There is an old tale which recounts that when the Acadians left Acadia around 1755, the lobster came with them and it grew smaller because it had to walk backwards from there to here. When they arrived in Louisiana, the Acadians built themselves houses with mud chimneys. The lobster wanted to do the same, so it started a house too. But after the long journey, it felt too tired and it didn’t finish anything except the chimney. So it decided to live in it instead, and it came to be called a “crawfish.”

When the March winds begin whistling and springtime approaches, it’s a reminder of crawfish, because it’s almost time to catch them. It is believed that three weather conditions are necessary in order to have a good season, a dry summer, a wet fall and a mild winter.

A dry summer is necessary for the mother crawfish to go underground where the eggs are hatched and where they are not in danger of being eaten by racoons, mink or snakes. A dry summer will also allow grass and plants, which are eaten by crawfish, to grow back in canals, ditches, lakes and other places which will be submerged later. A wet fall, especially the months of September and October, is necessary for the crawfish to surface, and so that fresh water is available for plant growth.

If there isn’t a wet fall, the mother crawfish will instinctively sense this during the summer and she will hold off laying and that will cause a later season. A mild winter is necessary simply in order to allow the crawfish to grow well.

Unfortunately, these conditions occur only three out of every five years.

But maybe that is good, because if the Cajuns ate more crawfish than we do now, it would make us ill, if not by the quantity, by the speed with which we consume them, especially if the price is low.