Remoulade

Bob Hamm Conceives Profile of a Cajun

By HOWARD JACOBS

A BRISK REFERENCE to the vivid composition by Bob Hamm, managing editor of "Acadiana," titled "What is a Cajun?" brought regrets from his proliferation, so here is in its pristine form:

"According to the history books, a Cajun is a descendant of a hardy group of French Acadian settlers who settled along the bayous and marshes of South Louisiana. The name 'Cajun,' they tell us, is a contraction of 'Acadian'... Acadian.'

"So much for the text books..."

"In other parts of the world, little girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice, while little boys are made of snips and snails and puppy dog tails..."

"Little Cajun children are made of granite, loam and some asphalt... crawfish stews and cornbread cakes..."

"A Cajun child is given hushpuppies to fish in, marshmallows to trap in, room to grow in and courage to worship in."

"A Cajun likes festive and colorful things in his music; plenty of pepper in his courbeville, shrimp in his sea, spent in his horses, neighborhood in his neighbors and love in his home..."

"A Cajun dislikes people who don't laugh enough, fish enough or enjoy enough of all the good things God has given to the Cajun country..."

"He doesn't like to be hurried when he's resting or distracted when he's working. He doesn't like using people, he enjoys, and he'd rather give the whole of his heart to someone he admires..."

"A Cajun likes to sing and laugh and sing when his work of hard work has ended..."

"And just as twenty years ago at the fair do do rejuvenates his store of energy and personal balance, so that he can meet the next week's chores with vigor..."

"At church he enters with his spiritual and moral values in tow, the secularist of his book or the sailor of his back..."

"But if you cross a Cajun, he'll give you the back of his hand and the toe of his boot. If he likes you he'll give you his whole wide wonderland world..."

"A Cajun is a complex person, with so many ingredients in his making for the human Mama's reason for special company. He has tastes for those who earn it... clarity for those who need it... a smile for those who will return it... and love for all who will share it..."

"A Cajun can be as stubborn as a mule, as crummy as an alligator. If he sets his mind on something, he'll fight a circle saw before he'll yield to your opinion..."

"You might as well argue with a fence post as try to convince a Cajun..."

"And no knowing as he is, a Cajun can work as hard as an eagle in any kind of weather. He carves out Acadia by hand from the swamps and marshes and unseasoned provinces..."

"But when the work is done and the argument is ended, a Cajun can sweep you right into a wonderful world of joint de vie with an affectionate chorus of 'La Belle Bionde' and a handful of happy little words..."

"Let the good times roll..."