Cajuns - and believe that they are so - they are "naturalized" Cajuns.

There are many who believe that the first settlers of this area were the settled Cajuns. And long before they arrived here, there were Indian, Spanish, French, Germans, and other Europeans. How then has this area become Cajun country or French?

"It might be that the Cajun worked harder at popularizing this area. The Cajun is more likely to surround himself with many little ones, he prides himself on his family, but the man thinking about the future, more than others to feed, and more work to pick cotton and prize the place. (So it was with the Negro sharecroppers farmers later on.)"

And Cajuns were not lazy! Most of them were hard-working farmers who raised almost all their food. They also clothed themselves from their cotton crops and the sheep they raised. "Claironais was so much among the women in their homes. And thrift was, by necessity of thrift, practiced constantly.

"Perhaps some reader can tell us how this nickname originated."
The Caius worked hard, but he played hard, too. Once Saturday night, there was nothing to interfere with the fun—doubt not even the babies at home—so they were taken along to the Saturday night fun and put to sleep alongside other babies, whose pajamas and names were there to enter the "Boston Two-Step," and "Alabama Ramble, Orleans."

The patois—French spoken in areas in and near Lafayette by both blacks and whites is not Cajun French. But French was imported from the West Indies when Negro slaves were brought here from the French-owned sugar cane fields. The uneducated Negro slave in Haiti, for example, did his best to learn his French master's language. Added to this French were many of his own African words.

And when he brought this French "patois" to Louisiana, his new master learned this language so that there might be better communication between master and slave. The more white children, cared for by young Negro slave girls, and later the non-slave learned this patois from them as well as from their little black classmates. These whites eventually absorbed the patois and passed it down to their offspring as a native tongue.

Hence, the reason for calling this French "Cajun" French.

But, it is not. Cajun French is more akin to "French" French, except for accent, expressions, inflections, etc., but American English is akin to "English" English. There are differences, yes, but there is no more trouble communicating between Cajuns and Frenchmen that there is between American and Englishmen. Most French-speaking Acadians do not even understand this patois.

Now let us go back to the other peoples who came to this area. Many Germans, Italians, Norwegians, and Croats came to cultivate Parish as ship captains and seamen. Many settled there, married off descendants Acadians, and their descendants still live in Caledon and Cameron Parishes.

There are among other major German settlements, a German settlement in Robert's Cove near Bayou. They, too, have intermarried with Acadians, adopted some of Latin habits, and given them many of their.

When the Huguenots were expelled from North Carolina and Georgia, many came to Louisiana to be near their own—the French and the Acadians.

Kontumca came down the Mississippi River on their river boats to New Orleans, plying their trade. Many, mostly English, stayed.

English Protestant missionaries came to this area as did English school teachers. There was even an Oliver Connell who taught in Acadia Parish.

Now, Lebonhav, Bryans, Italians came here as traders, as they
did elsewhere. The Italians came into New Orleans primarily, it is because of shipping from the Mediterranean to New Orleans.

Russia, the Slavic countries, and Asia were barely represented in comparison to the other nationalities. Chinese immigrants, however, were not unknown throughout that area.

Of all the cultural influences in Louisiana, the Italian is the only one which did not arrive en masse, except in isolated areas—as in the rest of the United States.

EXPRESSIONS FAMILIAR TO THIS AREA.

"How much did you pay that dress?" ("Poy for that dress?")

"Tell a tale" ("Tell properly.")

"Can you ride me home?" ("Can you give me a ride home?") In North Louisiana and in parts of Mississippi, it's "Can you give me a ride?")

"Poor Face," or "Poor Appearance" ("Poor to the first thing,")

In French conversation here it's always, "Sterke deh Cajun."

"Poor Sotonin Carter."

"Poor?" (pah-car) ("Oh, my, golly!")

"That?" (tah) ("That?"")

"That?" (nah-ty) ("That's what?"")

"That's how I'd do it."

"Yes, you know, yes."

"I'm not going to know you."

"There's and C'mon often contaminate the English conversation of many Cajuns."

"It's fitting to rain."

Is this Cajun? It's quite common in this area. Or does it originate elsewhere?

"Get out of your way," or "Get out of it!"

Is under a word for southeast Louisiana only, and is it true that there are 70 dialects in New Orleans—only bayous.

A use of words—yes. Conversation actually heard about twenty years ago on St. Louis Ave and when speaking to Calcasieu sports.

Young girl at her own. "You, you, look."

That sign ever. "He passing on bridge and we're passing by here."

French conversations are often interspersed with English phrases.

"It all is."

"It's okay by me."

"Oh, man, what the hell is the point of it?"

"We can pay you for business with you."

Questions.

Are there any other towns whose roads are named for railroad switches, such as our Glenda Switch Road, Parrot Switch Road, and Nation Switch Road?

Do they "ですよ the bide" elsewhere as we do here?
Names of Acadian Illiterates who went to schools conducted by English teachers had to be spelled out for obvious reasons. With these "naturalish" pronunciations, the English teacher did his best. Here are a few of these French names as they still are spelled today, but pronounced correctly as French names:

Auzin = O'Quin
Conque = Conv
Drozin = Drohin, Huguenot, Georgia
Moncton, Nivon, Wolton are supposedly all Nivons
Lagnois, Lagnion, L'algon are all from the same
Le Jeune, meaning "the young," became "Yeung" in some cases
Mareza, Marine, and Marineau; in many cases, near Mareux
Jeanowe sometimes became Johnson.
It is speculated that Chaisson may come from Chatsson
Daigle and Daigle might well have the same origin.

One more question: Which of all these people who populated this area was the first to brave eating the crayfish??? "Regarding????? it is the Acadian who capitalized on it, and the Acadian country's second name is "Crayfish Capital of the World."

Here is an interesting, almost obsolete, Cajun custom. Fireworks here were not for July 4th. They were for Christmas and New Year's Day. Youngsters hang their Christmas stockings a second time on New Year's Eve to be filled with fruits and fireworks?

As a finale, we repeat the joke about the Cajuns who migrated to "Cajun's Paradise," Port Arthur, Texas (Port Anguier). Many kept the current spellings of their French names, but they Anglicized the pronunciation. It is said that the Roberts became Rorberths, the Truhan became Truhans; the question is why didn't the Barra name (Bar-ras) Anglicize?

Oh, yes, one more thing! If the Cajun seems to be asking you too many personal questions, it's not that he's being nosy. It's just because he's friendly and wants to know you better!

Judith Boutin Hubert