

The Little Mudbug That Could
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Few cultures grasp the image of a crawfish with as much passion as the Cajuns of Louisiana and use the little crustacean as an emblem for the survival of their culture. There was a time when being Cajun, or associated with anyone Cajun, was considered lower than low class. To be Cajun was to be ignorant and a backwards hillbilly, which was made worse with those who ate crawfish supplied by the Louisiana riverbanks. Crawfish, mudbugs, little lobsters, were used to create a new identity for Cajuns that propelled the image of a Cajun into a national phenomenon. From a people that was shameful, the Cajun culture spread through America as people from coast to coast would have Cajun themed trinkets or Cajun themed parties. Symbols of the crawfish were stamped on combs, souvenir nickels, and graced dinner plates outside the state of Louisiana.

As the Cajun culture gained in popularity, Cajuns began to associate themselves against all others as an identity that could not be compared to any other in America. Cajuns emerged their culture into society with nuances that distinguished Cajuns from the others, the prominent factor being how one cooked and ate crawfish. Anyone could go to a crawfish festival and play Cajun for the weekend but to be a true Cajun one had to learn how to properly eat a crawfish and drink dark coffee. Cajuns not only differentiated themselves from other states but also within Louisiana itself as crawfish dishes would represent upper and lower classes in society. Crawfish gave Cajuns a unifying symbol in which to reclaim their culture through the determination and tenacity shown by the little crustacean.

Crawfish are similar in appearance to lobster but require a bit more dexterity in peeling the meat away from the tail as there are no crawfish crackers to help with the hard shell. Peeling and eating crawfish takes a skill that many people do not possess. It is a skill in which Cajuns are very proud of learning when they are at a young age and can quickly distinguish themselves from differing parts of society. Those who are not familiar with crawfish tend to shatter the shell, creating an inedible piece of meat covered in small pieces of tail shell and view other edible parts of the crawfish as repugnant. Not all crawfish are the same, however, as Cajuns know which crawfish are fit for eating and which are better suited as bait for turtles and fish, rather than eating any kind of crawfish caught from the swamps

of Louisiana. Knowing what a crawfish is not enough, for a true Cajun knows which parts are delicacies, which claws hold meat, and how to grab a live crawfish by the tail and throw it into a pot of boiling water.

According to Jerald Horst, in his book *The Louisiana Seafood Bible*, there are “over five hundred species of crawfish [that] range in size from one-inch midgets to the seven-pound Tasmanian giant freshwater crayfish... found in Australia.”¹ The more common crawfish in Louisiana are the red swamp crawfish and the white river crawfish, with the white river crawfish used mainly as bait to catch large fish or red swamp crawfish. The white crawfish has a mushy consistency with the meat and a bland taste when compared to the red crawfish that has firm white meat that is perfectly paired with some boiled potatoes and corn on the cob. While crawfish spend most of their time in the water, many people are able to find the female crawfish in late summer and early fall burrowing their homes in the mud along the Louisiana riverbanks, where a line baited with a smelly meat can be lowered into the hole in anticipation for a grab from a claw. Live crawfish are available December through July with the Spring months of March, April, and May being the most plentiful of crawfish, leaving the “crawfish harvested in July, August, or September... of poor quality, with extremely hard shells and tough meat,” leaving the spring months filled with crawfish festivals and family picnics along the riverbanks where children try to catch a crawfish or two.² Packed with baskets and baited lines Cajuns will wander the riverbanks looking for the mud chimneys created by the female crawfish that will fill the dinner plates on the table. Others, who have makeshift metal cages, will toss their baited cage in the water, relax with a beer and wait while the cage fills with the little crustaceans who happen to want a piece of the flesh from its cousin inside the cage.

Not all parts of the crawfish are edible as the thorax, head, and tail shell must be discarded before eating. While “15% of the creature's total weight is edible,” the meat “is considered a delicacy

1 Jerald Horst, *The Louisiana Seafood Bible: Crawfish* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2010), 63.

2 Moody, Michael W Moody, *Louisiana Seafood Delight: The Crawfish* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1980), 2.

[that] tastes much like lobster but sweeter and more tender.”³ The prize of this little crustacean is the orange colored 'fat' inside the head, which is actually the hepatopancrea, an organ that works like the liver in humans. As some view this organ as distasteful, many Cajuns view the fat as a delicacy and will “scoop the fat out of the heads with their fingers while others suck vigorously on the open ends of the heads.”⁴ The bright orange organ adds richness and flavor to many recipes, leaving those “crawfish with ample fat... superior.”⁵ Outsiders are immediately set apart as Cajuns watch the looks of disgust on not only those from other states but also many Louisianans, as crawfish heads are sucked and prodded by Cajuns eating the sweet delicacy held in the head. Slurping or digging into the head to get the juicy orange fat is a Cajun icon in the course of eating through a crawfish boil. Outsiders are playfully picked on by Cajuns as they stare into the head of a crawfish wondering if they really want to eat the liver type organ of the little mudbug or if the head should be passed onto the person sitting next to them.

Booklets published by the state of Louisiana are available with instructions on how to peel and eat crawfish, as well as many Louisiana crawfish vendor websites having instructional videos available for ease. Since most Cajuns are taught at a young age how to peel and eat crawfish, it is easy for Cajuns to distinguish outsiders from true Cajuns. Peeling a crawfish is not as easy as cracking a lobster, as the shells of a crawfish tail can rip easily into pieces before being peeled off the meat. Twisting the head from the tail a consumer can suck the fat out of the head and peel the shell off the tail and either dip the meat in sauce or pop the meat in their mouth as the “crawfish [will] satisfy almost every primal desire and cure a craving you didn't even know you had.”⁶ The shell of the tail has rings that need to be peeled off in order to slide the meat out of the tail, which many beginners break the rings into pieces, creating a piece of meat that no one would bother eating. Most Cajuns, after giving a good hearty laugh at the newbie, will show outsiders the proper way of peeling the shells from the meat. Discussions of the best

3 “The Crawfish Capital Celebrates.” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 1808 (1964): 30.

4 Jay V. Hunter., Judith Huner, and Darlene Frank Shilling, *Crawfish: Louisiana's Crustacean Delight* (Lafayette: Louisiana Ecrevisse, 1997), 10.

5 Gutierrez, Paige G. Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992), 86.

6 Sam Irwin, *Louisiana Crawfish: A Succulent History of the Cajun Crustacean* (Charleston: American Palate, 2014), 25.

way to peel the meat, from one handed swiftfullness to two handed grace, float over tables as Cajuns stuff themselves with crawfish meat.

Crawfish, however, did not always grace the tables in Louisiana and offer social connections between different cultures. Before the 1920s, the status of the crawfish was not readily accepted as a tolerable food for many people to consume, even to some Cajuns. As Glen Pitre states, in his book *The Crawfish Book*, “if Cajuns were low-class, to the Anglo-American majority crawfish were even lower class, a food of hungry hillbillies and swampers.”⁷ Some Cajuns even viewed those who consumed crawfish as “isolated, "backwards," swamp-dwelling Cajuns.”⁸ Since crawfish build their homes in the mud many people saw these small crustaceans as “creepy, cranky, crawly critters [that live] deep and secretive lives in the bottom ooze and debris” of the riverbanks.⁹ The insect-like bodies and backwards movements of the crawfish made many people, both Louisianans and those in other states, detest the idea of consuming the small crustacean. Crawfish, which were considered inedible, dirty creatures, were only eaten by the poor as they scavenged the riverbanks for their meals and ate in the privacy of their own homes. Even though the free meal was an easy supply obtained from the riverbanks, it was not a food that was going to grace the tables of many Louisianans and Cajuns, but this was not going to stop those who enjoyed the meat given freely by the river.

While the majority of the nation viewed the crawfish as socially unacceptable there were some who saw the value of the crawfish, albeit a small few, as people were able to scoop crawfish from the roads during annual crawfish migration. As early as 1933 “a huge 'crawfish run’” had “many persons... filling sacks, assuring pots of succulent bisque and gumbo, while thousands of the crawfish were being crushed by highway traffic.”¹⁰ Sounds of buckets scraping the roads and swooping through yards could be heard as men and women would scoop up the scurrying crustacean. Some Cajuns may have been

7 Glen Pitre, *The Crawfish Book* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 112.

8 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 80.

9 Norma S Upson, *The Crawfish Cookbook* (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1977), 9.

10 “Crawfish Blacken Road: Rare ‘Run’ Covers Miles of Louisiana Highway,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1933.

ashamed of eating crawfish but others enjoyed the free seafood that was provided by the swamps. The delectable little crustacean graced a few tables as a select few did not allow the perception of an ignorant Cajun eating crawfish spoil their dinners. During a crawfish run a person could scoop up a couple pounds of crawfish within a couple hours and for those with more patience and time in the day, the amount of crawfish collected could have someone eating crawfish for a week.

The perception of crawfish being a low class food item created another factor that fueled American perceptions against the Cajun identity. As far back as the early 1900s, Cajuns were fighting for the survival of their identity when their traditions, their French ancestry in particular, came under attack. The state of Louisiana attempted to pass laws that would require French speaking natives to lose their language for English as “local [Cajun] customs were often ridiculed by the more "sophisticated" outsiders, and the use of the French language in advertising, legal documents, and in public schools was forbidden by state law [as] many outsiders, and insiders as well, associated Cajun culture with ignorance and poverty.”¹¹ Mass media and the public attention that was put towards the association of being Cajun created a struggle for Cajun people to keep hold of their customs and heritage. The image and tenacity of the crawfish, however, gave the Cajun people an emblem in which they proudly “paralleled [the crawfish] in [their] own image of themselves as a people who have managed to fight and survive in the face [of]social oppression, and a sometimes hostile environment.”¹² The story of a crawfish that will raise its claws in the face of an oncoming train rather than scurry away is a story in which Cajuns proudly claim for the story of their culture. As a crawfish charges a train, Cajuns charge through the obstacles placed on them from different classes of society. The ignorance of a Cajun was transformed into a fighter as Cajuns embraced the emblem of the fighting crustacean.

The stigma and shame of being Cajun did not disappear within in matter of months or because

11 Paige C. Gutierrez, “The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways: Cajuns and Crawfish in South Louisiana.” In *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity* (Knoxville: University Press of Tennessee, 1984), 171.

12 Gutierrez, “The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways,” 174.

some crawfish festivals made the culture of Cajuns a national awareness. During the 1970s, Cajuns were still fighting for their survival as many Cajuns were trying to hold on to their old traditions and their French dialect. In Louisiana, where “children were punished for speaking the forbidden language [French] in school” just thirty to forty years earlier, those who grew up in those schools were “trying desperately to keep French alive.”¹³ In an effort to keep the language and the culture alive, The Council for the Development of French began to put together a budget in which French would be taught as early as kindergarten and elementary schools.¹⁴ To the dismay of Cajuns, the French being taught in schools was of the standard French dialect rather than the Cajun dialect. During the 1970s, James Donald Faulk “traveled the countryside, interviewing old persons” in an attempt to make a dictionary of the Cajun French dialect.¹⁵ In 1977, for \$18.95, high school students could buy a new text book teaching Cajun French, a book in which Faulk hoped would “stop the steady erosion of the Cajun culture and language.”¹⁶ Even though the textbooks sold out in 1977, Cajun French dialect is still in an uphill battle as generations in the 2000s are not interested in taking French in high school.¹⁷ From the early 1920s when French was not allowed to school and into a new century, Cajuns still fight for their culture to survive but now it is not a negative perception that is degrading the culture but the lack of their language to thrive in a society where Cajun French is used by the older generations.

Even though many Cajuns were fighting for the survival of their culture throughout the 1900s, there was also a fight for which type of Cajun was a true Cajun. Proud Coonasses speak a nonstandard Louisiana French dialect, or no French at all, while emphasizing the playful and rowdy side of Cajun life that includes heavy drinking, eating, gambling, cockfighting, barroom brawls, food, sex, and sleep. Genteel Acadians, however, are a wealthier class with a formal education who speak standard French.

13 Roy Reed, “Cajun Country in Louisiana Waging Underdog Fight to Keep French Alive.” *New York Times*. May 7, 1972.

14 The Council for the Development of French (CODOFIL) was formed in 1968 to support and preserve the French heritage of Louisiana. Through education reforms and bi-lingual teachers, CODOFIL has been able to aid in the restoration of the French language within Louisiana.

15 “Cajun Language Textbook Seen as Helping to Preserve Culture,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1977.

16 “Cajun Language Textbook Seen as Helping to Preserve Culture,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1977.

17 Sean Cockerham, “In Cajun Land, a Reveille to French Heritage,” *McClatchy Newspapers*, July 3, 2012. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/07/03/154929/in-cajun-land-a-reveille-to-french.html>

While there are many Cajuns who fall between the two extremes, the Proud Coonasses and the Genteel Acadians do not accept one another in social status as “the Proud Coonasses have little interest in learning to speak standard French and sometimes see the Genteel Acadians as elitist or hypocritical.”¹⁸ The Genteel Acadians view the Coonasses “as vulgar and do not identify with the lifestyle that the term represents.”¹⁹ Crawfish, however, unite these two classes, as well as the other Cajuns who fall within the spectrum, as it is the symbol of being Cajun. Whether a Genteel Acadian, a Proud Coonass, or just plain Cajun all variations of Cajun depict a crawfish for their culture. Eating, decorating, even clothing with crawfish patterns are seen in shops and homes as Cajuns proudly display the bright red crustacean for their Cajun identity.

As there was a personal difference among the elite and the lower classes, the dishes that were served also divided the wealthy Cajuns from the poor. Crawfish bisque is a dish in which many Cajuns would not make at home as it is “by far the most time-consuming and troublesome to prepare” and reserved for special occasions.²⁰ Those who have the skill, or cooks, to prepare the bisque can enjoy a dish with “cleaned crawfish heads filled with a stuffing made of ground tail meat, bread crumbs, and seasonings float[ing] in a thick broth along with whole peeled tails.”²¹ Crawfish etouffee's, another distinctive soup, use the fat of the crawfish in the roux, which makes the soup a delicacy. The downside to making these crawfish soups for a middle to lower class family is the amount of time and crawfish it takes to make the dinner. To make these soups for a family of four “thirty pounds of crawfish must be peeled; for a party of fifteen, one has to go through two hundred pounds of live crawfish,” who has time for that when there is a family waiting at the dinner table.²² Instead sacks of crawfish bought at the local processing plant, farmer, or market are dumped into pots of seasoned water and poured on tables where people can help themselves during the crawfish boils. Crawfish soups are reserved for special

18 Gutierrez, “The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways,” 172.

19 Gutierrez, “The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways,” 171.

20 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*. 95.

21 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*. 95.

22 Irwin, 41.

occasions or consumed at a restaurant as middle and lower class Cajuns do not have the time to peel the amount of crawfish needed for the dishes along with the time it would take to make the soup itself. Along with lifestyles and language dialect, various crawfish dishes were also used to distinguish Cajuns from one another.

During the late 1950s the crawfish saw a rise in social acceptance outside of the Cajun community, as well as a revival in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Paige Gutierrez, in her book, *Cajun Foodways*, “by 1958 the esteem for crawfish had risen to the point that the town of Breaux Bridge could be "honored" by being named the Crawfish Capital of the World.”²³ The residents of Breaux Bridge turned the negative labeling of the crawfish and being Cajun into one of a renown image as the crawfish took center stage at the city's centennial birthday festival. During the 1950s, Breaux Bridge was in an economic crisis and took the abundance of crawfish the riverbanks provided them and used the small crustacean as the notable identity for their festival. As a result, the emblem held by Cajuns was also rising the status of the Cajun and their culture as tourists enjoyed the crawfish festival and food supplied by the residents of Breaux Bridge. Cajun themed clothing and trinkets flowed through the festival grounds as the locals of Breaux Bridge proudly reclaimed their Cajun identity with the crawfish being center stage for propaganda of their culture.

The festival, given every two years (national renown began in 1960 after the centennial festival brought fame to Breaux Bridge), became nationwide news as information about the festival spread as far north as New York. The New York Times reported many times on the events of the festival and what tourists could expect from the state of Louisiana and the residents of Breaux Bridge. In Robert Meyer Jr's article, “A Tasty Treat in Louisiana,” the pride of being Cajun is displayed as the mayor of Breaux Bridge claimed “among their other faults... outsiders do not eat *couche-couche* or *gratons* and *boudins*; they do not make a decent crawfish stew or *etouffee*; they cannot dance a *fais do do*, and they cannot

23 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 80.

speak Cajun.”²⁴ Cajuns were proudly declaring the differences of their culture from others and that anyone else who was not Cajun, was just that, *not* Cajun. The festival of Breaux Bridge challenged the nation's perception of the crawfish and the Cajun culture, resulting in a large part of the population embracing the Cajun culture. Crawfish demand began to rise as many consumers could not eat enough of the little crustacean that was served at the crawfish festival. The dirty, little creature from the mud, which had many people cringe at the thought of, was filling the bellies of many Americans traveling through the city of Breaux Bridge. Residents all across Louisiana were scooping up as much crawfish as they could before tourist season, embracing the meat that was a revulsion just thirty years earlier. Crawfish and Cajun were no longer hiding in the mud or the shadows as Cajuns were declaring their culture and setting it apart from the nation.

Even in later years, the festivities for the Breaux Bridge crawfish festival became well known as articles for the New York Times and the Bloomberg Businessweek continually reported on the crawfish centered contests. As Bloomberg Businessweek relayed, “the town drew in three or four times its 3,300 population [with] women in Cajun bonnets and men in bib overalls” to witness floats that “depicted the crawfish [on] costumes and banners [that] carried [the crawfish] image.”²⁵ Those who could not adorn their clothing with crawfish images could buy trinkets and jewelry to show the pride they have for the crawfish and being 'Cajun' for a day. Merchants created wooden nickels with the emblem of the crawfish while plastic combs proudly declared *Louisiana* with an image of a crawfish across the state name. For those who would rather carry a beer or a handful of crawfish instead of a trinket could view the town flag with “its centerpiece [being] a crawfish, surround[ed] by other symbols of Cajuns and/or the community.”²⁶ Crawfish crawled out of the mud and shone brightly on flags and wooden nickels as people embraced, once again, being Cajun for the weekend in Breaux Bridge. Floats, dances, food,

24 Meyer, Robert Meyer Jr, “A Tasty Treat in Louisiana: Tourists Are Welcomed At Crawfish Festival In Bayou Country Costume Contests Twenty-Three Species Crawfish Capital,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1962, Accessed September 5, 2014.

25 “Crawfish Capital Celebrates.”

26 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 80.

beer, dancing, and more were celebrated as people stuffed their mouths full of crawfish meat and soups.

Vendors attending the Breaux Bridge crawfish festival encouraged the nation as they supplied “plastic crawfish key chains and combs, real crawfish frozen into clear acrylic paperweights shaped like the state of Louisiana, children's books featuring anthropo-morphized crawfish as main characters, and expensive gold or silver crawfish pendants” or food products made from crawfish.²⁷ If one could not take home a trinket they could have a full belly of crawfish as food vendors invented new recipes for crawfish. From crawfish cakes (similar to crab cakes) to a crawfish dog, patrons at the festivals would not be denied the Cajun delicacy that was crawfish. It was not enough to just go to a crawfish festival but to also enjoy the contests held in honor of the crawfish and the Cajun culture. Those tourists and locals who did not want to take home souvenirs could partake in the crawfish eating contests, costume contests, or multiple crawfish races. Crawfish peeling contests became popularized in 1964 when “Robert Les Domingues developed... a fifteen-minute peeling contest featuring the fastest professional crawfish peelers from the crawfish processing plants vying for the title of 'world's fastest crawfish peeler'.”²⁸ New events were being created that honored the crawfish and those who served it to the nation visiting the state of Louisiana.

The thrill and joy of the festival grew increasingly larger each passing bi-year as more and more tourists flocked to Breaux Bridge to eat crawfish and become 'Cajun.' The festival of 1968 saw “endless streams of happy promenaders... drinking uncounted barrels of beer and consuming small mountains of the delectable crawfish, a full 10 tons.”²⁹ From 3,300 in 1960 to an estimated 75,000 people in 1970, the little town of Breaux Bridge became flooded with people consuming vast amounts of crawfish, beer, and dancing.³⁰ There is more to the crawfish than the meat in its tail and fat in its head as many people cheer for their favorite crustaceans in races and their favorite contestants for the

27 Gutierrez, “The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways,” 169.

28 Irwin, 89.

29 Jay Peake, “They're Off 'n Crawling in the Bayou Country.” *New York Times.*, April 12, 1970.

30 Peake.

crawfish peeling contests, not to mention who could eat the most crawfish meat in a limited time. As reported by Jay Peake, “Mrs. Landry Dubois [became] the new world champion crawfish peeler” in 1970 as she peeled “15 ounces of delicious crawfish meat... in just 15 minutes.”³¹ But the biggest upset was a “lanky collegiate” who out ate the former champion in the crawfish eating contest.³² The former world champion, who shelled and ate “33 pounds of crawfish in two hours” was beaten out by someone who used orange juice to push down the crawfish meat, not beer, not coffee, not water, but orange juice of all things!³³ Who in their right mind would use orange juice to help swallow pounds of crawfish meat down their gullet? Hoots and shouts thunder as contestants were served five pound bowls of crawfish meat, each one gaining bloated bellies trying to out eat the one next to them. Outsiders could enter the eating contests as one New Jersey man won the contest “by putting away 20 ½ pounds of crawfish” during the 1972 Breaux Bridge festival.³⁴ Cajuns may differentiate themselves from outsiders but outsiders would eventually merge themselves into the Cajun culture as they joined in the festivities. Cultures merged and intertwined as everyone was considered a little bit Cajun during the crawfish festivals.

But the eating contests were nothing when compared to the crawfish races of 1970. A bullseye design painted on a table about eight feet length and crosswise was adorned with crawfish in the center, waiting for their cage to be lifted off the center dot. A lift of the portable crawfish cage and the contestants are off. Cheers echo through the air as “Gaston decided he didn't like the looks of Robespierre and took a sidewise swipe at him that sent him reeling” but Sock It To Me, Baby intervened as he took on both challengers with raised claws in a duel.³⁵ But Bonaparte “just inches away from the finish line, suddenly reared up, his antennae rotating like radar [and] sidled skittishly halfway back across the board” allowing Gaston to make a beeline across the finish line, which was the

31 Peake.

32 Peake.

33 Peake.

34 Roy Reed, “Cajuns Celebrate Crawfish at an Exuberant Festival in Louisiana,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1972.

35 Peake.

outer ring of the bullseye.³⁶ The pride of the crawfish was not over as Gaston had his winner picture taken on a mahogany and brass plaque along with his small floral horseshoe around his neck. Each winning contestant was also a crawfish that was considered to be the crawfish other crawfish looked up to. Honorary mentions, plaques, even flower garlands adorn the once disgusting crustacean as people from across the state of Louisiana and the nation cheer for the bright red mudbug. America was embracing the iconic image of the Cajun culture and demanded more tail meat each passing year.

As fun as the festivals were there was the problem of outsiders trying to be more Cajun than the Cajuns themselves. Younger generations outside of Louisiana would go to the festivals in an attempt to “out sex” the locals. As the Proud Coonasses would embrace the rowdy side of being Cajun that perception would hold out on many in the younger generations would have inappropriate behavior the family centered festivals. In 1972, Roy Reed reported on the sexual ramifications of the festivals as outsiders “try to outcelebrate the Louisianans [and] inevitably end up in orgies of drunkenness and destructiveness.”³⁷ To the dismay of many Cajuns, the perceptions of rowdy Cajuns was not one the locals held with esteem. The residents of Breaux Bridge would debate on quality of the previous festival and wonder if hosting another would be beneficial as hordes of drunken college kids would descend upon the town. Luckily for everyone, the residents of Breaux Bridge hold their festivals as they make new plans with how to deal with those who think they can out party a Cajun.

The 1960 Breaux Bridge festival created a dilemma for its residents as the availability of crawfish began to dwindle as tourists consumed vast amounts of crawfish at each passing festival. As the festival “spurred outsiders' interest in the crawfish as food... this in turn [became] an economic boon to the crawfish industry, the restaurant industry, and the regional tourist industry.”³⁸ As the supply of crawfish declined with demand rising, the city of St. Martin Parish applied and received state grants for the production of crawfish farms. Eight years after the first official crawfish festival, along with

36 Peake.

37 Reed, “Cajuns Celebrate Crawfish at an Exuberant Festival in Louisiana.”

38 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 82.

state grants, “of the 7,000 total acres of state crawfish ponds, 5,060 were set in wooded ponds and rice fields in St. Martin Parish.”³⁹ Crawfish was creating a market in which fishermen would be able to expand their businesses into a seafood item that thirty years earlier, would not be scooped off the roads by most people. Cities were able to gain state funding for the farming of crawfish as crawfish farms began to branch out across the Louisiana riverbanks. Crawfish no longer skittered across the roads as farmers created their boundaries but crates and crates of crawfish were now being lifted out of the Louisiana riverbanks in order to provide the nation with the tail meat it demanded with each passing year.

Just as farming was gaining a new foothold in the economy, the fashion of crawfish and the Cajun culture was broadening across the nation. Crawfish was becoming “crawfish chic” as people would casually claim “to have a clandestine crawfish connection... [through disclosing] that you either “know an old Cajun” or that you have a friend or a third cousin who has a direct relationship with an Atchafalaya River swamper or a crawfish farmer from Acadia Parish.”⁴⁰ The status of a poor, ignorant Cajun was no longer as many people would lay claim to having personal relationships with someone who came into contact with crawfish and those who were Cajun. My cousin knows a guy, who knew a market owner, who was friends with a crawfish farmer, who could catch as many crawfish in an hour while an out-of-towner wouldn't know a crawfish if it snapped him on the leg. Those associated with Cajuns, no matter how far out the relationship, were able to distinguish themselves from all outsiders, raising their own personal social status against those who were not Cajun or did not know a Cajun. It did not matter how far detached of a relationship how many times one was removed from the family, if you knew a Cajun you were a notch above those who did not.

It was not only just who you knew in the crawfish business but who developed certain aspects of crawfish cooking or other tips and tricks about the little crustacean, no matter how many years

39 Irwin, 120.

40 Irwin, 25.

crawfish has graced American tables. Barry Meir interviewed L.H. Hawk Arceneaux in 1995, who claimed he was “one of the first people to employ what is now a popular process called purging to clean crayfish (spelling with a 'y' is another indicator of those who are not 'Cajun') and remove any gritty taste or odor before they are cooked.”⁴¹ As Arceneaux asserts he first started the purging process in 1982, Norma Upson wrote *The Crawfish Cookbook* in 1977 and suggests soaking (purging) crawfish in salt water as the “salt removes tiny parasites that feed on the mossy algae growing on the shell of the crawfish.”⁴² It is not known who created the purging, or soaking, process but there will be people who proudly claim they have created a trick in which to enjoy crawfish. Even the purging process has different variations as *Enjoying Louisiana Crawfish* expresses the use of salt stresses the crawfish and should not be used.⁴³ It does not matter where the information on cleaning and preparation of crawfish comes from as long as the end result is a succulent piece of meat that makes a mouth water from one bite to the next.

People were not the only ones proudly using the symbol of the crawfish as local businesses began to use the crawfish as well. The local phone company of Breaux Bridge “featured a picture of a bright red crawfish on its directory [in 1966 and] up until 1974, a crawfish graced the directory cover every year.”⁴⁴ Besides phone books, local restaurants were wooing patrons with their exquisite crawfish dishes and atmosphere as they became “an appropriate setting for business transactions, and Lafayette restaurants offer crawfish as part of their business luncheons [while] local business leaders [would go to] great lengths to impress their clients with crawfish dishes.”⁴⁵ Crawfish, the 'dirty insect-like crustacean', was being promoted as a food item that was acceptable to be consumed during business mergers and impressing business clients. Whether or not someone was Cajun, the crawfish centered Cajun culture delivered on the doorsteps or was served to them on a plate. Local businesses embraced

41 Barry Meir, “At the Nation’s Table: Crayfish: Hard to Find but Worth the Trip,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1995.

42 Norma S. Upson, *The Crawfish Cookbook*, (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1977), 11.

43 Ruth M. Patrick, and Michael W. Moody. *Enjoying Louisiana Crawfish*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, 1992), 2.

44 Irwin, 89.

45 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 100.

the little crustacean as they promoted their products beyond the scope of food and phone books.

The fame and fortune of crawfish did not stop at farming, festivals, or trinkets as contractors and builders were also able to enjoy the financial influx crawfish created. Crawfish boils, the social party for local friends and families, were moving from parks and open spaces to the backyards of their hosts. While the techniques to cook a boil have not changed throughout the years, contractors and builders have been able to upgrade many outdoor BBQ areas of the backyard into large areas where one could show their wealth and materialistic consumption through outdoor kitchens. The cooking industry also grabbed a hold in the new revenue crawfish created as new equipment was created for the little creature. Production and construction were able to expand their businesses and financial fortunes as the nation took hold of the Cajun identity and the delectable meat of the crawfish.

As the popularity of crawfish boils expanded, the need for new equipment created new marketing techniques and custom outdoor kitchens. As Gutierrez explains, “some Cajun men invent and build their own specialized cooking equipment, using skills learned in the oil fields, such as metal cutting and welding.”⁴⁶ While many men would build their own grills from cutting an oil drum in half and placing a grill inside, entrepreneurs realized a new marketing avenue through specialized crawfish equipment. Some Louisiana farmers have created websites in which they can sell their crawfish as well as stockpots ranging from twenty quarts to one hundred and twenty quarts. The Louisiana Crawfish Company, “the #1 shipper of live crawfish, shipping considerably more than our competitors combined,” have been selling live crawfish and cooking equipment since 1985.⁴⁷ A consumer can find everything they need to cook their own crawfish boil from live crawfish to cooking pots, spices to dips, clothing to Cajun music. But one does not have to rely on crawfish alone as these farmers also sell alligator and turtle meat, or the ever popular, turducken. Food items that were once considered Louisiana and Cajun identity have now been popularized into a nationwide chain via the internet.

46 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 75.

47 Louisiana Crawfish Co. “Our History” <http://www.lacrawfish.com/OurHistory.aspx>

People in Oregon can boil frozen crawfish meat with potatoes and corn on the cob while dumping Cajun spices into the large pots with bluegrass blaring from their speakers. Tablecloths, cutlery, dishes, napkins, one can have all the Cajun they can handle and then some as their friends are adorned with plastic crawfish necklaces and plastic Cajun bibs. For the tech savvy, an entertainment system can be used to show their revelers how to peel the crawfish and get the most out of the little crustacean, there may even be a reveler or two who decide to go true Cajun and suck the fat out of the heads.

The internet has not been the only item that has grown in popularity as custom built outdoor kitchens have created a large revenue for many businesses. While some homes in Louisiana may have “an area of the yard where a barbecue grill or butane burner and picnic tables are set up for special occasions” some homeowners have built a “permanent, brick-floored, and perhaps covered patio [while] some homes have elaborate, completely functional second kitchens” built into their backyards.⁴⁸ While these kitchens are used for other gatherings they are essential for crawfish boils as cooks need to use pots that could contain as much as fifty pounds of crawfish at one time. Outdoor kitchens allow the smell of cooked seafood to waft away on the breeze rather than sticking to the walls inside the house, leaving the rooms smell like an ocean longer than anyone wants to admit. The permanent kitchens not only add appeal and value to the homes but also to the economy as contractors and suppliers can specialize in the outdoor kitchens. Why settle inside a small home when one can be out in the open with two burners holding fifty pounds of crawfish a piece? Picnic tables covered with old newspapers sit adjacent to custom built stone BBQs as friends and family debate on which seasonings make the best crawfish boil.

Those in the cities are also able to entertain their friends with crawfish boils with the ability to rent cooking equipment. The Cajun Crawfish Company will not only sell live crawfish, vegetables, and seasonings but they “may elect to rent you some equipment at a reduced rate or maybe even for free!”⁴⁹

48 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 73.

49 Cajun Crawfish Co. “Do-It-Yourself Live Crawfish Boil Equipment Supplies Sales and Rentals,”

While the Cajun Crawfish Company does not ship their crawfish out of state there are many other websites that will overnight live crawfish to the lower forty eight states, so even in Idaho one can impress their friends with a Cajun themed party including a live crawfish boil. Those who are squeamish about cooking live crawfish can buy the tail meat or frozen crawfish meat and throw them in the pot. From the west coast to the east coast of the United States, anyone can have their own Cajun crawfish boil complete with decorations, clothing, and music as they celebrate a moment of being 'Cajun.' The Cajun identity no longer stops at the Louisiana boundary but has expanded into the states and into the apartments of those living in major metropolitan areas. From the swamps of Louisiana to the skyscrapers of New York and San Francisco, crawfish and Cajun are gracing the homes of any who wish to buy from a Louisiana farmer's website.

The crawfish boils, the social event that all Cajuns held and many outside of the culture aspired to woo their friends with, was one true Cajun identity in which anyone and everyone was Cajun, no matter the social class of wealthy to middle or in Louisiana or out of state. People debated on the seasonings, friends and family gathered around tables and pots, people of all ages could stuff their mouths with delicious, succulent crawfish meat. Whether attending a crawfish festival, building a custom kitchen, or renting equipment, everyone was Cajun at a boil, even those who had to be taught how to peel a crawfish.

While many festivals have their own specialized menu in which to feed the masses there is nothing like a good old fashion local crawfish boil during Holy Week. Holy Week, the week of Easter, "is a time when just about everyone in south Louisiana either hosts a crawfish boil or attends one."⁵⁰ Spring is the time for social events and that means crawfish boils at one house or another. Food, music, dancing, and socializing are focal points during crawfish boils but nothing is as important as the cook

http://www.cajuncrawfishco.com/products.pot_and_burner_sales_rentals.asp
50 Hunter, Huner, and Shilling, 10.

and his seasoning as men “are [the] performers: they cook in front of an audience.”⁵¹ While crawfish boils are considered a man's job as it pertains to a type of BBQ, many women are the ones who prepare the crawfish and various ingredients and side dishes for the event. Friends, family, and some outsiders join together in backyards, and for those lucky enough will be able to enjoy the custom built kitchens, as men will gather around the one hundred quart pots and engage in who knows which seasonings are best for the water. Debates will be held among men of how much red pepper, salt, lemons, or crab boil seasoning is needed to have the tastiest crawfish for the party. Crawfish not only become the focal point as an eaten item but has become a social event for family gatherings. Neighbors debate on what vegetables go in the pot. Local market owners create their client base with discussions of crawfish and other variations of boils they learn from customers. There is more to a crawfish than the meat. The crawfish has created a social integration among local Cajuns and any who attend their crawfish boils.

Local crawfish boils can serve anywhere from ten people a couple thousand people. *The Crawfish Book* includes a recipe from Baboo Guidry in which to serve 20,000 people with 700 pounds of crawfish, 15 pounds of cayenne pepper, 60 pounds of salt, ½ a gallon of liquid crab boil seasoning, and 500 pounds of corn on the cob that will feed a large party of crawfish eaters.⁵² Even with the large pots crawfish must be boiled in batches and then they are dumped on tables that are scattered with old newspapers. People shuck through the crawfish, picking up the plump, juicy bodies and peeling the shells from the hot meat. Some will dip the meat in a variety of sauces while others use butter before popping the tender tail meat in their mouths. Sucking sounds echo over laughter and conversations as the real Cajuns suck the fat out of the crawfish heads while others dig out the fat with their fingers. Children that cannot peel the crawfish by themselves have help from an adult but that takes away from the adult enjoying as much crawfish as they can while other adults peel and suck their way through cooked piles of the small crustaceans. Those with “a hearty appetite and good peeling ability are...

51 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*. 72.

52 Pitre, 153.

valued, and people may call attention to the large pile of discarded shells near their places” as the piles of discarded shells display a prominence among the group.⁵³

Crawfish boils have a tendency to have a staple of ingredients in which to season the water but that, however, changes among different cooks and eaters. While red pepper, lemon, and crab seasoning dress up the boils there are others who enjoy a variety of add ins for crawfish. Kathy Hunt, author of *Fish Market*, prefers her crawfish with “garlic, flat-leaf parsley, tarragon, thyme, olive oil, and dry white wine [or] asparagus, avocado, zucchini, carrots, leeks, mangoes, morel mushrooms, hazelnuts, rice, and bacon.”⁵⁴ There are some who view Hunt's additions as sacrilege to the crawfish as “purists claim that crawfish need no adornments” and would be appalled by the exotic additions of avocado and zucchini.⁵⁵ However one eats a crawfish, the little crustacean from the mud has gain fame in which cookbooks and pamphlets are devoted to the different methods and recipes of cooking crawfish. Cajun recipes are placed alongside recipes such as crawfish fettuccine and crawfish stuffed jalapenos or crawfish rice with coconut and peanuts.⁵⁶ Different versions of Cajun crawfish have undergone not only regional changes but also ethnic as well.

Cajun flavors associated with crawfish have reached from coast to coast as many chefs and restaurants try to recreate Louisiana flavors with ethnic cuisine. Hieu Pham of Atlanta, Georgia “sells his customers a vision of Louisiana culture, accessorized with heaping bowls of crawfish” in his Vietnamese restaurant.⁵⁷ Learning cleaning and seasoning techniques from Vietnamese campers in Louisiana, Mr. Pham incorporates the Cajun culture and spices into his restaurant as he stocks his shelves with “Louisiana produced etouffe... beignet mixes (a French type of doughnut) [and] sugar-cane juice pressed to order from Louisiana cane.”⁵⁸ Restaurants from coast to coast are not the only

53 Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, 93.

54 Kathy Hunt, *Fish Market: A Cookbook for Selecting and Preparing Seafood*, (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2013), 47.

55 Hunt, 47.

56 Louisiana Crawfish Promotion and Research Board, *Louisiana Crawfish: Heads and Tails Above the Rest*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Crawfish Promotion and Research Board, 1997).

57 John T. Edge, “Little Bit N’awlins, Little Bit Vietnam.” *New York Times*, April 28, 2010.

58 Edge.

ones cashing in on crawfish and the Cajun culture as nationwide chains such as Popeye's serves Louisiana style crawfish one month of the year, as well as grocery markets containing "frozen Cajun entrees" and "Frito-Lay's Cajun spice potato chips" are scattered in convenience stores throughout California.⁵⁹ The thrill of eating Cajun food has become mass marketed for Americans to enjoy.

The mass marketing of the Cajun identity has opened new avenues in which many entrepreneurs are able to flourish. The literary world has also embraced the Cajun identity, although it has a much smaller following than food related items. In the early 1900s Cajuns were shunned as the nation viewed them as a lazy and ignorant culture. As the crawfish festivals reestablished the pride of Cajun and marketing of crawfish boils and the identity of Cajun have capitalized on the Cajun image, authors have used the distinctions of being Cajun as stories to relay the morals of accepting people for who they are to children and young readers.

Authors have embraced the Cajun identity and the crawfish as children books and comic books used the Cajun identity to teach young children the morals and values of being different. While the literature world did not gain in popularity alongside contractors and manufacturers, the literary world did pass on the attitudes and acceptance of being Cajun. Cajuns have been proud of the fact that their culture will embrace others and bring them under their wing once an outsider learns how to eat a crawfish and drink black coffee. Anyone could be Cajun, a message passed along in children books and comic books.

Crawfish Man, a crawfish that is shaped as a human with claws for arms, a crawfish head, and a crawfish tail battles his arch enemies in comic books created by Tim Elder. As early as the 1980s, Crawfish-Man has been a Louisiana hero that has traveled as far as Los Angeles, California where the Los Angeles times did an article on the crustacean hero.⁶⁰ At least fifteen comics with Crawfish-Man fighting crime have been distributed by author Tim Edler as "Crawfish-Man leaped into print, with

59 Blayne Cutler, "Is Cajun Hot or Not?," *American Demographics* 11, no. 6 (June 1989): 16.

60 Bill Cormier, "And Then There's Crawfish-Man," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1987. http://articles.latimes.com/1987-03-15/news/mn-10696_1_man-crawfish-swamps

giant claws to snare Dark Gator and a powerful tail to speed across dank swamps to Cypress Castle, home of the big, fat Swamp Witch.”⁶¹ The image of Cajun can be celebrated by children of all states as they read their hero fight against crime and save the day. The image of the crawfish is celebrated as many children in Louisiana are able to associate their hero with the crustacean that is found in the riverbanks of the rivers in their backyards. The Cajun identity is transformed into a hero, one who saves the world and gets the women, as Crawfish Man defeats the monster with his heroism. Cajun children embrace their culture as they run around pretending to be Crawfish Man and defeating Dark Gator or the Swamp Witch.

Comic books are not the only avenue in which children can learn the importance of accepting the difference of others or to embrace their difference rather than feel embarrassed of their culture. Dolores Smith Burch wrote a child's book in which a crawfish teaches children the value of being different and not giving up. Crusty the crawfish shows a little boy of nine that being different is okay. Crusty has a 'Cajun' accent and is missing a claw, which the boy questions Crusty of why he is different. Crusty explains the culture of being Cajun and that speaking differently and acting differently does not mean the boy and Crusty cannot be friends. The tenacity of the Cajun culture is depicted with Crusty snapping at the legs of a bull charging the boy and his friends with the bull running away from the crawfish. After making friends, Crusty enters the crawfish race at the festival and loses as he only has one claw to help him fight against the other crawfish. The boy learns a lesson that one does not always have to win in order to be a winner. Children learn the adversity of a different culture as the Cajun linguistics and easy lifestyle are accepted by the little boy rather than being disregarded as ignorant and lazy. Books of being Cajun and different are teaching children how to accept those who are unlike them while embracing the Cajun culture.

While Cajun and crawfish have been accepted nationwide the farming industry of crawfish in Louisiana has gained the major foothold in the supply of crawfish for the nation. Most of the crawfish

61 Cormier.

consumed in America comes from the riverbanks of Louisiana while Texas and China try to maintain their small market of supplying crawfish. Even as St. Martins Parish gained state grants to expand their crawfish farms, farmers and processing plants along the state Louisiana have expanded as they keep up with the public demand of crawfish meat. Cajun culture has centered on the image of the crawfish and the qualities of a fighting crustacean. The farming industry of Louisiana has expanded into crawfish farming as that Cajun image was embraced by the nation and those who wanted to eat crawfish and cook crawfish boils.

The crawfish not only gave rising pride in the Cajun culture but also gave an economic boom to the state of Louisiana. Interstate 10, which connects Lafayette to Baton Rouge, opened in 1973 which resulted in a “daily traffic count [that] went from 0 to 7,390 overnight” and 26,472 ten years later.⁶² The small town of Henderson gained popularity with their crawfish dishes and “boasted not one but four to five restaurants that specialized in crawfish cuisine.”⁶³ Pilots, horse racers, and gamblers could go to Baton Rouge or Henderson to share their wealth as they dined on some of the freshest crawfish Louisiana restaurants offered. Others could enjoy a family outing to one of the local crawfish farms and attempt to catch their own crawfish as farmers would have crawfishing days. Picnics and blankets would be carried out to the dry lands while kids could dig in the mud looking at crawfish traps and grabbing the little crustaceans by the tails trying not get pinched. Crawfish, an insect-like, detestable creature that came from the mud, was growing in favor as many people spent money not only to fish for the little mudbug but to share in the festivities of eating in restaurants specializing in crawfish dishes.

As the crawfish gained in popularity, the processing plants and shipping industry grew as it supplied crawfish to the nation. Fishermen specializing in catfish and rice farming expanded into crawfish farming as crawfish were harvested in the cooler months while the rice was harvested in the

⁶² Irwin, 21.

⁶³ Irwin, 21.

warmer summer months. When Breaux Bridge held their first crawfish festival there was roughly 2,000 acres of crawfish ponds in the state of Louisiana, “by the mid-'60s, crawfish farming had increased to more than 7,000 acres [and] in 2011, there were more than 189,860 acres of land devoted to crawfish aquaculture.”⁶⁴ Cajun families specializing in crawfish farming expanded the family businesses with many maintaining their crawfish farms well into the 21st century. Most of the supply of crawfish in the United States comes from Cajun farmers in Louisiana who have made a business out of the small crustacean that has been the symbol of the Cajun identity.

Locals would buy their crawfish from farmers, processing plants, or roadside stands set up by some of the smaller farmers that made a side business with their small supply of crawfish. At processing plants customers could purchase live or boiled crawfish while farmers and stands would sell thirty to fifty pound sacks of live crawfish. Shipping of live crawfish still has its difficulties as the crawfish can be crushed under the weight of stacked sacks or die from warm temperatures. Many consumers in other states do not know how to properly cook live crawfish and others do not have the stomach to put the live crustaceans in the pot of boiling water, creating a hardship for some farmers and processing plants expanding into shipping live crawfish. Another disadvantage of shipping live crawfish is “peeled crawfish tail meat averages 120 to 180 tail meats per pound,” resulting in higher shipping prices over the smaller frozen packages that many people are able to buy in their local grocery markets.⁶⁵ No matter whether frozen or fresh, people in America are able to grace their tables with the Cajun crustacean.

In an effort to inform the nation of crawfish farming Jerald Horst published *The Louisiana Seafood Bible*, in which he interviewed local crawfish fishermen and their experience in the farming industry. Alfred Scramuzza was a produce and seafood vendor in 1951 and remembers when only working class immigrants in New Orleans were the ones who would eat crawfish. As the years went by

⁶⁴ Irwin, 114.

⁶⁵ Horst, 79.

he gained more and more customers looking for live crawfish or the tail meat. Marshall Henson, a third generation crawfisherman, fishes in Brison where crawfish “cling to every tree trunk just below the water line [where he] pours them like red molten metal from every trap. When conditions are really good he says that he can average ten pounds of crawfish per trap [with] his personal record [being] an estimated fifty-five pounds [for] one six-foot trap.”⁶⁶ While supply of crawfish fluctuates with weather conditions and flooding of the Louisiana basins as well as higher demand for the mudbug, farmers have been able to catch a steady supply of crawfish with minimal farming techniques being adapted through the generations of farmers. There have been some advances in low skiffs that allow farmers to glide across the shallow waterways but the traps that are still being used are wire cages with floats or sticks that mark where the cage is set. Minnows, smelt, old and stinky fish, white crawfish, and even dog food are still being used as bait for the little crustacean that feeds on the bottom of the river.

While the labor market for crawfish expanded the peeling of crawfish could not expand into machinery that would peel the crustacean. The skill it took to peel the whole meat from the shell had “a skillful worker [that] can peel from eight to ten pounds of crawfish tail meat per hour.”⁶⁷ Women from neighboring cities could peel crawfish at the processing plants and earn cash money for the pounds of crawfish they could produce. By 1966 “there were thirty-three crawfish-peeling plants in operation in the state of Louisiana, employing women and children for the peeling and sorting of crawfish.”⁶⁸ The dexterity required for peeling the meat from the tail could not be done by machines as the gears and mechanisms would crush the meat along with the shell, wasting the small amount of edible crawfish. The labor market rose as processing plants hired skilled workers as well laborers in order to fulfill the demand of crawfish from around the states. Even now, there are over twenty five seafood processing plants that supply crawfish and crawfish meat alongside their other aquatic catches. Crawfish, a crustacean that was eaten by backwards hillbillies, is now a staple food that graces many American

66 Horst, 44.

67 Moody, 4.

68 Irwin, 109.

tables and employs a steady labor industry as the demand for the mudbug increases.

The Cajun culture, equipped with the image of the crawfish, fought and won the integration of America in Louisiana. Even as the state of Louisiana tried to rid itself of the culture, Cajuns did not forfeit their traditions and beliefs as many joined together to encourage the push for their culture. Schools taught Cajun French, authors wrote about the Cajun culture, and chefs from different ethnic backgrounds use Cajun spices and themes in their restaurants. Cajuns are just as tenacious as their crawfish mascot and did not fall to the wayside as legislators and the public tried to tell them their culture was poor and ignorant. In roughly one hundred years Cajuns were dismissed as a culture then embraced as a part of the nation in which life is full of music, dancing, drinking, and eating. The crawfish, the symbol of being Cajun, created new economic revenues in which Cajuns could expand their family business or create new businesses as people wanted to be apart of the Cajun identity. You do not think Cajun without thinking crawfish and you do not think crawfish without thinking Cajun.

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