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THE CREOLES OF COLOR:

A STUDY OF A NEW ORLEANS SUBCULTURE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Sociology

by
Roland Wingfield
B.A., Louisiana State University, 1960
August, 1961

MANUSCRIPT THESES

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DEDICATION:

J'aime le Creole de couleur. Je l'aime surtout quand il parle ma langue. Il est alors un peu mon cousin... Francais, je retrouve chez lui ma mentalite et sens vibrer tous mes sentiments a l'unisson des siens.
(L. Martin's forword to R. L. Desdunes, Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire).

This thesis is dedicated to
the Creole of color.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Vernon J. Parenton for the personal interest he has taken in this writer and the inspiration he has provided throughout the completion of this thesis.

Acknowledgment is made to Dr. Walfrid J. Jokinen and Mr. George S. Tracy for time and assistance so generously given.

The author wishes to express his grateful appreciation to Philippe Firmin who as his major informant and assistant has helped through every phase of the study.

And finally the author wants to say 'merci' to the Creoles of color about whom this thesis is written and by whom it was made possible.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of a New Orleans subculture: the Creoles of color. The historical, participant-observer and empirical methods were used in the compilation of data.

The Creoles of color are the descendants of free people of mixed French and African ancestry who share the vestiges of the French culture of Louisiana known as creole.

The first part of the study deals with the socio-historical emergence and development of this subculture. Its evolution is traced as New Orleans shifted from a Franco-Spanish regime to American control and faced the crisis of the Civil War. Emancipation resulted in the loss of the privileged status the Creole of color had enjoyed in a slave society. This is considered the crucial factor which has shaped the attitudes of this group to the present. Rather than be identified as a Negro, the Creole chose to isolate himself in an attempt to maintain a superior status. With time social distance between the Creole and the Negro gradually lessened and the rapid social changes which have occurred since World War II has brought about a further rapprochement.

Nonetheless, the French cultural orientation, the allegiance to the Catholic Faith, the absence of a back-

ground of slavery, the maintenance of traditional occupations and color consciousness play a significant role in distinguishing the Creoles as a separate class of New Orleans Negro society. The Creole further perpetuates this exclusiveness by maintaining a private world of his own which includes his well integrated family, church and community. However, the creole culture is becoming too small to meet the growing needs of its members. Traditional creole values and attitudes are changing. While the family, church and community act as agents of conservatism, political, educational and economic institutions are the primary agents of social change. In his public life the Creole is a Negro. In his private world he remains a Creole.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few cities in North America can claim the unique and diversified cultural heritage of New Orleans. Located in a semi-tropical setting, New Orleans was the most important center of French civilization in the United States. It also shared with the Antilles the peculiar exotic cultural variant of "France in the colonies," known as creole culture.

From its very founding New Orleans has had a multiracial population. In its first century of existence it absorbed successively, aboriginal Indian, African, French, Spanish, and Anglo-American elements. In the twentieth century, New Orleans' cultural destiny has been linked more closely with the rest of the nation and significant changes have taken place. Nevertheless, much of New Orleans' past lingers in the present, and has socio-cultural consequences.

Such is the case of the subculture which is the subject of this investigation. The Creoles of color are, for the most part, the descendants of the gens de couleur of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Much has been said and romanticized about them. Popular interest has centered principally around the quadroon girls, exotic courtisanes with a strain of African ancestry.

No doubt the quadroons were a product of the society of the time. However, they represented only a fraction of a group which played a significant role in shaping the history of New Orleans and which still exists today.

The Creoles of color of today are not in the public eye. They live in a world of their own, unknown and unobserved by other New Orleanians around them.

The enigma behind this "aloofness" alone, was a strong stimulus for this writer to study the creole world. Perhaps his curiosity was also captivated by the unusual sight of light-complexioned Negroes speaking French in an American city. However, his interest in Afro-French cultures is of long date.

A. Explanation of Terms

Creole

Because of the controversy over the term creole in Louisiana, the author feels obliged to define it carefully. Who is a Creole in New Orleans today? The descendants of the French Negroes claim to be, so do the white French, and the Americans carelessly confuse the term since it was never applied to them.

Traditionally the Creoles of color have captivated popular interest to a larger extent than have the white Creoles. Thus outside Louisiana, most people associate the word creole with Negroes. In time, the word became erroneously synonymous

with mulatto.

The word creole has never had a connotation of color. There can be white Creoles and Negro Creoles.[1] In New Orleans both groups are justified in calling themselves creole since the reference is to their culture and not their color.

The word creole was originally used to distinguish the French, Spanish and Portuguese born in the colonies from those born in Europe. By extension it was also used to distinguish Negroes born in the colonies from those born in Africa.

The term was used mainly in the French West Indies, in Louisiana, sometimes in South America. It was also used in the Mauritius Isle, a former French colony in the Indian Ocean. Today the term still exists in these parts with various meanings.

Origin of Term: The etymological origin of the word creole is from the Spanish criollo, diminutive of criado, meaning foster child. This term was at first applied to all West Indians whose fathers were white . . . they [the creoles] were treated with more favor than the full-blooded natives.[2]

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[1]Vernon J. Parenton, Kara Rousseau Smith, "Cultural Patterns of Colored Creoles," unpublished paper (Institute of Population Research, Louisiana State University, 1956), p. 2.

[2]Joseph T. Shipley, Dictionary of Word Origins (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 100.

The term is a corrupt word made by the Negroes in the West Indies.[3] Creole referred to a native of a West Indian colony whether he be black, white or colored.[4] The meaning varied in time and place. For some it meant specifically Europeans born in the colony, for others it meant specifically Negroes born in the colonies and for most it meant either Europeans, Africans or mixed-bloods born in the colonies.

In Louisiana the term belonged at first only to the descendants of French settlers but daily it came to include any descendant of French and Spanish parentage and is still so used all absurd statements to the contrary notwithstanding.[5] Thus the term creole came to be applied also to people of color who were of part French parentage and who were participants in the creole culture.

The Creole Culture: The term creole soon was applied not only to identify a person born in the colony but to the whole society and its culture.

Creole culture was a variant of French culture. In the

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[3]Walter W. Skeat, An Etymological Dictionary of English Language (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 143.

[4]Joseph E. Worcester, Dictionary of the English Language (Boston: Hickling, Swan & Brewer, 1860), p. 335.

[5]Nancy Cunard, Negro Anthology (London: Wishart & Co., 1934), p. 396.

eighteenth century, a similar creole culture was shared both by Louisiana and the French West Indies. It was France transplanted in the New World, modified by a semi-tropical environment and the institution of slavery. Food grown locally of European origin became "creole," so did animal bred locally such as "creole" ponies, etc. The famous "creole" cuisine was the result of French recipes in the hands of African cooks with New World ingredients. The "creole" language spoken by both masters and slaves was an Afro-French cultural product of the colony.

Thus French language, traditions, customs, attitudes, and tastes influenced by the presence of a large number of Negroes in the frontier atmosphere of "New France" produced the creole culture in Louisiana and the French West Indies. Eventually, with the advent of the free people of color as a semi-caste, creole culture was further differentiated into Negro creole culture and white creole culture.

Status Significance of Creole: There has always been an ethnocentric pride and feeling of superiority associated with the term creole. It was used to differentiate between people and products that were indigenous from those that were from the outside. Thus the "nèg" creole of the West Indies derisively called Negroes fresh from Africa as nèg bossal or nèg congo, implying that they were unbred, uncivilized newcomers. When a slave was advertised for sale in

eighteenth century New Orleans as "creole" the implication was that he had special attributes because he was raised in the ways of the colony.

Among the white Creoles it denoted a certain excellence of origin.[6] They were the first settlers and differentiated themselves from those who came later. They were the old families of New Orleans in spite of the fact that most came from humble European origin. In New Orleans the title creole belonged first to the French and later included Spaniards and some "creolized" Germans, but it was never applied to Italians, Irish, Anglo-Americans and others. The title and its prestige were jealously guarded and it is still pathetically prized by a few descendants of white Creoles in a day when it has no more than historical interest and has lost its status meaning.

In regards to products, the spirit of commerce saw the money value of so honored a title,[7] and anything manufactured which was peculiar to Louisiana was qualified by the adjective creole, such as creole eggs, onions, baskets, etc. Through the force of tradition, these designations still exist today although most people would be at a lost to explain the quality of "creole."

Among the Creoles of color, the term creole also

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[6]George Washington Cable, The Creole of Louisiana (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 41.

[7]Ibid.

signified superior status.[8] It was further used to differentiate this class from the American free Negro. Colored persons descended from early French and Spanish settlers were once recognized as "colored creoles," a group which was not to be confused with other free Negroes in Louisiana.[9]

How the Creole of Color Defines Himself: The result of this investigation reveals a wide disparity of definitions and confusion with respect to the exact meaning of the term creole. However, those who consider themselves creoles identify readily with a particular way of life and share a generalized value system with other colored Creoles which they are quick to recognize. Thus the cultural connotation of the term is correct.

Verbalized definitions of creole by the Creoles of color ranged from "those who speak the creole language" to the standard text book definition of "descendants of the original French and Spanish settlers," to which they might add also those of part-Negro and part-Indian ancestry. But the majority of answers was "a mixture of French and Negro." Implication of upper-class status was also evident.

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[8]John H. Rohrer, Munro S. Edmondson, The Eighth Generation (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 17.

[9]Donald E. Everett, "Free Persons of Color in New Orleans, 1803-1865" (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Tulane University, 1952), p. 4.

Summary: This writer defines the Creoles of color as descendants of people of mixed French and African ancestry who share a particular French cultural orientation[10] called creole.

While this author concedes that when the word creole is used to designate a person in Louisiana, it generally refers to a white Creole, the term Creole of color is quite justifiable. The fact that thousands of people of color have regarded themselves as Creoles for centuries cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the white Creoles of New Orleans have all but lost their creole culture whereas the subculture of the Creoles of color is still evident.

The Creoles of color generally refer to the white Creoles as the French. In this thesis, Creoles of color will often be referred to as Creoles since this is the way they call themselves. The other Creoles will be referred to as white Creoles. The term non-creole will be used at times to identify Negroes outside the creole culture.

Subculture

To describe the creole subculture as a variant of American culture is saying little. It is more precisely a variant of French Louisiana culture, in this case of the city of New Orleans where unique circumstances are responsible for its

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[10]Parenton states that the term "French cultural orientation" refers to the characteristic customs, behavior and attitudes which are French in origin and which are common to the group under study distinguishing it from other groups. Op. cit., p. 2.

emergence and continuation. Since the Creoles are classified as Negroes, their culture could also be considered as a variant of American Negro culture. However, it would be better described as a hybrid culture which has assimilated French, Negro, and American cultural forces.

Culture or subculture is conceived here as the "way of life" of a structured group, including its social institutions, beliefs, customs, and folkways.

B. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to survey the culture and social structure of the Creoles of color.

The writer has attempted to analyse the social organization of this culture in terms of its sub-groupings and their social institutions, such as the familial, economic, political, educational and religious institutions.

Social institutions generally cluster around a primary need; earning a living, for instance, is generally the primary function of economic institutions. However, all social institutions are interrelated and interdependent and it is for the sake of clarity and organization that this writer has treated each major institution separately.

The investigation of this subculture has the following more specific objectives:

1. To consolidate various material on the social history of the creole subculture in order to reconstruct the

past and compare and analyse contemporary social phenomena in terms of what has happened before.

2. To study the everyday life of the Creoles of color in order to discover patterned values, attitudes and behavior intrinsic to the group, and reflected in its social institutions.

3. To attempt to evaluate social change and which institutions are the primary agent of change.

No hypotheses were to be tested although this writer had several in mind from the beginning which could be called expectations rather than hypotheses. Some turn out to be accurate guesses, others apparently are without foundation.

C. Plan of the Study

The study was organized in the following way: The first part deals with the historical emergence and development of the subculture and the role it played in the society of New Orleans. The author traces the evolution of this group and its fluctuations as New Orleans shifted from a French to a Spanish regime, was acquired by the United States and faced the crisis of the Civil War. He describes the isolation of the group from the post-reconstruction days to World War II; the rapid social changes which characterize the last decade leading to rapprochement with the non-creole Negro.

Social differentiation and stratification is treated next as a social process which has direct bearing on all

social institutions. Possibly, it is the most interesting social phenomenon of this group. Class consciousness and the struggle to maintain a self-defined status have permeated the belief system of many a Creole and explain certain aspects of his behavior. The social phenomenon of "passing" as a form of social mobility is considered in a separate chapter.

The next chapters are devoted to the fundamental social institutions; namely, the family, economic, political, educational and religious institutions. An attempt is made to point out the intrinsic attitudes and values which have become institutionalized.

Chapter VIII deals with folkways. Customs, habits, "ways of doing things," unique to the Creoles, are described. These reveal the extent of the African, West Indian, French, and indigenous Creole heritage still existent today. They also reveal the more latent content of belief systems, attitudes and values. While of secondary importance in influencing behavior, the folkways of the Creoles still function in a small way as a means of group identification and solidarity.

In the last chapter the writer has attempted to summarize and analyse his findings.

D. Survey of the Literature

A survey of the literature revealed that no comprehensive work has ever been devoted to the Creole subculture.

However, references have been made to this group throughout the years in histories, novels, official documents, articles and unpublished monographs and theses. It was a laborious task to wade through much literature in search of pertinent data. A few authorities stand out nonetheless as primary sources. These can be grouped into three major categories.

The first of these include accounts of travelers and resident writers, mostly of the nineteenth century. They describe the social life and customs of the time and inevitably mention the people of color. If one learns to overlook the opinionated presentation of some or the paternalistic attitude of others, often these reports reveal valuable social observations. As examples, this writer can cite, Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la Colonie Espagnole du Mississippi (1803),[11] Perrin du Lac, Voyage dans les Deux Louisianes (1805), Robin, Voyages dans l'Interieur de la Louisiane (1807), and Olmsted, A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States (1856). Later came the works of George Washington Cable, the "Guy de Maupassant" of Louisiana. His sympathetic interest in the plight of Creoles who were not quite white, is recorded in a series of short stories which are classics of social literature. A contemporary of Cable at the turn of the century, is a lesser known Louisiana French writer, Madame Sidonie dela Houssaye.

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[11]See bibliography for full entry of books cited in the review of literature.

Drawing from her family's archives a quantity of historical information for George Cable,[12] she herself published novelettes. Her serial novel, Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle-Orleans (1894-98), gives a fresh insight into the lives of the quadroons. This novel abounding with details of the social life of the time, has been surprisingly overlooked by popular writers in quest of savory material.

In a second category, this writer would group the work of historians. The two major Louisiana scholars, Gayarré (Histoire de la Louisiane, 1846), and Fortier (A History of Louisiana, 1904) are important sources of social data relating to the people of color. In a lighter vein, but carefully detailed, are the books of Grace King. The most valuable source this writer consulted is an impressive unpublished dissertation by Donald E. Everett: "Free Persons of color in New Orleans, 1803-1865" (Tulane University, 1952). Based nearly exclusively on primary sources, this scholarly work merits publication.

In his third category the author would include sociocultural literature. Unfortunately it is scanty. Two works written by Creoles of color deserve attention and are valuable expressions of their subculture. They are, Desdunes, Nos Hommes et notre Histoire (1911) and Rousseve, The Negro

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[12]Auguste Viatte, Histoire Litteraire de L' Amerique Francaise (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), p. 294.

in Louisiana, Aspects of his History and Literature (1937). Among unpublished works by other Creoles is an interesting monograph that this writer found accidently at Xavier University: Vincent Mott, "The Creole de Couleur, A Sociological Study of a Racial Sub-Group" (1938), and a Master's thesis at Louisiana State University by Kara Rousseau, "Cultural Patterns of Colored Creoles: A Study of a Selected Segment of New Orleans Negroes with French Cultural Orientations" (1955). This thesis, although limited to certain aspects of the creole subculture, has proven useful in orienting this writer.

A recent publication, The Eighth Generation, Cultures and Personalities of New Orleans Negroes (1960), is the joint effort of Rohrer (psychologist), Edmondson (anthropologist), Thompson (psychiatrist), Lief (psychiatrist), and Thompson (sociologist). They effectively follow the historical development of the Negro culture in New Orleans in terms of the changes in the social structure. The psychological rather than the sociological approach is used to interpret the Negro subculture of New Orleans. The book deals only indirectly with the creole Negro. Nevertheless much has been gained by this writer from this study which is a follow-up of Davis and Dollard's Children of Bondage.

E. The Setting of the Study

Creole cultural islands exist in other parts of

Louisiana, both of the rural and urban variety.[13] This study concerns itself only with New Orleans where the creole community reached its greatest development and largest size. This thesis concerns itself with a subculture rather than a community. Creoles can be found in many sections of New Orleans; however, the bulk of them are concentrated downtown in the Seventh Ward (see Figure 1).

Canal Street is considered the dividing line between uptown and downtown New Orleans. For the Creole, Canal Street is the symbolic socio-cultural barrier which separates him from the "uptown" or "American" Negro. Downtown has always been the traditional habitat of the Creole of color as it was once upon a time for the white Creole.

While this writer's interviewees came from several sections of New Orleans, he has concentrated his investigation on the creole community in the Seventh Ward. However, the findings of the study should be applicable beyond the boundaries of the core community. These boundaries, more or less accurate, would limit the creole community on the riverside by North Claiborne Avenue, on the back of town side by North Broad Street. Elysian Fields would be the downtown boundary and Esplanade the uptown limit (see Figure 2). Corpus Christi Church is the focal point of the

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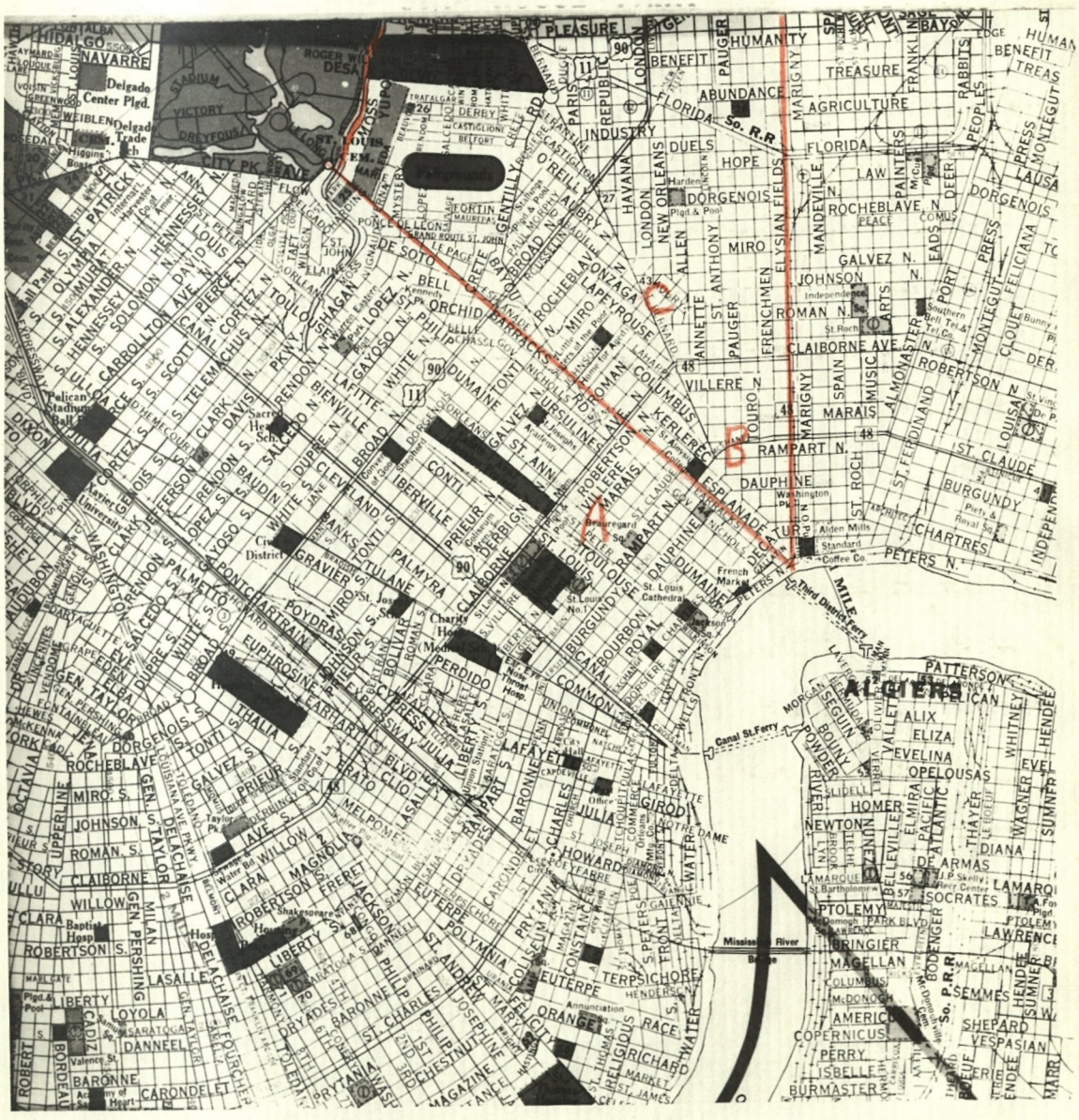
[13]See Joseph H. Jones, "The People of Frilot Cove" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1950).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PAINTERS
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MANDEVILLE
ELYSIAN FIELDS
FRENCHMEN
PAUGER
ST. ANTHONY
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PARIS
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ORLEANS
ST. LOUIS
CONTI
IBERVILLE
BIENVILLE
TOULOUSE
DUMAINE
BOURBON
ROYAL
BARONNE
CHARLES
JULIA
GIROD
HOWARD
LAFAYETTE
COMMON
POYDRAS
PERDIDO
GRAVIER
CANAL
CANAL ST.
Canal St.Ferry
Third District Ferry
Mississippi River Bridge
So. R.R.
So. P.R.R.
PATTERSON
ALIX
ELIZA
EVELINA
OPELOUSAS
DE ARMAS
DIANA
LAMARQUE
SOCRATES
PTOLEMY
BRINGIER
MAGELLAN
SEMMES
SHEPARD
VESPASIAN
COPERNICUS
PERRY
ISABELLE
BURMASTER
NEWTON
HOMER
ATLANTIC
PACIFIC
ST. PATRICK
OLYMPIA
HENNESSEY
ALEXANDER
CARROLLTON AVE.
CANAL
CORTEZ
TONTI
PALMYRA
TULANE
BROAD
CLEVELAND
BANKS
WILLOW
CLARA
ROBERTSON
LIBERTY
LASALLE
LOYOLA
DANNEEL
CARONDELET
BARONNE
GEN. TAYLOR
GEN. PERSHING
DELACHAISE
CLAIBORNE
ROMAN
JOHNSON
MIRO
ROCHEBLAVE
DORGENOIS
ST. ANDREW
ST. CHARLES
ST. JOSEPH
ST. MARY
ST. PHILIP
ST. LOUIS
ORANGE
RACE
CHESTNUT
MAGAZINE
MARKET
ST. JAMES
ST. PETER
ST. ANN
ST. LOUIS No. 1
ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL
ST. ROCH
ST. FERDINAND
ST. MAURICE
ST. MARY'S
ST. JOSEPH
ST. ANTHONY
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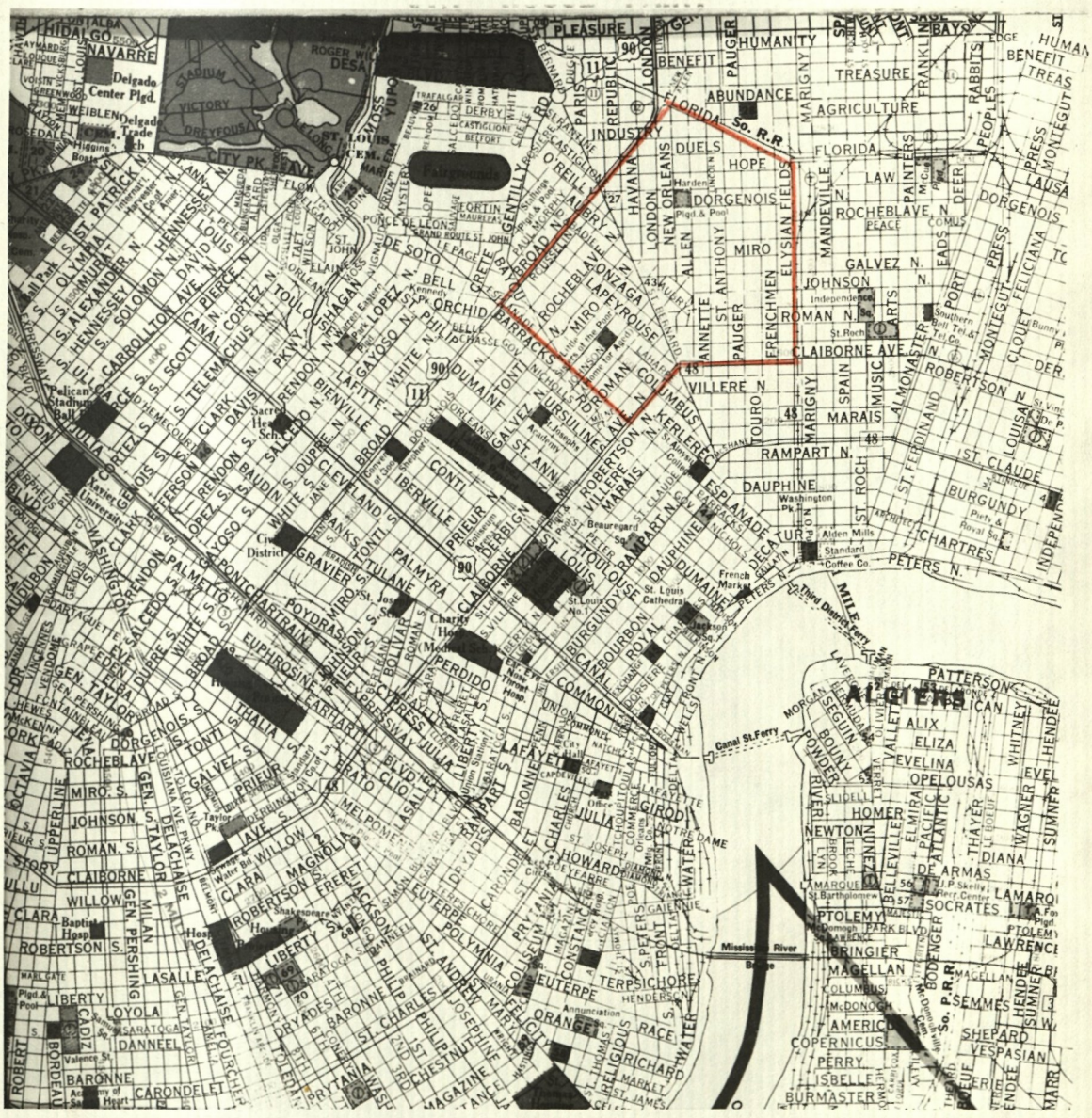

Figure 2. Territorial Limits of the Creole Community in New Orleans

community both socio-culturally and geographically.

The original creole communities were probably located between Esplanade and Elysian Fields near Rampart Street, and in the "Treme" section behind the Municipal Auditorium. The former no longer exists as such whereas the "Treme" is now adjacent to the Corpus Christi area and could be considered an extension of it.

The physical aspect of this creole community is more suburban than urban. This is typical of most New Orleans' residential areas. At first glance it doesn't look much different from other lower-middle class sections of that city. The houses are of the two-family shotgun type or old creole cottages. A few are modern wood or brick dwellings or are renovated. Sub-tropical foliage has grown rather casually around the dwellings and the streets are kept in poor repair by the city, which attempts to remedy this situation before every election. However, most of the houses are in fair shape although flimsily built. Diminutive grocery stores occupy every corner but the nearest shopping and recreational center is North Claiborne Avenue. The Circle market (formally marche Saint Bernard) at the junction of St. Bernard and Claiborne has been patronized by Creoles for years. Some who have moved out of the neighborhood still shop there out of tradition. The same is true for Corpus Christi Church which boasts to be the largest Negro parish in the

United States. Creoles who now live elsewhere come back on Sunday out of sentimental attachment and take advantage of the occasion to visit their friends and relatives in the neighborhood.

Is this creole section a community? Yes, if we define community as a residential area that is more or less self-sufficing with its own center of interests, trading center, social center, its own church and schools. All these can be found right in this community although many people are employed outside the community. The important thing though, is how people identify themselves with a community. The findings of this investigation establish that the Creoles have a high degree of community consciousness. Judging, among other things, the number of acquaintances people have, and the amount of gossip, visiting, and greetings exchanged, one would conclude that it is a well integrated community.

How many Creoles of color are there? This is unfortunately impossible to determine. The census tracts list Creoles as Negro and some of them might have been erroneously listed as white. Recently many non-creole Negroes have moved into the community and as stated above, Creoles do live in other sections of the city, so the problem is further complicated. Perhaps the nearest thing to a fair estimate is the Catholic Church census since nearly all Creoles are Roman Catholic. But then there are non-creole Negro Catholics too.

All in all, taking into consideration that Creoles have

started to marry non-Creoles and are often lost to the culture in the process, others migrate or cross the color line, this writer estimates their number to be anywhere between 20,000 to 30,000[14] representing less than 20 per cent of the Negro population of New Orleans and on the decrease.

F. Methodology

As this writer has mentioned before, the Creoles live in a world of their own, aloof and detached to a certain extent from the rest of the Negro community and the rest of New Orleans. They have two lives, private and public. In their public life, they are forced by necessity to participate in the socioeconomic life of the city, but it is in their private life that their subculture exists and shapes

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[14]This estimate has been arrived at in the following fashion: Of the 16,000 parishioners of Corpus Christi Church, 10,000 reveal some kind of creole background (French name, mixed ancestry, etc.). Epithany Parish seems one hundred per cent creole, thus adding another 6,000. Creole membership of the twelve other Negro Catholic churches in New Orleans could be estimated at 6,000. This makes a total of 22,000, roughly one-third of the Negro Catholic population of New Orleans. Most creole families seem affiliated with one of the Catholic churches whether they are active church goers or not. A negligible proportion of Creoles are non-Catholic. Allowing for errors, the figure of between 20,000-30,000 seemed a fair estimate according to the opinion of prominent and informed members of the creole culture. It is strange that no one had thought of making an estimate of the creole population nor given much thought to its size.

For historical comparison see Table I, p.36 (Negro population in New Orleans) and Table II, p.66 (Color Composition of the Negro population in New Orleans). For a partial list of creole family names (336 different names entered) see Appendix C.

their behavior. It is the family-transmitted type of socialization to their specific culture that makes them Creoles.[15]

It is obvious that in a study dealing with a closed group, more can be learned from subjective data. For this reason, this investigator relied heavily on the participant-observer technique of collecting data. As complementary tools, he used the historical method and formal inquiry consisting of fifty-four interviews, a case study and group interviews.

1. The Participant-Observer Technique

Along with the development of precise concepts, all science rest upon observation.[16] Many social investigators feel more comfortable observing in a library or in a controlled situation, than out in the field. Success in field work requires a certain amount of social flexibility which is more often a personality trait than an acquired skill. Actually both the intellectual and experiential approach are necessary and should be proportionately balanced according to the nature of the problem. Furthermore, field work observations become a scientific technique only if these are

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[15] Parenton, op. cit., p. 2.

[16] Robin M. Williams, American Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 21.

planned, recorded and subject to check and controls.

If skillfully employed, one of the best methods we have in sociology to study a cultural group is the participant-observer technique. Pioneered by anthropologists,

> it consists of becoming as nearly as possible, a member of the group which is under study. It is not merely being with the group, nor does it consist of being an onlooker to the group activities. Rather it is a matter of having . . . [a role] . . . in the group's activities.[17]

Thus, as an accepted member of the group, the investigator spontaneously participates in informal and formal situations, and witnesses an infinite variety of interactions. The insights he gains this way into the group's behavior cannot be disputed.

The participant-observer must be aware of his own attitudes, excesses, and biases, in other words, the limitations of his own frame of reference. Although considered old-fashioned by some, there is value in Cooley's concept of "sympathetic introspection,"[18] whereby through a combination of observations of himself and others, the investigator is able to "put himself in the place" of the subject and gain better understanding of the latter's behavior.

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[17]John F. Cuber, William Kenkel, Social Stratification in the United States (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), p. 75.

[18]Charles H. Cooley, Social Organization (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 7.

The participant-observer must be intellectually honest. It is too easy to manipulate data to make it fit in the framework of a theory. On this score, hypotheses are especially dangerous. Some investigators might unconsciously have the tendency to de-emphasize facts which challenge the validity of their hypotheses.

True, the very personal nature of the participant-observer technique is both its strength and weakness. However, not even the natural sciences are immuned to the influence of personal factors. Checks and controls can be applied to this technique by using the multi-method approach to a problem.

Success with the participant-observer technique of gathering data, depends essentially on rapport. Success in interpreting the data found is of course dependent on the competence of the sociologist.

Establishing rapport is then the first consideration. Rapport is interpreted here as a condition of mutual responsiveness between two or more people such that each is capable of responding sympathetically and with apparent spontaneity to every other.[19]

2. Participant-Observation as Applied to the Creole Subculture

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[19]Henry P. Fairchild (ed.), Dictionary of Sociology (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p. 248. Definition by Mapheus Smith.

It has often been claimed in studies of this kind done by members of the group under study, that they alone are able to achieve rapport, have access to data unavailable to non-members and therefore are able to interpret the behavior of their group more adequately. To a certain extent, there is some truth in this statement. It takes time to become totally accepted in a group and an investigation is always limited by time. In the more intimate and sensitive areas of investigation, the non-member is at a disadvantage, possibly as a result of lack of kinship ties.

However, a member studying his own subculture is often a participant without being an observer. He has a tendency to take too much for granted and consider as commonplace what is often significant. Furthermore, he often lacks knowledge of other cultures to use as a point of comparison. It is interesting to note that very few outstanding studies of cultures and communities have been done by "natives." The French adage "Nul n'est prophète en son pays,"[20] applies here.

In regard to the Creoles of color, this writer feels that he was in an advantageous position to make this study due to circumstances in his own life. Reared in France, he was able to spot the French element still present in the

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[20] No one is a prophet in his own country.

creole culture. As a member of a famous Negro dance company, he was in close contact and participated in the social life of American Negro society, a contact which he has maintained over a decade. His familiarity with the Afro-French culture of Haiti has also proven helpful. Furthermore, his specialization in sociology is in the field of race relations.

The first problem to solve in this study was to gain an entree and establish rapport with the Creoles of color. The entree was gained accidently three years prior to the study. The writer who had recently arrived from New York where he left a career in choreography to complete his college work at Louisiana State University was asked to give a course in modern dance to a group of Negro teachers in New Orleans. Most of the teachers were Creoles and the classes were held in the creole community. Several of these courses were subsequently arranged. The enrollment of 25-30 students was made up mostly of physical education teachers and college students. Through these courses, this writer became personally acquainted with his students and their families. The decision to study the creole subculture was made during this period.

When the time came to start his field work, the writer re-activated the dance class. He realized that conducting the class gave him a role in the community. He was contributing a service that was in demand and not available at the time. The comparatively low status accorded to the professional dancer in white society is not regarded as such in

Negro society where the art of dance assumes a greater importance.

The role and status of this writer in the community, as far as he can determine himself, was based on several factors. Following are remarks he overheard: "He is the dance instructor, he has danced in the company of Katherine Dunham" (famous Negro dancer known to all of them). "He is the guest dance-director of a dance troup in Haiti." "He is with LSU, he is studying the Creoles." "He doesn't speak like an American and he has nice ways, he must be French or Haitian." "He speaks the 'good' French with the old people." "He visits the home of Mrs. L.... and Mr. R...." "When he is here he stays with Madame B...," etc. All these factors apparently predisposed the group towards accepting this writer. As far as he can judge, social and cultural distance were at a minimum.

The membership this writer had in the group could be termed as part-time. For a period of six months, he spent three to four days every other week in the community. He stayed with a Creole family. Because many Creoles look like Caucasians, this writer's presence in the community did not attract undue attention. To nosy neighbors, his hostess would reply: "If you think he is white, then he is white, if you think he is creole, then he is creole. He is whatever you think he is. I don't know because I've never asked him."

A diary was kept by this writer, a portion of which is included in the appendix. A partial list of some of the

activities in which he participated would include: attending Mass every Sunday; shopping at the Circle Market; roller skating at the Corpus Christi Community Center; frequenting clubs patronized by Creoles; attending a style show, talent show, church play, and an opera at Xavier University. Spending Carnival Day with the Mardi Gras Indians, strolling in the neighborhood, visiting, attending parties, and engaging in countless conversations could be added to the list.

Keeping a diary to record spontaneous observations and experiences, proved very useful. Reading it later, this writer was amazed at the number of recorded details which had slipped his mind. Many observations seemingly unimportant at the time of recording possessed greater meaning once the research phase of the study was over.

3. The Historical Method

> The analysis of historical legacies is an essential part of the interpretation of culture, because the group relations and styles of life which prevail in modern society can be understood only as a more or less temporary end products of past conflicts among the ideas and behavior patterns of status group.[21]

It must be borne in mind, however, that the analysis of historical documents has some drawbacks. Historical records often mirror personal and slanted impressions of a past event.

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[21]Reinhard Bendix, Bennett Berger, "Images of Society and Problems of Concept Formation in Sociology," in Llewellyn Gross (ed.) Symposium on Sociological Theory (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson & Co., 1959), p. 107.

Through a cumulative process, facts and fiction become so enmeshed that correct interpretations of the life of the times become difficult. Then again the interpretation is also subject to the personal slant of the writer.

There is a paucity of detailed and organized background material dealing with the Creoles of color. However, the author has used as many historical sources as practicable. Among sources used, were the archives of Louisiana State University Library, old censuses and old newspapers recorded on microfilms. Census volumes and city directories were consulted. The Louisiana Weekly, New Orleans' Negro newspaper, was scanned every week in search of information dealing with creole activities. Sunday church bulletins were collected. Recordings of old creole folklore and early "creole" jazz were listened to and the collection of nineteenth century "belles lettres" authored by Creoles of color was read.

4. The Empirical Method

The empirical method used in this study was twofold. It consisted of various types of interviews and a case study. The interviews were of three types, individual interviews, group interviews and the report of informants.

a) Individual Interviews: The interviewees represented a selected rather than random sample. They were not intended to be representative of the creole group, the exact size of which is unknown. The prime purpose of the interviews was to

verify more empirically the findings which the participant-observer method was uncovering.

All respondents were approached by personal introductions which took place prior to the interviewing date. In the case of the two schools which were included in this investigation, the author first lectured to the class on the historical link between Haiti and Louisiana. It was felt that greater interest and co-operation might be obtained this way. In the remaining cases, the interviewer was personally acquainted with the respondents.

Approximately sixty Creoles were interviewed. They were divided into three groups. Group I represented the young generation (age range: 15-20). Group II included people born in the twenties and thirties. The last group included older people.

The following criteria were used in selecting creole subjects:

1) The subject was born and raised in New Orleans.
2) The subject was of mixed ancestry.
3) The subject considered himself creole or part-creole.
4) The subject had a French family name either on the paternal or maternal side.
5) The subject was a Roman Catholic.

These criteria are not to be taken too rigidly. There

are exceptions to each one of them. However, combined together, they proved very successful in selecting subjects who were active participants in the creole subculture. A short questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to select the respondents of group I.

Certain biases are notably present in the sample. The original intention of this investigator was to get 20 interviews in each age group. Because of conditions beyond his control, group I is over-represented to the detriment of the middle age and older group. While the sample represents both sexes fairly evenly, single persons are over-represented.

The author is the first to admit that there is a bias with respect to social status. The sample is more selective of middle and upper class Creoles where rapport was so much easier to establish.

Twenty-five interviews were conducted by local informants. This was considered as an effective check on the personal biases of the author.

b) The Interview Schedule: The schedule was 23 pages long and contained 130 questions of both the objective and open-ended variety (see Appendix B). It took an average of an hour and one half to administer. The questions were grouped according to the plan of the study with minor shifting around for the psychological effect. The schedule was made up after the participant-observer phase and group

interviews had begun. The schedule was tested on five respondents before it was used.

c) Group-interviews: A total of ten group-interviews was held by this writer. Two "captive" groups participated voluntarily in this endeavor. One was this writer's dance students and three group-interviews were held with the Sisters of the Holy Family, a Creole-Negro order to whom the author lectured.

These meetings proved very fruitful and became the scene of lively discussions. Everyone seemed to enjoy these sessions and the author found it particularly significant when the respondents didn't agree with each other and were carried away with their viewpoints.

d) Reports of Informants: About five persons interested in the study and articulate about the relevant aspect of their subculture volunteered as informants. Most of them also conducted interviews for this writer.

The author met periodically with each informant. They were all interviewed with the schedule but subsequent meetings were less formal with only a list of questions at hand.

The author's hostess who loved to machouquer[22] as the Creoles say, was an untarishable source of information and leads to new areas of investigation. Thus she should also

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[22]Creole vernacular for talking incessantly.

be classified as an informant.

The author could also include the distinguished persons who are either authorities on the Creoles or hold important leadership roles in the creole community, upon whom he called formally.

e) Case Study: A case study was included in this investigation to illustrate the process of socialization. The aim was to determine how much of the creole subculture the subject had internalized. The findings also had the important function of elucidating new information which was subsequently investigated.

The subject was one of this writer's informants and conducted interviews for him. He became quite familiar and interested in the study. A friendship developed between the subject and this writer removing all barriers to intimate communication.

A battery of tests was given the subject for two reasons. First to probe for latent and unconscious attitudes as a member of his group. Secondly to reveal more accurately the personality makeup of the subject so as to determine any personal bias in his reflections about his group. Tests given were the TAT, Wonderlic Personnel Test (Intelligence), Kuder Preference, and Charles S. Johnson's color Ratings, Personal Values, and Race Attitude tests which the

latter used in his study of Negro youth.[23] The subject also wrote a 2,000 word life history and was subjected to intensive interviewing of both the structured and unstructured variety. His school records were checked and his associates were sounded for any pertinent information. Correspondence was held between the investigator and the subject and a content analysis was made of the letters in terms of both personality and subculture revelation.

G. Significance of the Study

It is hard for a writer to determine the significance of his own work. If he is motivated primarily by his intellectual curiosity, it will always seem important to him. The value of sociological research is hard to measure objectively. One simply cannot put the facts uncovered by a social investigation in one scale of the balance and use for weights the "social progress" it might accomplish. This raises the question whether one has to justify a study in terms of practical issues rather than basic scholarship. Nevertheless, the author hopes that his efforts have been fruitful in consolidating the historical and contemporary social data of a unique subculture which is fast disappearing.

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[23] See Charles S. Johnson, Growing up in the Black Belt (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1941), pp. 334-356.

Cultural group studies, besides their value in illustrating sociological theory, have historical significance. It is history which is as objective and accurate as the science of sociology is able to make it.

Finally, this author hopes that his study will illuminate, to some, the problems of a group of people who defy arbitrary white-Negro racial classification. Culturally they stand between the white and Negro community. Thus the Creole of color, if he is allowed to play this vital role, is strategically placed to reopen channels of communication between whites and Negroes in New Orleans.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Creole New Orleans

As stated before, the Creoles of Color are, for the most part, the descendants of the gens de couleur of colonial New Orleans. These gens de couleur were truly a product of the New World, the result of cross-racial unions between Africans and Europeans. In New Orleans, their appearance coincides closely with the founding of that city.

The Negro was a part of New Orleans from its very origin. Before 1718, there were a few Negro slaves in Louisiana who had probably drifted from the West Indies.[1] Historians assume that the first cargo of African slaves arrived in Louisiana in 1719. In 1720, two years after the founding of New Orleans, a slave receiving station was in operation on the present site of Algiers.[2] By 1721 the census listed 173 Negro slaves in New Orleans (see Table I). Ten years later, Negroes constituted nearly a third of the city's population, a ratio which kept increasing for a whole century.

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[1]Henry P. Dart, "The First Cargo of African Slaves for Louisiana, 1718" Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIV, (1913), p. 170.

[2]Ibid., p. 165.

TABLE I

NEGRO POPULATION IN NEW ORLEANS: 1721-1960

Census Year	Negro Population	% Negro	Free Population	Slave Population	Total Population
1721[1]	173	36.6			472
1732[2]	258	28.9			893
1769[3]	1,387	43.4	99	1,288	3,190
1778[4]	1,507	41.1	353	1,154	3,659
1785[5]	2,194	43.7	563	1,631	5,028
1791[6]	2,751	57.2	1,147	1,604	4,816
1803[7]	4,110	51.0	1,335	2,775	8,056
1805[8]	4,671	55.2	1,566	3,105	8,475
1810	10,911	59.0	4,950	5,961	17,242
1820	13,592	50.0	6,237	7,355	27,176
1830	25,953	56.3	11,477	14,476	46,082
1840	42,670	41.7	19,222	23,448	102,193
1850	28,029	24.1	9,961	18,068	116,375
1860	24,074	14.2	10,689	13,385	168,675
1870	50,456	26.3			191,418
1880	57,617	26.7			216,090
1890	64,491	26.6			242,039
1900	77,714	27.1			287,104
1910	89,262	26.3			339,075
1920	100,930	26.1			387,219
1930	129,632	28.3			458,762
1940	149,034	30.1			494,537
1950	181,775	32.0			570,445
1960	233,514	37.2			627,525

Based on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Census of the United States. Percentage mine.

[1]Census of Louisiana in 1721, transcribed from the Book of the Census (Recensements) of the Louisiana Historical Society. Cited by William Beer, editor, "Early Census of Louisiana," Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society, V, (1911), 92.

[2]Ibid.

[3]The O. Reilly Census of 1769 cited by Minton Wood, "Life in New Orleans in the Spanish Period," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXII: (1939), 648.

[4]Photographs of Documents in the Archives of the Indies, Seville, 1717-1820. Prepared by U. S. Survey of Federal Archives. Document 42,70A.

[5]John Davis, Travels in Louisiana and the Floridas (Berguin-Duvallon). (New York: I. Riley & Co., 1806), p. 136. N.B. This census underrates the number of free people of color.

[6]Wood, op. cit., p. 649.

[7]Davis, op. cit., p. 33.

[8]New Orleans. City Council. New Orleans in 1805, a Directory and a Census (New Orleans: The Pelican Gallery, Inc., 1936), p. 107.

Cross-racial unions between whites and Negroes occurred almost from the start due partly to the scarcity of white women in this infant colony (see Table VI, page 122 for sex ratios). A considerable number of Indians were also absorbed into the Negro population.[3]

It was against this background of amalgamation that the free people of color emerged. It was the accepted custom for a white father to free his mulatto offspring. At the same time, the purchase of freedom was a regular legal procedure.

The first record available indicates the presence of a free person of color in 1722,[4] only four years after the founding of the city. The Code Noir of 1724, mentions the free person of color as having the same rights, privileges and immunities as other free citizens.[5] Free men of color were serving in the French army in Louisiana as early as 1735.[6]

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[3]Rohrer, op. cit., p. 14.

[4]Everett, op. cit., p. 16.

[5]Le Code Noir, ou, Edit du Roy, Servant de Reglement, pour le Gouvernement et l'Administration de la Justice, Police, Discipline et le Commerce des Esclaves Negres, dans la Province et Colonie de la Louisiane (Paris: Saugrain et Pierre Prault, 1728), p. 14.

[6]Everett, op. cit., p. 22.

The shift of New Orleans from a French to a Spanish regime in 1763 was no more than a legal entity. When Spain took possession of the colony in 1763, she respected in her administration the customs and mores of the French Louisianian.[7] Under such conditions, French culture continued to flourish and the Spanish influence was absorbed.

Manumission was fairly extensive during the Spanish regime. In 1769, six years after the colony was shifted to Spain, the census list 99 free persons of color of which 68 were mulattoes while the slave population was 1,288. Two decades later, the free people of color numbered 1,147, only 457 less than the slave population. It appears that the Spanish authorities were gradually lifting the slaves to the status of free men.

The Spanish period was also marked by the arrival of new groups of immigrants: Islenos from the Canary Islands, Acadians from Nova Scotia, and some "Kaintocks" from the upper Mississippi Valley. However, these newcomers tended to form new communities outside the city limits, leaving the population of New Orleans predominantly Creole and intent in keeping their French-Creole ways.

With an increased population, the colony enjoyed an economic expansion and New Orleans grew in importance and

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[7]Claude Robin, Voyages dans l'Interieur de la Louisiane, vol. III (Paris: F. Buisson, 1807), p. 148.

wealth. The social system crystallized in three strata with the whites at the top, the slaves at the bottom and the free people of color enjoying an intermediate socioeconomic position with many of the privileges of the dominant class.

Cross-racial unions continued. In some cases church marriages took place, but more often these unions were in the form of placages, a form of common-law marriage accepted in the mores of the society of the time. Criticisms of these liaisons became more manifest as the colony progressed and European women became more numerous. The latter pressed Governor Miro to proclaim in 1786, that concubinage would no longer be tolerated and free women of color were forbidden to wear plumes and jewelry and had to bind their hair in a tignon as a symbol of their lower status.

Nevertheless, the free people of color continued to grow in number and importance throughout the Spanish regime. The Spanish period was the most favorable to the Creoles of color as this class began to be called.

B. The Implication of the Saint Domingue Revolution

The French Revolution of 1789 had repercussions in her colonies, largely in Saint Domingue, France's prized colony in the New World. Although linked culturally and economically with Saint Domingue, Louisiana did not suffer the dismal fate of her West Indian cousin. The successful slave rebellion of Saint Domingue started in 1791, raged for

thirteen years and culminated in the founding of the independent Negro Republic of Haiti in 1804. This resulted in the bloody massacre of the French planter class.

Thousands of whites and mulattoes escaped and took refuge in Jamaica, Guadaloupe, Trinidad, Puerto Rico and Cuba. Many eventually found their way to New Orleans.

The bulk of the Saint Domingue refugees took shelter in Santiago de Cuba across the Windward Passage from Saint Domingue. There they re-established themselves with the aid of the faithful slaves who had followed them in exile. In 1809 when Napoleon invaded Spain, they were harrassed in Cuba and forced to leave.

> Within the space of two months, from May 19 to July 18, 1809, thirty-four vessels arrived in the port of New Orleans from Cuba, with 5,754 of these hapless people on board . . . In the first delegation were 1,798 whites, 1,977 free persons of color, and 1,979 slaves. Subsequently, other groups of fleeing French, white and black, found their way to the city--in all a total estimated at 10,000.[8]

The influx is reflected in the census figure of 1810 which estimated the population of New Orleans at 17,242, an increase of over 50 per cent in five years. Particularly noteworthy is the increase of free people of color from 1,500 to 5,000 for the same period, bringing the total Negro population to 59 per cent, the highest ratio of non-whites

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[8]John S. Kendall, History of New Orleans, Vol. I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1922), p. 85.

the city has ever known.

The social impact must have been significant. A temporary economic disruption resulted. The cost of living rose, a shortage of housing occurred and charity drives were organized to help those who were destitute among the emigres. Newspapers of the period reflect ambivalent attitudes towards the refugees. However, mention of them vanished on the eve of the Battle of New Orleans and they seem to have integrated themselves into the society of New Orleans in a comparatively short time.

Concern was expressed over the entry of such a large number of slaves and free people of color from the West Indies. Legislation was passed to restrict the entry of Negroes. However, in view of the unusual circumstances and the expression of public sentiment sympathetic to the plights of the faithful slaves who had accompanied their masters in exile and the cultivated free colored from Saint Domingue, these regulations were largely unenforced. It appears that the objection to the presence of the refugees came from the Anglo-American population. The latter, representing no more than one-sixth of the city's population,[9] resented this sudden doubling of the French population which was offsetting their growing influence.

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[9]Cable, op. cit., p. 156.

In an effort to prevent a further increase of the free colored population, a request was dispatched to the American consul at Santiago, Cuba to discourage free people of color from emigrating to the territory of Orleans since it already contained "a much greater proportion of that population, than comports with the general interest."[10]

A fear of an uprising similar to that of Saint Domingue was casting suspicion on the emigres of color. However, these fears were largely unfounded since most were of the slave-owning class. The great majority were women and children.[11] Cable assumes that it is with this influx that the famous quadroon caste arose and flourished.[12]

Thus the Creoles of color, as a class, were numerically reinforced. The emigres brought with them useful trades, better education and a creole civilization that was older, and more sophisticated. Their influence on the shaping of the creole subculture was decisive, as will be shown subsequently. Today some of the more prominent families of color in New Orleans point with pride to their Saint Dominguian ancestry.

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[10]Everett, op. cit., p. 69, citing Rowland (ed.) Official Letter Books of W. C. Clairborne, IV, p. 409.

[11]Charles E. Gayarre, History of Louisiana, Vol. IV New Orleans: F. F. Hansell, 1903), p. 216.

[12]George W. Cable, Creoles and Cajuns (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1959), p. 404.

Another interesting fact linking Louisiana to the Saint Domingue Revolution concerns the Louisiana Purchase. Napoleon had hoped to make the American mid-continent the foundation for a colonial empire but the army which was needed to hold it had been destroyed in the insurrection in Saint Domingue. That fact contributed to Napoleon's offer to American envoys in Paris to sell the vast region of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

C. Ante-Bellum New Orleans

Louisiana was briefly reannexed to France for twenty-day's interregnum before the "Stars and Stripes" was raised in the ceremony consummating the Louisiana Purchase on December 20, 1803.

Antagonism between the French speaking, Roman Catholic, bon-vivant Creole and the newcomer was not wiped out by the mere raising of a flag. The entire nineteenth century was marked by the struggle between the anglo-saxon values of the Americans who were arriving in great numbers and the attempts of the Creoles to maintain their dominance. The Creoles themselves had been reinforced numerically in the first decade of the new regime by the West Indian refugees and exiles from the French Revolution were still arriving from the mother country. The French element resisted stubbornly assimilation by the aggressive, money-minded "barbarians" as they called the Americans. Little by little though, they

were forced to yield their commercial, political and cultural dominance.

The early years of the American administration were also marked by difficulty with privateers from the West Indies. Smugglers and pirates had made their headquarters in the Barataria region of South Louisiana after being chased out of the West Indies by the wars of France and Spain. They had helped transport the refugees from Saint Domingue where their leader, Jean Lafitte was born himself. Free Negro refugees also found employment on Jean Lafitte's smuggling fleet.[13] By 1813 the Baratarians reached such a pinnacle of prosperity that not only did the United States suffer a loss of revenue, but the shipping in the port of New Orleans diminished and commerce languished.[14] It was inevitable that the government would intervene and a prize was put on the head of Jean Lafitte.

The conflict solved itself by a historical irony which made Lafitte and the Baratarians the popular heroes of the Battle of New Orleans. The War of 1812 was in its third year before Louisiana, now a state, became the theatre of operation. The victorious battle of New Orleans repelling

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[13]Jane L. De Grummond, The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 11.

[14]Grace King, New Orleans, the Place and the People (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), p. 194.

the English, sealed once and for all the Louisiana Purchase. It temporarily bridged the schism between the anglo-saxon and French elements of the city and gave the free people of color a chance to distinguish themselves and show their loyalty to the American nation.

Following the transfer of Louisiana, the new government had their reservations about the free colored militia inherited from the Spanish regime. There was fear in disbanding the three hundred armed mulattoes. After much hesitation and controversy they were reorganized and given official recognition. General Jackson was able to capture the imagination and support of the free colored battalion in an address to them in 1814.[15]

In the Battle of New Orleans, 430 of the 3,600 soldiers were free men of color. Savary, a free man of color from Saint Domingue, undertook to form a battalion of 150 men from the ranks of emigres from that island who had cast their lot with the whites when they fled to Louisiana.[16] Savary was later cited for valiant service and reported to have shot General Pakenham.[17]

After the battle was won, recognition was given to the

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[15]Everett, op. cit., p. 79.

[16]Gayarre, op. cit., p. 406.

[17]Charles B. Rousseve, The Negro in Louisiana (New Orleans: Xavier University Press, 1937), p. 29.

free colored battalion from many sources. None was more gallant than the complimentary address to the men of color by General Jackson:

> "Soldiers! From the shores of Mobile I collected you to arms; I invited you to share in the perils and to divide the glory of your white countrymen. I expected much from you, for I was not uninformed of those qualities which must render you so formidable to an invading foe. I knew that you would endure hunger and thirst and all the hardships of war. I knew that you loved the land of your nativity, and that, like ourselves, you had to defend all that is most dear to man; but you surpass my hopes. I have found in you, united to those qualities, that noble enthusiasm which impels to great deeds.
>
> "Soldiers! The President of the United States shall be informed of your conduct on the present occasion, and the voice of the Representatives of the American Nation shall applaud your valor, as your general now praises your ardor. The enemy is near; his sails cover the lakes; but the brave are united; and if he finds us contending among ourselves, it will be for the prize of valor, and fame its noblest reward."[18]

Today these veterans of color are still recalled among their creole descendants.

From 1820 to the advent of the Civil War, the city of New Orleans enjoyed a tremendous economic growth. The city expanded, so did its trade and banking. By 1840 it was the fourth largest city in the nation. Under American leadership many civic improvements were effectuated. The population doubled and the white population increased substantially by the arrival of German, Irish and later Italian emigrants. Slaves continued to be brought in from the English-speaking

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[18]Gayarre, op. cit., p. 408.

states, Africa, and the West Indies to supply labor for the large-scale plantations. This was the era of the much romanticized ante-bellum days.

The Creoles of color did not participate in this expansion and were further inhibited by the ever-present tension between the progressing Americans and the retreating Creoles with whom they identified. The prestige gained by their performance in the Battle of New Orleans was ephemeral. As a man of color said at the time: "Nous sommes tous frères quand le danger nous menace, mais nous devenons des ennemis au retour de la securité."[19]

The status of the Creole of color was changing for the worse. This could be attributed to two main factors. The first stems back to the Louisiana Purchase and the arrival of a large number of Americans and other foreigners. The traditional tolerance of the Franco-Spanish culture towards the man of color was replaced by racial consciousness and other manifestation of the anglo-saxon "superiority complex." Class and caste lines became more rigid. Furthermore the poor Irish immigrant coveted the monopoly of the free man of color in the trades and crafts and gradually succeeded in displacing the colored man in many of his traditional

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[19]"We are all brothers when danger threatens us but we become enemies when security is restored." Rodolphe Desdunes, Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire (Montreal: Arbour et Dupont, 1911), p. 11.

occupations.

The second factor was the large increase of the free colored class. Natural increase was proportionally larger than that of the white population.[20] The *emigres* from the West Indies had doubled the class and more were sill finding their way to the Louisiana shore. Furthermore New Orleans with its reputation of tolerance and lax administration of its racial laws,[21] was a magnet drawing free Negroes from other states. By 1840, the free population of color numbered 19,222 representing 45 per cent of the Negro population and 19 per cent of the total population of New Orleans. The number of free colored persons in Louisiana exceeded that of other states in the deep South from 1810-1860.

Presumably out of fear and antipathy the dominant white class started to erect barriers to curb the social, political and economic ascendancy of the free man of color. Changes occurred too in the treatment of the slaves. Gone were the paternalistic days of the Franco-Spanish regime when the intimate contact between master and slave made bondage somewhat more bearable. Slaves were now economic cogs essential to the operation of large scale plantation.

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[20]Robin, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[21]Everett, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

Regimentation was more severe, the fear of an insurrection a la Saint Domingue being ever present. The purchase of freedom by slaves was also inhibited.

The main restrictions imposed upon the free people of color in New Orleans during the first half of the nineteenth century could be summarized as follows:

1807: The entry of free people of color into the territory of Orleans was restricted.

1808: To identify free persons of color more clearly, it was now required to designate them as "free men or free women of color" on any official or notarial papers.

1812: Suffrage extended to all free persons in 1803 was now restricted to whites only.

1830: Free people of color were prohibited to write and publish any matter which might tend to breed discontent among slaves and were forbidden to instruct slaves.

1841: An ordinance in New Orleans was passed forbidding the lodging, entertainment or employment of any free person of color not a native of Louisiana.

1842: Prohibitive legislation was passed to prevent more effectively the entry of free people of color into the state.

1855: Free persons of color could not move about the streets of New Orleans without a pass.

The civil rights of the Creole of color became precarious. They were modifiable or revocable at the discretion of the governing class.[22] Because of his dependent status, the Creole of color could not command respect. His treatment was subject to the political whim of the time.

This dark picture was offset a little by a cultural renaissance among the Creoles of color correlating somewhat the ante-bellum golden era of white New Orleans of 1830-50. The upperclass Creoles owned extensive property assessed at millions of dollars. They maintained commercial establishments, practiced various trades and professions and educated their children in private schools, in some cases in France. In 1830, 2,354 slaves were owned by 752 families of that class,[23] some even employed white servants.

True to the French tastes, they enjoyed literature, painting, music, theatre and all kind of social pleasures. Some engaged in duels and wrote poems to their lady loves. A collection of poems, Les Cenelles was published in 1845 with contributions from seventeen poets of color who also

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[22]Desdunes, op. cit., p. 17.

[23]See Carter G. Woodson, Free Negro Owners of slaves in the United States in 1830 (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life, 1924), pp. 9-15.

edited a literary periodical. Victor Sejour, a mulatto, produced plays in New Orleans, later became a famous playwright in Paris. Edmond Dédé distinguished himself in music, Norbert Rillieux[24] in applied science, Basile Croquère in swordsmanship and Eugene Warbourg in sculpture, to name a few. In no other time did this creole society produce such a number of cultivated men. Perhaps they intended to expose the incongruity of their ascribed inferior status.

Although only indirectly related to the world of the creole elite, the same period witnessed creole songs and dances performed on Congo Square, vodou practice and quadroon balls. All of these activities have received much attention in popular histories.

After 1840, there was a sharp decline in the free colored population of New Orleans which is also reflected in the figures for the state. How to account for a reduction of 50 per cent or nearly 10,000 people? It could be attributed to census errors, to the stringent laws restricting the entrance of free Negroes into the state, or the discouragement of manumission. It could also be due to the new limitations put on the economic and civil rights of the free

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[24]His invention of the "multiple effect" process in 1846 revolutionized the sugar refining industry. See Carlyle T. Sitterson, Sugar Country (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), pp. 147-50.

people of color forcing some to leave Louisiana or declaring themselves white. Historical records give little explanation about this population drop.

> In Louisiana the decrease in the free colored between 1840-1850 seems to be chiefly in New Orleans where the decline in the third municipality alone decline from 8,704 in 1840 to 3,524 in 1850, or nearly two-thirds. The average number of colored persons to a family in the three municipality in 1840 was 10-1/2 and in 1850 5-1/7. All of this is very extraordinary and leads to the conviction that errors were committed . . . . or that free mulattoes have been passing into the white column which is not shown, however, in the increase of the whites in that municipality since 1840. The colored persons who are known to have left the city will not account for this decline of one-half, notwithstanding the natural increase.[25]

On the eve of the Civil War there was a small expatriation movement to Haiti. The Haitian Government sent an agent to recruit people and was particularly interested in those of Haitian ancestry. A wealthy Creole of color made funds available to facilitate the departure of his compatriots to Haiti and also to Mexico.[26] The Daily Delta commented in 1860 that "scarcely a week passes but a large number of free persons leave this port for Mexico or Hayti."[27] The exact number of free people of color who left

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[25]Statistical View of the U.S., A Compendium of the Seventh Census (1850), p. 62.

[26]Desdunes, op. cit., p. 89.

[27]Everett, op. cit., p. 129, citing New Orleans Daily Delta, January 16, 1860.

for Haiti[28] is not known.

D. The Effects of the Civil War

The advent of the Civil War was of great concern to the Creoles of color. While they had lost some of their standing since the American domination, they still occupied an intermediate stratum between the slaves and the dominant whites. They were still recognized as a separate class. What was their future going to be now that all Negroes were to be free? Would a social distinction between the free man and freedman be maintained or would their intermediate status be destroyed? These considerations might have prompted 1,500 men of color in 1861 to offer their service to the Confederacy. They were accepted and organized in a regiment for the defense of the city. As New Orleans fell in 1862, General Butler took over this regiment which became the first colored contingent incorporated into the Union forces.

> Complete accord in favor of either the North or South was never attained by the free colored population of New Orleans. While the majority attached themselves to the Union cause soon after the capture of the city, some continued to support the confederate cause.[29]

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[28]This writer has met in Haiti descendants of this group who knew of their Louisiana origin. It is reported that many settled in the town of Jeremie in south Haiti.

[29]Everett, op. cit., p. 272.

This latter group was probably not motivated by patriotism.

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 resulted in thousands of freedmen pouring into New Orleans to seek protection of federal troops during the occupation. Between 1860 and 1870, the Negro population of New Orleans doubled reaching the figure of 50,000.

For a brief period after the Civil War the situation was especially advantageous for all Negroes, with the elimination of the official civil distinction between whites and Negroes.[30] In 1865, Negroes voted freely for the first time in Louisiana. The Republican party won the general election of 1868, at which time a new state constitution was ratified. The office of lieutenant-governor, state treasurer and other high positions were held by Creoles of color. The generation and a half of reconstruction was particularly violent in New Orleans in 1874, when a rebellion staged by 5,000 knights of the White Camellia took place in that city. This event marks the end of Negro influence in the government and the return to power of the southern whites. In 1876, the Democrats were back in control. In 1877, the federal troops were removed.

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[30]Kara E. Rousseau, "Cultural Patterns of Colored Creoles" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1955), p. 13.

One of the first acts of the post-reconstruction government was to segregate the school system by race. The system of separation of race spread rapidly to other areas and white supremacy became institutionalized in a system of legalized racial segregation for the first time in New Orleans. It seemed scarcely believable that less than a century ago the laisser vivre tolerant French attitude had prevailed in New Orleans.

In 1891, a group of Creoles of color formed the comite des citoyens as a last attempt to fight a legally defined inferior status. Two test cases were brought to court to protest "the adoption and enforcement of unjust and humiliating distinctions against the colored race in Louisiana."[31] The first case was won, the comite succeeded in annuling Act 111, commonly known as the separate car law. The second case was the famous Plessy versus Ferguson case. Homere Plessy, a Creole of color, lost his appeal to the Supreme Court in 1896, paid a $25.00 fine and the "separate but equal" doctorine became a way of life for the entire South.

By 1898, the last Negro official was removed from office, and segregation was in full force. No channel of recourse was left opened. The Creole had lost, his future looked hopeless, he was now a Negro. Whites and Negroes no

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[31]Desdunes, op. cit., p. 187.

longer recognized his intermediate status. This was intolerable to him so he withdrew to himself and attempted to create his own social order centered around his French and Catholic culture.

E. The Twentieth Century

Little can be said for the Creole of color in the first half of this century. Politically silenced, subjected to the same civil and economic restrictions as his black brother, his history is that of racial accommodation and social isolation. He lived quietly, went about his daily work, concentrated on his creole world, his family and church.

World War I began to loosen the race-caste structure and the growing dissatisfaction with the status quo began to be manifested. At about the same time, jazz, which the Creole helped to create, began its meteoric journey across the world and revived interest in New Orleans and the forgotten Creole of color.

The turning point of the creole culture of this century came as the result of World War II. Rapid social changes are taking place. The traditional social distance between the creole and non-creole Negro has narrowed through mutual educational and political goals. The conservative attitudes of the creole subculture are no longer able to cope with the aspirations of the time. The young Creole of today is accepting his identification as an American Negro to escape

the narrow confine of his small world. Since 1950, the continuous migration of the Creoles, principally to California, is further weakening the subculture.

Yet the creole "way of life" still persists. There is no doubts in this writer's mind that this "way of life" as elusive as it might seem, is real and has meaning to thousands of Creoles of color in New Orleans. That it will eventually disappear, there is no doubt, but before it does the author hopes his readers will take this opportunity to get a closer look at the creole world as it is today.

1718	New Orleans founded by Bienville
1719	Arrival of first cargo of slaves from Africa
1722	New Orleans becomes capital of the colony of Louisiana
1724	Black Code is published
1727	Arrival of casket girls
1763	Colony of Louisiana transferred to Spain
1765	First arrival of Acadian refugees
1769	Execution of rebels ordered by O'Reilly
1769	Yellow fever scourge
1777	Arrival of Islenos from Canary Islands
1786	Miro's Proclamation prescribing the dress of women of color
1788	Great fire
1789	French Revolution creates mild stir, refugees follows soon
1791	French theatre founded by refugees from Saint Domingue
1794	First newspaper (Le moniteur de la Louisianne)
1794	First Bishopric of Louisiana
1795	Bore successfully granulates sugar
1803	Colony transferred back to France (20 day interregnum)
1803	Louisiana Purchase
1809	Arrival of Refugees from Saint Domingue
1811	First college founded (College of Orleans)
1812	First steamboat
1812	Louisiana admitted to the Union
1813	Era of Jean Lafitte and the Baratarians
1815	The Battle of New Orleans
1827	First organized Mardi Gras carnival
1829	Pere Antoine dies after a half century reign
1830	New Orleans divided into three municipalities (until 1852) as a result of ill feeling between Creoles and Americans
1830	(circa) Dance in Congo Square, voodoo practice, quadroon balls
1830	(circa) Golden era, ante-bellum plantation, theatre, duelling
1830	(circa) Arrival of German and Irish emigrants
1832	Great plague (5,000 deaths in the city)
1849	Capital of Louisiana transferred to Baton Rouge
1853	Yellow fever epidemy (11,000 deaths in the city)
1861	Louisiana secedes from the Union and joins the Confederacy
1862	New Orleans occupied by Union troops
1863	Emancipation Proclamation
1868	Louisiana is restored to statehood
1868	Black and Tan Legislature
1870	Steamboat race era
1874	Rebellion of the Knights of the White Camellia
1876	Democrats and southern whites back in power
1877	Removal of federal troops from New Orleans
1885	World's Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans
1890	(circa) Birth of jazz, Basin Street era
1891	Mob lynching of eleven members of the Italian Mafia
1895	Storyville era
1896	Plessy versus Ferguson case goes to Supreme Court

Figure 3. Outline of the Social History of New Orleans for the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND STRATIFICATION

A. Introduction

One of the basic facts which characterizes social groups is their awareness of similarities and differences between themselves and other groups. This social differentiation often gives rise to a ranking system which categorizes people into a hierarchy. Social stratification is understood here as a ranking of people into a hierarchy of social classes. These classes are stratified according to the degree of prestige conferred to its occupants. The degree of prestige is determined by a set of criteria which is more or less understood and accepted by the members of the society in question. Since criteria are never absolute and are subject to change, social stratification in a particular society is difficult to describe. Furthermore the comparison of the class structure of one social group to that of another is problematical since criteria vary from one group to another.

Social differentiation and stratification are sometimes hard to separate. This is the problem we face in attempting to analyse patterns of differentiation and stratification among the Creoles. They are part of American society, they

have been made part of American Negro society, they have their own cultural identity and they are part of the social structure of New Orleans.

In our discussion of social differentiation we will include mainly those differences which set the Creoles apart from other groups. Social stratification as a form of social differentiation refers to the class structure of creole society. The author wishes to stress that this will not give an exact picture of the situation as it is since some Creoles take as their point of reference the class system of New Orleans Negro society whereas others identify only with creole society.

B. The American Class System

American society is not a class-conscious society in the sense that most Americans are only dimly aware of the importance of class differences in determining the round of their daily activities. The majority of the population believe in the myth of the self-made man and the freedom of "choosing one's own class" it implies. To be sure class differences enter into almost every aspect of American life but are often not consciously perceived. Perhaps this is why the criteria of wealth, occupation and power are stressed in America in determining the social standing of a person. These goals presumably can be reached by anyone within his life time. Factors such as family background, good breeding

and refinement which take more than a generation to acquire, are deemphasized by the average middle-class American.

While the United States is not a rank-conscious society, it is conscious of social differentiation in other ways. Racial, ethnic and religious distinction become more apparent as these vary more from the white anglo-saxon Protestant ideal. Thus in general a Catholic will have greater acceptance than a Jew, a German-American than an Italian-American and at the bottom of the scale is the American Negro. Social differentiation is so sharp between the white and Negro American that some writers have described American society as a caste system. The term caste has been criticized by some as too rigid to describe the American Negro-white social structure.[1] None the less it has many features of the caste system; thus quasi-caste or caste-like would be appropriate terms to describe the nature of Negro-white differentiation in America. For this reason American society could be divided here into two groups, white and Negro, each group having its own class system.

C. The American Negro Class System

Greater occupational differentiation, with the continuance of color segregation, has contrived to bring about a

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[1]See Robert M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 394-403.

separate class structure within Negro society. There is a rough parallel between Negro and white society since the Negro has adopted to a large extent the class criteria of the dominant group. Wealth, occupation and education are stressed with the added factor of color which often correlates with the others. The size of the upper, middle, and lower Negro classes, according to Davie's estimates would be as follows: About five per cent of the Negro population falls in the upper class, fifteen per cent in the middle class and eighty per cent in the lower class. Comparable figures for whites of the same socioeconomic standard would be twenty per cent upper, forty per cent middle and forty per cent lower.[2] However there is no exact correspondence of classes between white and Negro society.

The Negro upper class consists of businessmen and professionals such as doctors, dentists, and lawyers. Public school teachers, social workers and some clerical workers have gained admission to the Negro upper-class because of their education qualification and their style of living. The income and style of living of the Negro upper-class corresponds somewhat to that of the white middle and upper-middle class. Conspicuous consumption and social ritual

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[2]Maurice Davie, Negroes in American Society (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1949), p. 416.

play an important role in the life of the "black bourgeoisie."[3] The great concern with respectability displayed by the upper-class has arisen from its desire not to be identified with the mass of Negroes and from the impression they want to make upon the white world.[4]

The Negro middle class is composed mainly of people whose skilled, semi-skilled and service occupations correspond to working class status in white society.[5] They endeavor to maintain a stable and conventional family life, identify closely with their church and stress respectability above all. They frown upon the moral conduct of the lower class.

The Negro lower-class is composed of the great mass of unskilled workers, often irregularly employed. Lack of stable family life, poor education and low social participation in the institutions of their community result in the absence of social control on the behavior of this class. This is a partial explanation for the type of behavior associated with Negro lower-class status.

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[3]See E. Franklin Frazier, The Black Bourgeoisie (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957).

[4]E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro in the United States (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949), p. 299.

[5]Kurt B. Mayer, Class and Society (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 52.

D. The French Class System

Since the Creole of color has a French oriented culture which is reflected in his class values, it might be useful to briefly summarize the characteristics of the traditional French social class system. The class system of France still exhibits vestiges of the old estate order which antedated the colonization of Louisiana. Importance attached to family background, an inherited status and the marked social distance between the upper and lower class have survived feudal days and have been blended into the modern French social structure.

As compared to the American, the French is more class conscious. Class distinctions occupy his thoughts and conversation. Personal questions might be asked of a newcomer which might appear indiscrete to the American but which do not embarrass the Frenchman, who is simply ranking the person socially.

> Social distinction far from being based on purely economic criteria, income and occupational differentiation, are linked to a great extent to criteria which are independent, or at the most only indirectly dependent of the above. Traditional and family values, wit (tour d'esprit), culture, manners, the role played by women, the education of the children, a whole stock of ideas and behavior vary from one class to another and are not linked directly to income brackets. Their symbolic strength is such that one can say that regardless of their income, persons who participate in the same taboos consider themselves equal.[6]

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[6]Francoise Bouriez-Gregg, Les Classes Sociales aux Etats-Unis (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1954), p. 41 (translation mine).

We shall see later how the American, American Negro, and French criteria of social class have blended somewhat haphazardly into the class system of the Creole of color.

E. The Historical Background of the Creole Class System

The origin of social distinctions among Creoles goes back to slavery. Differences between the field slaves and the house slaves, between those trained in more skillful occupations and the non-skilled gave rise to status differentiation. There was also the identification with the white master; his social class status rubbed off on his slaves. One must not forget however, that the free status of the ancestors of many Creoles dates back to the early eighteenth century. In the case of the descendants of the *emigres* from Saint Domingue, there was no recent history of slavery in their family. People of color were manumitted in Saint Domingue as early as the sixteenth century and their descendants had lived for centuries in far better social circumstances than the white peasant emigrants who came to New Orleans at the same time they did.

In the early days free people of color were predominantly of mixed ancestry (see Table II). Since they received preferential treatment from the whites, physical proximity to whites rapidly became an important factor of social distinction. Color was also a highly visible criteria. A person of color was presumed to be free, to enjoy

TABLE II

COLOR COMPOSITION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION OF NEW ORLEANS: YEARS FOR WHICH DATA IS AVAILABLE[1]

Census Year	Total Negro Population	Mulatto (Free population)	Black (Free population)	% Mulatto
1732[2]		6		
1769[3]	1,387	68	31	68.7
1778[4]	1,507	248	105	70.2
1850[5]	28,029	8,058	1,903	80.9
1910[6]	89,262	30,480	58,782	34.1
1920[7]	100,930	22,434	78,496	22.2

[1]In 1890, the U.S. census broke down the Negro population by degree of Negro descent. For Louisiana with a total colored population of 559,193, the figures were the following: 468,240 Negroes, 76,840 Mulattoes, 8,597 Quadroons, 5,516 Octoroons. Eleventh Census, 1890, p. 397.

[2]"Sidelights on Louisiana History," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, I (January, 1918), 139.

[3]Wood, op. cit., p. 648.

[4]Photographs of Documents in the Archives of the Indies, op. cit.

[5]Statistical View of the United States. A Compendium of the Seventh Census (1850), 80.

[6]Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915, p. 229.

[7]Fourteenth Census, 1920, Vol. II, p. 35.

certain economic advantages and have blood ties with a white family. As cross-racial unions continued over the generations, various degrees of mixture resulted and were differentiated as follows:

The griffe was technically the off-spring of a Negro and a mulatto, was supposedly of three-fourth Negro ancestry. The term generally referred to a person of some white blood but whose physical characteristics were predominantly Negro.

The mulatto was supposedly the result of white-Negro union, and was of half-Negro ancestry. There was great variety in his physical characteristics as he was further subdivided into light and dark mulatto. The presence of white ancestry was always quite evident. In its generic sense, the term was often used to denote a person with some proportion or perceptible trace of Negro blood. The census generally defined mulatto, when such a category was used, in this broad sense of mixed blood.[7] The term should be used parsimoniously today as it has a depreciatory meaning to a person of color implying illicit miscegenation.

The quadroon was a person of one quarter Negro ancestry or the offspring of a white and mulatto. Again the term was used in its generic rather than specific sense. Thus a

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[7]Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, 1790-1915, p. 207.

quadroon was a person of mixed blood whose caucasian features predominated but his Negro ancestry was generally still perceptible. An aura of mystery has always surrounded the term quadroon, as often the quadroon were of exotic and pleasing countenance which was attractive to most people. The usual type associated with the term quadroon was a person with a fair complexion, blondish hair and greyish eyes.

The Octoroon was technically the offspring of a white and a quadroon but the term generally referred to a person known to have Negro ancestry but with no negroid characteristics. The Octoroon was expected to be of the Spanish type with black eyes, black hair and le teint peche.[8]

It is not exactly clear what degree of Negro ancestry the marabou had. Moreau de Saint Mery placed him somewhere in between the griffe and the mulatto.[9] Marabou referred to an ideal type and stressed fine hair texture. In Haiti and among Louisiana Creoles, the marabou's main feature was his soft and straight black hair. His profile was aquiline and his skin darker than the quadroon but of coppery rather

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[8]Peach complexion.

[9]For an interesting breakdown and discussion of the 124 possible combinations of Negro-white race mixture see Mederic L. E. Moreau de Saint Mery, Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de la Partie Francaise de l'Isle Saint Domingue, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Larose, 1958; original edition, Philadelphia, 1797), pp. 86-102.

than yellowish hue. Thus like the much celebrated Moreno type of Brazil, the marabou represented the harmonious blending of the best elements of the Caucasian and Negro races with a possible admixture of Indian blood.

The briqué is not such a happy blending. His skin was white and his features were generally sharp although there is no concensus on this last point. However his hair was reddish, of a coarser grain and often woolly. The briqué corresponded somewhat to the Haitian grimaud, the latter having definite negroid features.

These terms, quite prevalent in the past, are seldom used today. Mulatto is still used in its pejorative sense of origin in a cross-racial mesalliance. Marabou and briqué are used to stress the hair texture of an individual. The fact that these classifications came about, shows the concern creole society had about degrees of white admixture and its consequent bearing on the status of the individual. There was also a tendency to marry within one's color.

Therefore mixed or non-mixed ancestry was the fundamental factor differentiating the free Negro population of early New Orleans. As the free people of color became more prosperous and stable, social class distinctions appeared which reflected the values of the white Creoles. There was less social distance among the white and colored Creoles than among the latter and the slaves. During the Spanish

period, the legal and political rights and occupational opportunities of the Creoles of color were not too different from those of the whites although there were reservations on the social level where a color etiquette prevailed.

After the Louisiana Purchase the color line became more rigid and the rights of the Creoles of color were curbed. The society of New Orleans in the first half of the nineteenth century was divided into three distinct strata, the whites, the free people of color, and the slaves, each with its own class system. Within the stratum of the free people of color three classes appeared. A small upper-class made up of professionals and proprietors whose style of life compared favorably with the upper-class whites. Many were slave-owners, maintained homes of ease and comfort where they led quiet and dignified lives. They educated their children in Europe, attended the theatre in the second tier reserved exclusively for them. In their contact with whites they did not assume a servile role nor did the whites expect them to.[10]

The middle class was composed of artisans who monopolized the skilled trades where they were outstanding as shoemakers, tailors, and cabinet makers. Women of this

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[10]See Charles A. Gayarre, "Historical Sketch--The Quadroons of Louisiana," Unpublished document, Gayarre Papers: Department of Archives, Louisiana State University).

class became skilled hairdressers, and accomplished seamstresses whose services were eagerly sought by the whites. As landladies renting furnished rooms and running pensions they were without equal and several of the white gentlemen who patronized their establishments have praised them in their diaries and travel accounts.

The lower-class of the free people of color was composed mainly of recently freed slaves who were unskilled laborers, mostly non-creole Negroes.

The antagonism between the French-speaking and English-speaking white population of New Orleans had its reverberations among the people of color. In the nineteenth century many slaves were brought to New Orleans from other states and some were of mixed blood. Many bought their freedom and became free people of color without being Creoles. These American mulattoes could be termed afro-saxons[11] since their cultural orientation was Anglo-American rather than French-Creole. Social distance between the Creoles and "American" Negroes became apparent and still has consequences in the present. Among other things, it helped shape the spatial distribution of the Negro population in New Orleans. As the city was literally divided into two antagonistic camps, the French below Canal Street and the

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[11]Vincent V. Mott, "The Creole de Couleur, a Sociological Study of a Racial Sub-Group" (Unpublished monograph, Xavier University, 1938), p. 3.

Anglo-Americans above, so were the Creoles downtown and the Negroes uptown. The free American Negro was a newcomer and consequently did not enjoy the economic advantages and lacked the social background of the Creoles. Furthermore, he was generally of darker complexion. American mulattoes found it easier to gain entry into some creole circles, but in general cultural differences kept the two groups apart, even on the same class level.

The Civil War swept away the legal structure on which the three-strata society of New Orleans was organized but social differentiation was too deeply embedded to be set aside by the resulting change. White society, whether Creole or American, lower-class or upper-class rallied together to reassert their domination over the Negro and drew a caste line between themselves and the Negro regardless of his previous status. It meant the disintegration of the intermediate status of the free people of color.

> The color line was drawn so as to include the descendants of the former free people of color and the former slaves in the same category, and both were subjected to the same restrictions. This brought about some solidarity of interest and sympathy between the groups, but on the whole they withdrew within the narrow circle of their relatives and friends, refusing even to send their children to the schools provided for Negroes. Some families migrated to other sections of the country where they became part of small groups of upper class mulattoes or they became lost in the white race. The less affluent skilled artisans likewise formed their own "creole" community from which the emancipated blacks and their descendants were excluded.[12]

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[12]Frazier, op. cit., pp. 277-8.

The first half of the twentieth century was more or less an extension of the social situation resulting from the aftermath of the Civil War. Class distinction within the Creole group tended to lessen with the reduction in number of their elite. With time rigid social differentiation between white and Negro society and within the Negro group gradually lessened. While interaction between the two racial groups was and still is limited to utilitarian social participation, interaction within the Negro group was increasing but reservations were maintained on the more intimate level. Color, family and creole background were stressed by the Creoles who now represented a sort of self-appointed elite. They went to great length to see that their children married within the group and had a minimum of contact with non-Creoles. As American culture became more and more dominant and creole background harder to identify, color became the main criteria used by the Creoles to exclude others from their social activities.

As we have seen in Chapter II, World War II speeded up changes which were gradually but imperceptibly taking place. Profound changes have occurred within the last twenty years. The non-creole Negro has made rapid strides up the socio-economic ladder and has challenged creole dominance.

Today the casual observer might conclude that the Creole as a social group is a thing of the past. However the

picture is more complicated than that as we shall see. Vestiges of the French cultural orientation, the allegiance to the Catholic faith, the absence of a background of slavery, the maintenance of traditional occupations and color consciousness still play a significant role in distinguishing the Creoles as a separate class of New Orleans Negro society.

F. The Creole Class System of Today

We are concerned here with how the Creole ranks the world around him rather than how the world ranks him. For the sake of clarity we have treated Negro and white society as separate entities but individuals do not think this way. For instance the Creole of middle-class status considers himself of a higher status than the poor whites of the Ninth Ward. In the same way he might make a social distinction between himself and a poor non-creole Negro. It is social differentiation due to differences in cultural background, mentality and values not necessarily social rank that set the creole apart from others.

With respect to social stratification, the result of this investigation establishes certain trends which have been confirmed by the sample taken. The sample creole population ranked people socially according to the following criteria listed in order of importance:

1. Family background

2. Color
3. Moral conduct
4. Education
5. Wealth
6. Manners
7. Occupation
8. Personal fame

When the sample was broken down by age groups or separated by sex, no substantial changes occurred in these rankings (see Tables III and IV). In essence, all agreed unanimously on family background as the most important factor. In second place but not a close runner-up was the factor of color. All attached least importance to personal fame (individual achievement) and all deemphasized occupation.

In regards to variation between the sexes, women put more stress on education and manners whereas men more than women tended to stress wealth and occupation.

Variations between age groups showed the following trends: adolescents stressed moral conduct the most; adults stressed education and gave a slightly higher position to occupation; the older generation attached more importance to manners and placed wealth slightly higher.

An interesting experiment was conducted with 55 per cent of the respondents to test how much reservation they

TABLE III

RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED ITEMS IN DETERMINING SOCIAL CLASS RANKS AMONG CREOLES OF NEW ORLEANS CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUPS

Selected Items	Total Creole Population	Group I 15-19	Group II 20-50	Group III 50 & above
Family Background	1	1	1	1
Color	2	2	2	3
Moral Conduct	3	3	5	7
Education	4	6	3	5
Wealth	5	5	7	4
Manners	6	4	4	2
Occupation	7	7	6	8
Personal Fame	8	8	8	7

TABLE IV

RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED ITEMS IN DETERMINING SOCIAL CLASS RANKS AMONG CREOLES OF NEW ORLEANS CLASSIFIED BY SEX

Selected Items	Total Creole Population	Males	Females
Family Background	1	1	1
Color	2	2	2
Moral Conduct	3	4	4
Education	4	6	3
Wealth	5	3	6
Manners	6	7	5
Occupation	7	5	7
Personal Fame	8	8	8

had in answering the more sensitive criteria of the scale. They were asked first to tell what they personally considered the most important points in determining the social class of a person. Then they were asked what they thought the Creoles attached the most importance to. The results were not the same. This writer believes that the interviewees were expressing for themselves the idealized norms (expected behavior) of their culture. When they had expressed their personal opinion, they became freer to answer candidly for the Creoles. They often said: "Personally I don't attach much importance to this point but the Creoles do." The respondents' private ranking system was the following:

	Personal	Creoles
Moral conduct	1	3
Family background	2	1
Education	3	4
Manners	4	6
Wealth	5	5
Color	6	2
Occupation	7	7
Personal fame	8	8

It is interesting to note that color dropped from second to sixth place, family background stayed high and occupation stayed low. Personal fame remained consistently at the bottom.

1. The Criterion of Family Background

As it has been noted above, the criterion of family background looms large in the creole value system. It is an all inclusive criteria. Good family background generally implies good occupational standing, a comfortable income, high standards of education and conduct. Furthermore, lightness of color is often assumed due to the partially true stereotype which identify the mulatto rather than the Negro with the above qualifications. However, family background can command the respect of the Creoles without fulfilling all of the above conditions. As a respondent said for example, referring to a prominent family: "They are very dark but they come from a good creole family."

Family background has always been a source of pride for the Creole. It sets him aside from the "American" Negro who seldom knows the history of his family line. In contrast, many Creoles can trace back their family tree for several generations (see Figure 4). For example, 33 per cent of the respondents owned family vaults where three or more generations were buried. The Creoles consider it their duty to maintain the dignity of their family name. Like the French they are curious to find out to whom people are related in order to place them socially. Some pointed out to this interviewer that their ancestors were never slaves and in a few cases that their family had once owned slaves.

PATRILINEAL LINE

Great grandfather:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. white

His wife:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. white

Great grandfather:
1. Valcour Trevigne
2. 1864
3. St. James Parish
4. Creole of color

His wife:
1. Helene Arceneaux
2. 1867
3. New Orleans, La.
4. Creole of color

Grandfather:
1. ? Martinez
2. 1868
3. Arkansas
4. white

Grandmother:
1. Marie Trevigne
2. 1887
3. New Orleans, La.
4. Creole of color

MATRILINEAL LINE

Great grandfather:
1. Joseph Fontenette
2. 1840's
3. Jeanerette, La.
4. Free Man of Color

His wife:
1. Rose ?
2. 1850's
3. Virginia
4. Free Negro

Great grandfather:
1. Joseph Lespinasse
2. 1840's
3. Haiti
4. Free Man of Color

His wife:
1. Celina Azemard
2. 1850's
3. Bay St. Louis, Miss.
4. Free Woman of Color

Grandfather:
1. Lucien Fontenette
2. 1875
3. New Orleans, La.
4. Creole of color

Grandmother:
1. Wilhelmina Lespinasse
2. 1879
3. New Orleans, La.
4. Creole of color

Father:
1. Felix Martinez
2. 1909
3. New Orleans, La.

RESPONDENT
Raoul Martinez

Mother:
1. Euphemie Fontenette
2. 1915
3. New Orleans, La.

Figure 4. An example of a creole family tree. In due respect to family privacy, this family tree is the composite of the history of two families and the last names have been changed.

Eighty different families were named as representing old prominent creole families. Fifteen of these were mentioned several times. Four families were named repeatedly. The latter are all professional families. One is a family of distinguished educators, two have interests in many business establishments of old standing, and the other two are known through their family legal and medical practices. All of these families are respected for their decorum and their contributions to the community. They shun publicity and avoid ostentation.

The author hypothesizes that the importance the Creoles attach to family background can be traced in some measure to their French heritage. In American society family background does not play such a dominant role. The majority of Americans are descendants of European immigrants of humble origin and the social heritage and tradition of their family are of little consequence if not obscure to them. This was not the case however of a few groups of early settlers, such as the Back Bay Bostonian, Virginian and Charlestonian society groups and some of the French who settled in New Orleans and started family dynasties. It is from these latter families through the process of interbreeding that some Creoles of color got their white ancestry, and the cultural values and attitudes that came with it. Like the white Creoles, they were very proud of their family "pedigree" and

through the years have made every effort to maintain high family standards and traditions. In the case of the descendants of the emigres, a similar development occurred to their ancestors in Saint Domingue. In the case of those who won their freedom at a later date, the same values of family traditions were incorporated through the process of emulation. Today it is not necessary for the Creole to trace his lineage back to historical times to be considered of good family. But it is expected that living members of a family will exhibit patterns of behavior consistent with the traditional standards of the subculture.

2. The Criterion of Color

More than any other factors the concern with color has characterized the Creole of color throughout his history and made him a target of criticism by the non-Creole. His concern with color is not exactly of his own making but stems from the importance that New World society has given to color which in turn has made color a prime determinant of social status. It is not the physical traits per se which are important but the social consequences of approximation to white. Hence the morbid preoccupation with hair texture and degrees of skin color. While expression of color preferences are discouraged by the creole culture of today, color remains nevertheless an important determinant of social status.

Middle-aged respondents reported instances of flagrant color discrimination which have occurred within their lifetime. Discriminatory practices apparently lost their subtler forms when they were applied to semi-public functions. Well-known creole social clubs which are "integrated" today were notorious in the past for barring Negroes and even dark Creoles on the basis of too much African ancestry. Hair texture seems especially important. A light brown girl with "keen" (i.e. sharp) features and soft marabou hair might have gained entrance at a dance while her lighter escort might have been turned away on the basis of his "bad" hair. This writer has heard several stories which he dismissed at first as gross exaggerations. However the same stories kept coming up again from different sources. Some are related here for what they might be worth.

> "Creole parishioners of a predominantly creole church which was acquiring many non-creole converts, petitioned the priest for a sitting arrangement which would allow the light-skinned people to sit in the front, the medium dark in the middle and the dark-skinned people in the back. The petition was denied."

> "We called 'paper bag' dances, dances where they would exclude dark people. A brown paper bag like one you get at a super-market would be the color standard used which would determine whether you would get past the door or not. Those who were darker than the paper bag would be turned away."

> "They used to have the 'comb test' to keep out the people who were not welcomed at a dance. This was before they could process your hair with chemicals like they do today. Should they be suspicious of the grade of hair you had, they would pass a comb through it. If the comb got caught in the hair you wouldn't get in.

> People say that Creoles still do this in the country. In C... for instance, there is a blind man who sits outside the dance hall with a big black comb in his hand. He also claims that he can tell the color of a person by touching his skin."

Behavior of this kind would be termed pathological today. Two generations ago it was an expression of a stubborn refusal to be identified as Negro and an attempt to retain a semblance of intermediate status by emulating white discriminatory practice. An interesting cultural lag is the color attitude among "country" Creoles. They still maintain today several all-mulatto communities in South Louisiana where their strong color consciousness reflects the attitudes which were once prevalent among the Creoles of New Orleans a generation ago.

Today color differentiation has considerably lessened and assumes more latent forms. The ideal type is no longer the near-white but the light brown, light enough to escape the indignities heaped on the black man, yet dark enough to be identified as a Negro. In comparison to other Negro urban communities throughout the nation, the New Orleans Negro community still has the reputation of being very color conscious. Color consciousness gradually decreases as one moves from New Orleans to Washington, D.C., to New York City, and the ratio of mulatto to Negro decreases as well. Furthermore, as one goes down the socioeconomic scale color plays a less significant role. While migration and "passing"

has reduced the proportion of light-skinned Creoles in New Orleans there is still a substantial number of people who stand on the racial borderline and have the problem of determining for themselves their racial identity. In the sample of this investigation, using the historical classification, 29 per cent of the respondents were judged as octoroons, 38 per cent as quadroons, 19 per cent as mulattoes, 14 per cent as griffes and none as full-blooded Negroes. With respect to hair texture, 46 per cent had marabou hair, 39 per cent partly and 15 per cent did not. In regards to keen features, 46 per cent had caucasoid features, 41 per cent partly and 13 per cent did not. It goes without saying that this was a subjective estimate by the writer and his interviewers. In general the creole eye is very sharp at identifying minute variations in skin tone and hair texture. Many a time the author was impressed by the subtleness of differentiation. Eighty-six per cent of the respondents admitted readily that Creoles were more color-conscious than the non-creoles. "Good" hair was considered more important than light complexion and keen features was ranked much below the other two. It was also felt by 59 per cent of the respondents that the lighter Creoles are prouder of their creole background than the darker creoles. The remainder felt that the dark Creoles were just as proud if not prouder of their heritage.

This investigator found no evidence to substantiate the claim of some writers that Creoles have ambivalent feelings towards their white ancestry "shrouded in the mystery and humiliation of illegitimacy." It must be pointed out that in some cases people of color were the offsprings of unions which were blessed by church sacraments and in other cases of stable placage where genuine love and responsibility more than compensated for the lack of legal recognition. Furthermore it must take a great deal of imagination to feel humiliated by a faux pas committed by an ancestor in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. To the question: What do you think Creoles feel about their white ancestry?, eighty per cent felt that Creoles were proud of them while only two per cent felt that Creoles were not proud of them. The rest felt that Creoles had no special feelings about them. In general white ancestors are seldom discussed.

3. The Criterion of Moral Conduct

As we have seen before, the Creoles ranked moral conduct as the third most important criterion in judging a person's social class. This emphasis on moral conduct reflects to a great extent the teaching of the church. The Catholic faith exerts a pervasive influence on the behavior of the group and Catholic values are internalized by the young during their socialization process. This is probably why the younger generation, more directly influenced by

their upbringing, ranked moral conduct higher than the middle and older generation. Catholic teachings have set the moral goals of the group and were reflected as such in the test sample where individuals were asked to express their own personal criteria of class ranking. They gave moral conduct first place.

Moral conduct was also understood here as implying personal reputation and respectability. As such it takes an important place in the creole community of downtown New Orleans. This community has the "gemeinshaft" spirit of a country village and is highly socially integrated. The private life of most individuals is known and subject to social control. A mode of living not considered proper to the group would subject the individual to sanctions. If the individual chooses to remain in the community and participate in its social institutions, he must conform to the relatively high moral standards of the group. If he does not, his social status will suffer accordingly.

4. The Criterion of Education

Education as a means of gaining social status seemed less important to the Creole than to the non-Creole. Enjoying the security of a high status derived from family background and color, many Creoles did not feel the need to climb the educational echelons to further their social standing. The situation was reversed for the ambitious non-creole

Negro. In the post-reconstruction days, many Creoles stayed home rather than go to school with the children of freedmen. While the educational attainments between Creoles and non-Creoles are comparable on the elementary and secondary levels, the non-Creole seems to be surpassing him on the college level. Consequently attitudes towards education as a criteria of social standing will progressively gain more importance as family background, color and moral conduct prove insufficient to assure a high status. In the sample, the adult group, particularly women, stressed education more than the other groups. Working experience in competition with the outside world might have played a role in changing attitudes towards education as a status giver. The respondents conceded two to one that the non-Creole places more importance on getting a higher education.

5. The Criterion of Wealth

It is significant that the Creoles as a whole are less impressed by wealth than middle-class white Americans and American Negroes. At least this is the impression of this writer who ventures again to trace this attitude to the French background. Wealthy people without family background and standards of taste, manners and refinement consistent with their income, are derisively called nouveaux riches or parvenus by the French. While not using these terms, the wealthy Creole frowns upon ostentation and naive attempts

to impress others by conspicuous consumption. His wealth is less visible, he refrains from discussing prices and like the French he is typically thrifty, and dislikes extravagance and gaspillage.[13] Display of wealth is contrary to family conservatism.

6. The Criterion of Manners

The term "personal comportment" would describe more appropriately the cluster of values understood here under the heading of manners. Such values as breeding, personal pride, taste, and gentlemanly behavior are more often the result of the early training of an individual. They are secondary values stemming largely from the type of family background an individual has been exposed to. Thus personal comportment is linked closely to family background. Personal bearing is still considered a mark of social distinction by most Creoles regardless of their socioeconomic status. Non-creole school teachers have passed the remark on several occasions that they can always tell a child with a creole background by his reserved manners. While les belles manieres are considered old-fashioned by the younger generation, the older generation likes chivalrous attention and gave second place to the criterion of manners. Manners were ranked by the group as a whole only slightly below

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[13] Waste.

education and wealth.

7. The Criterion of Occupation

It is surprising that this criterion, all-important in American society, ranked so low among the Creoles. This could be partially due to the lack of opportunity for the group to rise to the professional level of which they feel capable. There is a marked incongruity in many cases between the style of life and standards of the family and the occupation of the head of the household. For instance this writer visited a creole home where he was impressed by the crystal chandeliers, the subtle color scheme of the decorations, the gracious manners of the host and his intelligent comments on current political events. He expected the host to be a physician or lawyer and was surprised to find out he was a retired cabinet maker. The American dream that anyone can get to the top with a little initiative and hard work has proven unworkable for the Creoles. While occupational opportunities have improved today, there is still a long way to go for the young Creole to embark freely upon the career of his choice. This explains the large out-migration of the better trained young Creoles. A small minority of Creoles are in the professional occupations catering largely to the Negro community of New Orleans. In this capacity they are better represented proportionately than the non-Creoles. The bulk of Creoles are in middle-class occupations, particularly in the construction field.

Few are in unskilled jobs.

An adapted North-Hatt scale[14] was used to evaluate occupational prestige. The result compared very favorably with the national average (see Table V). Out of 25 selected occupations, seven had the same rank than the national average while only five varied more than one rank, namely: priest, lawyer and night club singer received a higher rating while banker, and automobile repairman received a lower rating. In view of the strong Catholic faith of the Creole, it was understandable that the priest would occupy the top place, eight ranks above the national average.

Lawyers took fourth place, three ranks above the national average. The active leadership in the fight for civil rights displayed by creole lawyers might be responsible for this higher rank.

Possibly the interest the Creoles show in the performing arts is responsible for raising the status of night club singers from twentieth to seventeenth place. The entertainment field has also been a traditional avenue of social mobility for the Negro but in view of creole reticence

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[14]See National Opinion Research Center, "Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation," in Reinhard Bendix, Symour M. Lipset (ed.), Class, Status and Power (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 411-426. Reprinted from Opinion News, Vol. IX (Sept. 1, 1947), pp. 3-13. The survey on which the findings are based was done for the President's Scientific Research Board on the basis of plans developed originally by Paul K. Hatt and C.C. North.

TABLE V

RANK AND SCORES ACCORDED TO OCCUPATIONS BY CREOLE SAMPLE POPULATION AS COMPARED TO NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER STUDY

Occupation	Creole Ranking	National Ranking	Score Creole	Score National
Priest	1	8	97	86
*Physician	2	2	96	93
Supreme Court Justice	3	1	96	96
Lawyer	4	7	93	86
College professor	5	3	91	89
**Architect	6	5	91	86
**Dentist	7	6	91	86
Banker	8	4	86	88
*Building contractor	9	9	83	79
*Public school teacher	10	10	82	78
*Undertaker	11	11	75	72
Carpenter	12	14	68	65
**Insurance agent	13	12	68	68
**Mail carrier	14	13	67	66
**Plumber	15	16	66	63
**Barber	16	17	65	59
Singer in a night club	17	20	61	52
Automobile repairman	18	15	61	63
**Restaurant cook	19	18	52	54
**Truck driver	20	19	51	54
*Taxi driver	21	21	50	49
**Dock worker	22	23	46	47
**Restaurant worker	23	22	44	48
*Janitor	24	24	40	44
*Shoe shiner	25	25	27	33

*Same rank for creole and national sample.

**One rank difference between creole and national sample.

to public display, this writer does not think this point played a significant role.

The lower position given to bankers is attributed to the fact that there are no Negro bankers in New Orleans and consequently it was difficult for respondents to identify the exact status of that profession.

The reasons are not clear why automobile repairmen ranked lower; however, the difference was very small.

8. The Criterion of Personal Fame

Personal fame or individual achievement stayed consistently at the bottom of the scale in the judgments of the respondents. This attitude seems substantiated by other observations of this author. There is a paradox putting great emphasis on family background which is ascribed and personal fame which is achieved. As a creole informant put it: "If you have family background you don't need personal fame." It seems, therefore, that if an individual lacks family background, the "right" color and his moral conduct is not acceptable, all the fame in the world will not raise his prestige in the eyes of the Creoles. The Creoles are not concerned with publicity and public display. Many forbid their daughters to appear in local fashion shows and beauty contest even for charitable purposes. The only acceptable activities of this kind are those under the patronage of the local universities, and the more

exclusive carnival balls. Like the display of wealth, personal display and display of achievement are contrary to family conservatism.

9. Residence as a Criterion

There is still an attitude among the Creoles that residence downtown implies a superior status. This attitude dates back to the arrival of the Americans in the beginning of the nineteenth century when antagonism between the French and Americans resulted in dividing the city into two spheres of influence, the French downtown and the American uptown. This division was carried over to the colored population which has maintained it after it had largely disappeared among the whites. Canal street which separates uptown from downtown New Orleans still represents for some Creoles the frontier of their world. Beyond this boundary live the "uptown" or "American" Negroes, or the "other" people as non-Creoles are often referred to. As Lomax put it in popular fashion, uptown and downtown could roughly represent the following dichotomy:

Downtown	Uptown
Mulatto	Black
Upper Caste	Lower Caste
Trades and Professions	Day Laborers
Accepted (somewhat)	Jim-crowed
Educated	Illiterate
Sophisticated	From the country[15]

[15]Alan Lomax, Mister Jelly Roll, The Fortunes of Jelly Roll Morton, New Orleans Creole (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), p. 84.

Using the same idea, this author would make the following dichotomy, keeping in mind that these are value judgments of people and not necessarily facts:

Downtown	Uptown
Creole	Non-Creole
Mulatto	Negro
French culture	American culture
Catholic	Non-Catholic
Middle and upper-class	Middle and lower-class
Professionals, skilled and semi-skilled workers	Skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers
More home ownership	Less home ownership
Less crime and delinquency	More crime and delinquency

The majority of Creoles make their home below Canal Street, but a great number of "uptown" Negroes have moved downtown recently, already outnumbering the Creoles. In the new residential development of Ponchartrain Park, the population divides itself about evenly between Creole and non-Creole. In the exclusive "Sugar Hill" neighborhood near Dillard University, non-Creoles are well represented.

All in all, uptown and downtown residency still implies social differentiation between the non-Creole and the Creole and in the eyes of the latter, it implies a higher status for him.

G. General Conclusion

To the question: "What social class do you feel you belong to? Fifty per cent of the respondents answered middle-class, thirty per cent upper-middle class and nine per cent upper-class. The remaining eleven per cent said they belonged to the working class. The respondents were

less generous in ranking the Creoles as a group. According to the opinions of the respondents, the majority of the Creoles fall in the middle and working class.

Sixty-three per cent felt that there are proportionately more Creoles of "better" class than non-Creoles. Fifty-eight per cent considered being a Creole as something to be proud of. Fifty-four per cent preferred to be called a person of color or a colored person than a Negro. All of the above-mentioned figures are only slightly above the fifty per cent mark. They point to the fact that creole as a distinctive status is in a state of change. To be a Creole commands far less prestige than it used to. Dark Negroes consider most Creoles pretentious. Whites are aware of the existence of the creole subculture just enough to resent people of color referring to themselves as creole.

Reality is forcing the Creole to modify his superior attitude. Social distance between him and the non-creole is diminishing, at least on corresponding class level. He participates with him politically and economically, goes to school with him, worships with him and attends social functions with him. But public intimacy does not necessarily mean private intimacy. In his private world, the Creole tends to keep to himself.

CHAPTER IV

CROSS RACIAL MOBILITY: THE PHENOMENA OF PASSING

A. General Considerations

"Passing for white" or "going over to the other side" are both vernacular expressions describing a change in social status achieved by crossing the Negro-white color-caste line.

The practice is the result of two factors: the presence of a sizeable population of mixed ancestry whose physical traits cannot be distinguished from "pure" whites, and the tradition of assigning to the Negro, regardless of the amount of his Negro ancestry, an inferior socioeconomic status. Passing thus becomes a means for the light-skinned Negro to circumvent discrimination and segregation.

The social phenomena of passing has long interested the sociologist. It is a peculiar type of mobility sometimes referred to as diagonal mobility since it has the features of both vertical and horizontal mobility. It is generally an urban phenomenon where conditions are more favorable for a person to lose his identity. Passing is much more common in northern cities than in the South where the consequences of being found out might be disastrous. New Orleans is an exception to this rule.

Most Negroes are familiar with passing. It is particularly well-known among the Creoles of color in New Orleans. All of the subjects of this investigation had something to say about the practice ranging from the prosaic to the fantastic. Passing is often discussed among them and is generally referred to by the creole-French term passa-blanc. Most of the respondents had either close friends, relatives or members of their immediate family who were passés. Their joint recollections would add up to a sizeable amount of people who are now "white." Among prominent people rumored to be passés in New Orleans are the owners of several successful business establishments, a movie star, and a star organizer of a movement to "keep the Negro in his place."

Passing may be accidental or intentional. Accidental passing occurs frequently to light-skinned Negroes who are mistaken for whites and asked to remove themselves from activities or facilities reserved for "colored only." In such cases, the Negro will often give passive acquiescence to the error of the white, for this is less embarrassing to him than to make a correction.

Intentional passing may be temporary or permanent. Activities such as going to a white restaurant or beauty parlor to secure a service not available to Negroes is considered temporary passing.

Permanent passing is again of two types: segmental and total. In segmental passing, the light-skinned Negro

motivated by the desire to hold a job or have a career not opened to Negroes, earns his living as a white but his social life is in the Negro world.

Permanent total passing is considered the least common of all. It means that the person severs his family and friendship ties and is cut off from the Negro world. The process is gradual rather than abrupt, accompanied no doubt, by emotional conflicts, fear, and guilt. It is easier to accomplish such a transition by moving to another part of the country. Often the descendants of such persons are not aware of their Negro ancestry. There are some interesting cases of inheritance which befall people in New Orleans and which also revealed their Negro background. Some ignored the inheritance while others accepted the legacy and the inevitable exposure.

It is assumed that more men than women pass. Men are more ambitious and it is easier for them to break family and neighborhood ties. Frazier's conjecture on the cause of the differential sex ratio of 88.6 for mulattoes as against 101.8 for blacks in the 1910 U.S. census, is that the mulatto man has more frequently passed into the white race.[1] In the case of women, there is the fact that the light-skinned Negro girl is in a privileged marital position since

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[1]Frazier, op. cit., p. 186.

Negroes, particularly the successful ones, prefer fair-complexioned wives. Thus a woman can make a better match by remaining a Negro.[2]

A source of great anxiety to those who pass permanently and marry whites is the "black baby" myth. This worry is largely unfounded, for there is no scientific evidence for it. Geneticists are in general agreement on the fact that in the case of mixed marriage, if one of the partners is "pure" white, it is not possible for the child to be darker than the darker of its parents. If both parents have some Negro blood, there may be an accentuation of Negro characteristics in the child but never extreme. The matter of "pure" race is also questionable in view of historical evidence. Stuckert[3] published a paper in 1958, based on a genetic probability table extending between 1750-1950. He estimated that in 1950, 28 million white Americans had African ancestry, whereas only four million American Negroes are of pure African descent. Thus the majority of the persons with African ancestry, according to his findings, are classified as white.

B. The Measurement of Passing

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[2]Davie, op. cit., p. 405.

[3]Robert P. Stuckert, "African Ancestry of the White American Population," The Ohio Journal of Science, Vol. 58, (May, 1958), pp. 155-60.

The extent of the practice of passing is hard to measure because of its secretive nature and the social threat that revelation might bring to the subject. Nevertheless, there is an interesting literature speculating on the extent of this phenomenon. Estimates range from 2,000 to 30,000 a year for the United States.

The first and best known effort to measure the phenomena empirically was done by Hart in 1921.[4]

> His method consisted of comparing the census returns for native whites by age groups at the two censuses of 1900 and 1910. He found that the census returns showed an increase. After estimating the number who had died or emigrated, he arrived at the conclusion that the increase was the result of the passing of Negroes. He estimated the number passing at 25,000 per year.[5]

Johnson,[6] pointing out changes in the sex ratio, revealed that passing is more current among males. His yearly estimate was about 20,000.

Burma,[7] using the same method for later censuses arrived at the figure of 2,500 a year. He also pointed out that short of "marrying white," most passing is segmental rather than total.

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[4]Hornell Hart, Selective Migration as a Factor in Child Welfare in the United States, with Special Reference to Iowa. (University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, Vol. I, 1921).

[5]Davie, op. cit., p. 406.

[6]Charles S. Johnson, "The Vanishing Mulatto," Opportunity, Vol. III (October, 1925), p. 291.

[7]John H. Burma, "The Measurement of Negro passing," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LII, part I (July, 1946), pp. 18-22.

Eckard,[8] using census data in a different way arrived at the same estimate as Burma's.

It is interesting to note that in the last two studies done two decades after the others, the estimated amount of passing was nine-tenthsless than in the first studies. Whether this was due to refinement in methodology or signified a reduction in the amount of passing was not specified by the authors.

In view of the size of the white population of the United States and the cumulative errors inherent in any census compilation, one might come to the conclusion that we are dealing with too small a figure and too wide a margin of possible error to reveal accurately the extent of passing.

In the case of New Orleans, accurate data on migration would have to be secured first before one could determine how many individuals continue to cross the color line. Sociologically speaking, it is not the number that is significant, but the attitudes, feelings, and behavior of the marginal man who is able to move from the Negro to the white world.

C. Passing in New Orleans

It seems plausible to assume that the practice of passing has existed for a long time in New Orleans. The decades

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[8] E. W. Eckard, "How many Negroes 'Pass'?" American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LIII (May, 1947), pp. 498-500.

following the Louisiana Purchase were dominated by the anglo-saxon orientation towards a more rigid color-caste system, diminishing many of the privileges the free people of color had enjoyed in the previous Franco-Spanish regime. Little by little the socioeconomic advantages and the civil rights of that class were taken away. Possibly to escape an intolerable situation, some of the people of color who could, passed into the white race. It is interesting to note the disparity between the censuses of 1840 and 1850; during that decade there was a loss of over 10,000 free people of color in New Orleans.[9] Could some of them have been lost to the white group? It was so difficult to identify people by race in the nineteenth century that an ordinance in 1808 required free people of color to add f.m.c. or f.w.c. (free man of color or free woman of color) next to their name.

The practice of passing in New Orleans probably increased in the general confusion after the Civil War. The near-whites who wanted at all cost to avert the impending loss of status caused by merging free men and freedmen in one class either left the city or merged into the white race. In the post-reconstruction era of 1890, when laws were crystallized to give the Negro an inferior status, it is presumed that another cross-racial exodus occurred. Passing has always been facilitated in New Orleans by the

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[9]See pp. 51-52 above.

presence of a large number of people of the latin type with swarthy complexion and dark hair. Furthermore, Louisiana has always had the reputation of being racially heterogeneous. People in the neighboring states of Mississippi and Alabama, obsessed by the lily-white purity of their blood have occasionally cast a suspicious eye on Louisianians of French extraction. This writer has been told several times of whites of French descent who have experienced embarrassment when traveling to these neighbor states. For example, when they register in hotels, a distrusting look occasionally appears on the clerk's face after he learns of their French name and New Orleans address. Creoles of color tell the story of a Louisiana French registering in an hotel in Mississippi and being asked point blank whether or not he is white. The Frenchman answered: "I am Louisiana-white!"

To evaluate accurately the extent of passing in New Orleans today would be a difficult task.

Some of this writer's older informants, born before 1900, have wondered where the "pretty light girls" of yesterday have vanished. The trend to marry darker men is recent among the Creoles and so is large scale migration.[10]

It does not require much training in anthropometry for an alert observer interested in racial type, to notice the

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[10]Notice the drop of over 8,000 in the mulatto population between 1910-1920 reported in Table II, p. 66.

extent of Negro strain, as slight as it might be, in certain segments of New Orleans white society. In the Ninth Ward for instance, a great number of people are of undetermined "mixed" racial origin. Yet according to the census of 1958, in tracts number 18, 19, and 26, which are more typical of this situation, the population classified as Negro makes up only 6.2 per cent of the total,[11] an unrealistic number for anyone familiar with this section of town. The Creoles in the Seventh Ward, particularly those of light complexion who have "lost" relatives to this group are quite aware of this anomalous situation. Their reactions to it are ambivalent. Sometimes when the passés show obvious Negro ancestry, they are amused by their nerve and pretention. "If they'd rather be low-class whites than upper-class Negroes, let them," they say. At other times they are more resentful. For instance many blame the current school integration crisis, which occurred in the Ninth Ward, on the presence of a large number of "pseudo-Caucasians." "There is nothing more prejudiced and insecure than those Ninth Ward mulattoes," was said. It is rumored that some Creoles have actually called some of their passa-blanc relatives and threatened to expose them if they continued to participate in the current school

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[11]U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports: Special Censuses, series P-28, No. 1238 (Special Census of New Orleans, Louisiana, November 28, 1958), pp. 2, 13, 17.

boycott. It was further rumored that this action resulted in over sixty children returning to school at one time, but that threats from other parts have kept them out of school again. Some of these families are reported to have left the city fearing exposure of their Negro ancestry. However, one would assume that in most cases the racially mixed white would avoid getting involved in any situations which might bring out family skeletons. In view of the concentration of the so-called passés in the poorer Ninth Ward, one might assume that in general people who pass and remain in New Orleans seem to prefer an inconspicuous place in New Orleans white society. Furthermore, white people in New Orleans seldom speculate over the racial identity of a designated individual. They are notoriously color-blind when it comes to fine shadings. They will accept at face value whatever latin nationality a person claims he is. They are further restrained from attempting disclosure for fear of the consequences should they be wrong.

In view of the observations presented above, this writer is of the opinion that the practice of passing in New Orleans must have been more widespread than it is generally believed.

D. Anecdotes Pertaining to Passing in New Orleans

The following anecdotes, some historical and some contemporary all pertain to passing experiences in New Orleans.

1. Selected Literature

Popular writers have often used the theme of passing in their novels and movie scripts emphasizing the mysterious and dramatic aspects of this phenomenon. Judging by their success, the Caucasian reader has an avid interest in stories dealing with passing. Several authors have treated the subject of passing in New Orleans. Among others are Tinker's Toucoutou (1928),[12] a fictionalized treatment of an actual law suit described below; Ferber's Saratoga Trunk (1941), and Show Boat (1926) in which both heroines are passing, the former brazenly, the latter innocently. George W. Cable is without any doubt the master of this theme. In Madame Delphine (1881), a sympathetic priest gives absolution to a quadroon who torn with grief has denied her motherhood so that her daughter may marry the white gentleman she loves. In an earlier story, 'Tite Poulette (1874), the plot is essentially the same, except that the daughter turns out to be really white. In Strange True Stories of Louisiana (1889), Cable retells the famous contest for freedom of Salome Muller, the white slave, in 1845. This was ironically, a reversed case of accidental passing. As an orphaned German emigrant, Salome was sold into bondage at an early age and was accidently recognized by a relative, twenty-five years

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[12]See bibliography for full entry of books cited as literature on passing.

later. Salome was then a woman in her late twenties and the mother of quadroon children. The Louisiana Supreme Court decreed her free.

2. L'Affaire Toucoutou

This was a celebrated law suit which took place in New Orleans shortly before the Civil War.[13] It captivated the public interest, was the subject of a creole poem and later of a novel. The case was further immortalized in a popular satirical song which has died out in this century.

It appears that a woman familiarly known as "Toucoutou" was a passa-blanc who had married a white man. Once removed from her own circle she proceded to avoid her family and former friends. Incensed by her arrogance, some people of color retaliated by whispering behind her back and making sly remarks when they saw her on the street. One woman was more brazen than the others and Toucoutou sued her for slander after she openly accused her of "having a tignon in the family."

Judicial contests of this kind were not uncommon in those days. People of uncertain racial origin had recourse to the law to establish officially their white status. Once they were legally white, their position was secure. By the same token, a court decision might backfire for if it was

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[13]See Desdunes, op. cit., pp. 83-88.

revealed that the family had some colored blood, their status was set once and for all as colored.

Toucoutou took her chance and lost. Her appeal to the Louisiana Supreme Court was denied. People of color then had the same mixed feelings about passing as they have today. Some approved while others disapproved, but all resented being snubbed. Little sympathy was shown for Toucoutou.

The popular poet-satirist Beaumont, a Creole of color, capitalized on the situation and wrote his best remembered piece. It was a lampoon on the lawsuit. Overnight it was on everybody's lips, was shortly transcribed to music and became the Mardi Gras song of the year.[14]

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[14]Ah! Toucoutou, ye conin vous
Vous cé tin morico
Na pas savon qui tacé bon
Pou blanchi vous la peau.

Quand blancs loyés va donnin bal,
Vous pli capab aller
Comment va fé, valliante diabal
Vous qui l'aimez danser?

Mo pré fini mo ti chanson
Pas qui mauvi dormi
Mé mo pensé que la leson
Longtemps li va servi.

(Ah! Toucoutou, we all know you
You're just a passa-blanc
There is no hope to find a soap
To make your skin like blanc.

When white folk, chère, will give a dance
Don't you say you don't care
When white folk, chère, will give a dance
To go I bet you won't dare.

I have finished my little song
Because I want to sleep
But I do think that this lesson
Will help to make you meek).

Desdunes, op. cit., p. 87 (translation mine).

The song haunted Toucoutou wherever she went. Knowing no peace and because of the awkward status of her husband and son, the three of them left for Cuba never to return.

3. The Ralph Dupas Case

A more recent case which questioned officially the racial identity of a person, involved the well-known New Orleans lightweight boxer Ralph Dupas. This 1957 case was given considerable coverage by the national press and radio. Severe criticism was directed at Louisiana by the National Athletic Association and the mass media for permitting such an action which was called: "An unbelievable action, in a civilized nation in the middle of the twentieth century."[15] The Creoles of color followed the case with interest.

The issue came about as the result of a 1956 statute of the Louisiana Legislature prohibiting athletic contests between the colored and white race. The problem concerned itself with the race of Ralph Dupas. Testimonies were brought to the Louisiana State Athletic Commission that Mr. Dupas was not white and there was question of cancelling a scheduled bout in order to conform with the new state law. The fight promoter petitioned the Civil District Court to prevent the State Athletic Commission from cancelling the

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[15]Heard by this writer over a national broadcast from New York in 1957.

fight. In the injunction petition was a letter from the Commission to the fight promoter stating that Mr. Dupas was a Negro. It was alleged that according to the public records of the Louisiana State Department of Health, the race of one Ralph Duplessis, alias Dupas, son of Eveline and Peter Duplessis, born in 1935 in Plaquemines Parish, is reflected to show him to be of the colored race on his original birth record.[16]

At the second Commission hearing, the attorney for Dupas called five witnesses to the stand including his mother and the young fighter himself. The other three were old friends who had known the family for many years and said that the Dupas have always been considered and accepted as white. Testimony that Ralph was born in New Orleans was in direct conflict with statements entered at the first Commission meeting. A letter from state Senator W. M. Rainach was read at the hearing. Rainach's letter said that a Mrs. Gravolet, a resident of Plaquemines Parish, had written to inform him that "she knows of her own knowledge and can prove that Ralph Dupas is a Negro from Plaquemines Parish, who was formally known as Ralph Duplessis." Mrs. Gravolet appeared at the meeting and maintained this position. Dupas' mother, Mrs. Evelyn Dupas, was asked on the witness

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[16]New Orleans Times Picayune, March 29, 1957.

stand of the date of her marriage and could not recall. She replied yes to the question: Have you always considered yourself a white woman? Ralph Dupas related on the witness stand that he had attended white public schools in New Orleans. He said he had always considered himself a white man, had associated with white persons and had been accepted by them. Documentary evidence produced included a baptismal certificate from St. Peter and St. Paul Church (in the Ninth Ward), a marriage certificate and birth certificates for other members of the Dupas family.[17]

The Louisiana State Athletic Commission eventually ruled that no evidence had been presented to justify barring lightweight Ralph Dupas from the scheduled prize fight.

The whole matter was eventually dropped. In the meantime, irreparable harm was done to the family. This writer knows of a relative of the family who recently has experienced difficulty in securing a birth certificate in order to get married. She was told by a birth registration clerk that no one with the name Dupas or Duplessis will get an affidavited white birth certificate, that as far as their office was concerned the case was not closed.

It is rumored that the whole scandal started as the result of professional jealousy within boxing circles. A

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[17]New Orleans Times Picayune, April 3, 1957.

few months after the last hearing, the statute barring interracial athletic events was quietly repealed by the state legislature.

4. Personal Anecdotes

The following are reminiscences and personal passing experiences reported by Creoles of color. They are classified in three groups, accidental passing, temporary passing, and total passing.

a) Accidental Passing

"I was sitting in the middle section of a Greyhound bus when the driver came over and asked me to move. I became immediately defensive and said: 'And why should I move?' The driver was very polite and said in a low voice: 'You have to make room for the colored people.' Putting on my white act I replied: Oh! I understand,' and followed the driver who carried my baby to the front seat."

"I had a minor car accident near my neighborhood and the other driver, a young white man was at fault. The policeman was very courteous until he saw my driver's license and recognized me as the wife of a known Negro businessman. The policeman attitude changed immediately and started blaming the accident on me to such a point that the young white man asked the policeman:' Why is she suddenly at fault?'"

"I was guilty of a minor traffic contravention. A cop stopped me and lectured me. He was about to let me go and was handing me back my driver's license when he noticed on it that I was colored. Without a word he proceded to write out a ticket."

"I was very surprised when I looked at my new driver's license the other day and noticed that the clerk had put down my race as white. Worried I asked my husband what to do about it. He told me to ferget it, that I will have less trouble as white."

"When I use the streetcar, I generally sit towards the middle so that my colored friends won't think that I am trying to pass. I noticed that no Negroes ever sit next to me."

"My mother was erroneously recorded as white on her baptismal certificate and never had a birth certificate. She had all kind of problems trying to prove her racial identity when she married my father. They thought that she was a white woman trying to pass for colored so that she could marry a colored man."

b) Temporary Passing

"Negro beauticians don't know how to fix my hair so I am obliged to go to white beauty parlors. Often I have to sit and listen silently as the operator tells me all about the 'niggers.' I am afraid to give them a piece of my mind for if I had to produce identification papers or give my address for one reason or another, I might get into trouble."

"My girl friend and I went to the other end of town to get our hair fixed in a white beauty parlor. My girl friend was all through but I still had curlers in my hair when the Negro maid called the operator aside and told her we were colored. The operator came back to me furious and said: 'Don't you know we don't fix niggers' hair here?' I replied: 'Well you didn't ask me what I was.' I had to take the curlers out of my hair myself after the beautician told me to get out."

"I always go to exclusive white beauty parlors because I like the latest hair styles which they offer rather than have my hair 'fried' in a Negro beauty parlor. I generally never return to the same one so that I will not become too familiar with the operators and have to answer personal questions. I generally make an appointment by telephone with a heavy accent and an impossible foreign name. When I get there I act like an imperious foreigner of few words. They always give me the royal treatment. While I wait, I pretend to read a French magazine. I don't read French but I always buy a magazine which has big headlines in French. When I think of all the trouble I have to go through just to get the service I can afford and am entitled to, I often wonder why the good Lord made me a Negro."

"I received as a house guest a young English girl who had roomed with me at the University of Michigan and who was passing through New Orleans. I was at a loss to think of a way to entertain her and show her New Orleans. The night of her arrival, I was invited to a nice affair but I decided not to take her along. If it had been a white boy, there would have been no question about it but I know how the Southerners feel about protecting their pure white lilies from the company of Negro men. I also feared that my friends at the party might have felt nervous by her presence. In order to show her the French Quarter, I did the following thing. I invited along a creole couple who are very light and we went to one of the famous restaurants. Each of us pretended we were of a different nationality. Two of us actually spoke foreign languages. They fussed over us and had the band play a special number for us. I was so nervous that I actually felt miserable. I could hardly swallow my food, I was all choked up in my throat."

"When we go to the movie show on Canal Street, sometimes the cashier asked us meekly what we are. We generally pretend not to hear her and walk on in. This way we don't have to deny that we are colored which makes us feel as if we are ashamed of our race."

"Each time I go out with a fellow who is darker than myself, the police stops us, so I generally try to go out with fellows of my own complexion. I belong to a social club in which all the girls are of my complexion. We don't discriminate against darker girls but none of us would think of suggesting one for membership. The reason is that we could no longer go wherever we want such as the opera, movies on Canal Street, the French Quarter, Pontchartrain Beach, etc. I hate to go to Lincoln Beach.[18] The dark Negroes are always taunting me and make me feel uncomfortable. At Pontchartrain Beach no one bothers me."

c) Permanent Passing

"I know of a case of twin sisters. One married a white man and passed into the white race and the other remained on the Negro side. Since they were close, the white sister would come to visit her Negro sister occasionally. She generally brought her school-age daughter with her. One day the daughter refused to go.

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[18]A city beach in New Orleans reserved for Negro patrons only.

She said: 'Why do we have to visit that nigger family? My school friends who live next door to them, have seen us go there and they tease me about it.' The mother was very upset to hear her daughter speak this way about her own aunt and cousins. She had never told her daughter that it was her sister. To make a clear breast of it she told her Negro sister about it. The sister replied: 'Don't tell me those things, they upset me. I don't want to hear them, just don't come to see me anymore.'"

"The wife of a prominent Creole was looking over the Sunday papers when she saw in the society section the picture of a cousin whose family had gone over the other side. The young girl was making her debut in white society. The wife cut out the picture to put in the family scrap-book and commented: 'I wonder if the poor girl knows she has Negro blood? Wait until she gets old, they'll be able to tell then.'"[19]

"I know of a group of creole girls who have passed completely over to the other side. First they started to work as white. Next they moved away from here and went to live in the French Quarter. Eventualy, they stopped coming to church here and went instead to a white Catholic church. Next they turned their head the other way when they saw us in the street. They spoke creole among themselves and pretended they were Puerto Ricans. They are living like pigs all crowded up in one room in the Quarter just to say they are white."

"This happened a long time ago before World War I. The daughter of a prominent white family whom we knew were passés was killed in an accident on Canal Street. A newspaper reported that she was colored and her brother sued the paper for slander. They said they were Spanish but they lost their suit when old records were dug up. You know, after they exposed that family, they vanished overnight. They were prominent but nobody ever heard anything about them since or knew of their whereabouts."

"The man who owns this market claims he is white but we all know he is creole. Now that he is old and

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[19]Light Negroes have a tendency to darken with age and negroid features tend to become more pronounced.

his white wife died, I am almost sure that he wishes to be creole again. He hires creole girls to work in the store because he likes them. I worked there myself and I can tell he is creole by the way he talks and the things he knows. Perhaps the reason why he takes such good care of his creole employees is because of his guilt for having left the group."

E. Attitudes of Creoles Towards Passing

In general Creoles approve of segmental and temporary passing. The only moral dilemma is to have to deny being a Negro if asked. After all, they didn't make the laws to keep the races apart. It is the white man's code not theirs that is broken. As Cable said in one of his stories: "From what race do they want to keep my daughter separate? She is seven parts white! The law did not stop her from being that."[20]

When it comes to total passing the Creoles have mixed feelings. All respondents in the sample population resented being shunned and ignored by their "formerly-Negro-now-white" relatives or friends. Most disapproved of the implication total passing has of being ashamed of one's Negro ancestry. Many felt that instead of devoting so much effort to eradicate proofs of Negro ancestry, passés would be better off devoting their energy to the breaking down of racial barriers, thus benefitting the whole group instead of just

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[20] Cable, op. cit., p. 233.

themselves. However, not all respondents had the same attitude. It is interesting to note the difference in attitude between the sons of two creole professional men. Both were of fair complexion, of the same age, go to the same school and apparently both come from the same socioeconomic class and have the same degree of creole cultural background. One said: "The Negro isn't gaining anything by being a Negro and if he can do better why not pass?" The other answered: "Negroes ought to be proud of what they are and not pass for something they are not." It was noticed that lighter Creoles who could pass were more tolerant of the practice than darker Creoles. Creoles who cannot pass, although few admit it, are probably resentful of the advantages enjoyed by Creoles who can pass for white in segregated New Orleans. Sometimes within the same family one member can pass and another cannot. The author knows of a young man who was particularly resentful of the fact that his near-white mother took his younger brother who could pass to a white movie house and left him home. The light Creoles who occationally pass are quick to confirm that darker Negroes make it a practice to expose them. One Creole explained this by saying: "The darker Negroes expose them as a result of being snubbed and shunned by those who are passing. I myself when I happen to pass, I never ignore them. If white people can say hello to their Negro friends, so can I."

Notwithstanding the obvious social and economic advantages of passing, there are many Creoles of the near-white type in New Orleans who do not pass. An important consideration is the inherent feeling of strain and tension in the passing situation. However, more significant is that today the Creole, regardless of his color, is finding a new pan-Negro solidarity and racial identification. This is the result of the rapid social changes engendered by World War II and culminated by the Supreme Court decision of 1954. The fight for civil rights, equality and dignity, has developed an esprit de corps non-existent in the thirties. While the light-skinned Negro suffers less from the indignities of racial discrimination, he knows what they are. He might consider himself superior to black Negroes but is sympathetic to his plight and resents the white man's injustice to him. Today Creoles generally prefer to pitch in the fight for equality rather than disappear in the white race. It becomes a moral dilemma to deny his group heritage for a personal advancement. Also, contrary to the expectation of the majority of white Americans, there are desirable values in Negro life, such as solidarity, warmth, informality, mirth, which for some transcend the hardships of discrimination and the stigma of belonging to a minority group.

CHAPTER V

THE CREOLE FAMILY

A. Introduction

The institution of the family is generally considered as the fundamental social unit of every society. With the family rests the responsibility of passing on the cultural heritage of a group to its new members through the process of socialization. Similarly the family system of the creole subculture is chiefly responsible for having maintained to this day the characteristic way of life which differentiates the Creole from the "American" Negro in New Orleans. Creole family institutions are quite unlike those of the non-creole Negro and the explanation lies partly in the unique history of the subculture.

B. Historical Background of the Creole Family System

Unlike the American Negro family system, the Creole family system does not necessarily have its roots in slavery. To be sure, any Creole of color could, by tracing his lineage far enough, eventually find an ancestor who was brought to the New World as a slave. However, the Creoles or free people of color, emerged as a group only after manumission and their social institutions crystallized

outside the confines of slavery. It is from the French Creoles that the ancestors of the Creoles of color derived their family system and other social institutions during the eighteenth century.

New Orleans in its early days had an acute shortage of white females and a considerable surplus of colored females. A glance at Table VI will reveal how unbalanced the sex ratio was for the white and Negro population of New Orleans until 1860. No doubt this situation created a favorable climate for tolerant attitudes towards cross-racial unions between white men and women of color during the French and Spanish regimes of the eighteenth century. The custom, although frowned upon by the Americans, continued during the nineteenth century up to the Civil War.

1. The Placage System

The placage system flourished in the creole civilization of the French West Indies and Louisiana. It was a form of marital arrangement between a white man and a woman of color. Though placage enjoyed neither legal nor religious recognition, it often had all the other features of a recognized marriage. Placage implied taking a mate for pleasure, companionship and a measure of home life without the assumption by either person of legal obligation. As Placage became an accepted custom in the male dominated society of old New Orleans, these unions became institutionalized and automatically implied certain responsibilities for those who

TABLE VI

RATIO OF MALES PER HUNDRED FEMALES IN THE WHITE AND NEGRO POPULATION OF NEW ORLEANS: SELECTED YEARS[1]

Census Year	White	Negro		Total Population
		Free	Slave	
1721[2]	223.8			
1805[3]	114.7	66.2	76.2	85.7
1810	130.6			
1820	161.5	63.9	58.3	94.5
1830	169.9	53.0	60.5	94.4
1840	141.8	78.2	62.5	94.1
1850	137.1	65.4	69.5	90.6
1860	108.5	71.9	67.2	82.5
1870				89.2
1880				87.5
1890	91.2	80.6		85.9
1900	91.1	82.5		86.8
1910	95.6	84.7		90.0
1920	98.3	86.9		95.3
1930	93.8	85.4		89.6
1940	91.7	85.8		89.3
1950	92.0	86.6		90.3
1958[4]	91.9	88.1		90.6

[1]Based on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Census of the United States. Calculation mine.

[2]Wood, op. cit. N.B.: Children are not included in this ratio.

[3]New Orleans. City Council, op. cit.

[4]Census Bureau. Current Population Reports: Special Censuses, series P-28, No. 1238. Special Census of New Orleans, Louisiana, November 28, 1958, P. 2.

contracted them. Therefore, placage was often a permanent and stable relationship with strong affectional ties and through which provision was made for the welfare of offspring. Since placage was not restricted to single males, it sometimes amounted to concubinage.

The custom of placage probably had its origin in the gallic custom of taking a mistress. In the case of married men, taking a mistress compensated for the affectional limitations of a mariage de convenance. Since an arranged marriage was mainly concerned with promoting or perpetuating the social prestige of a family, romantic adventures and sexual gratification outside of marriage was tolerated for the husband so long as a semblance of decorum was maintained. This custom, brought over to the New World took on a "creole" flavor: the mistress became a woman of color.

Historical accounts describe placage principally as a form of concubinage. One would think that every white man in New Orleans had a concubine of color. In view of the high sex ratio for the white population it seems more safe to assume that many placages were not concubinages but unsanctioned marriages.

It is presumed that the free woman of color entered willingly into such alliances. There was a scarcity of males within her own group and a mesalliance with a slave was out of the question. Another possibility was to remain a

spinster. In a society placing high value on motherhood and children, leaving no alternative role for a woman, spinsterhood was a dismal fate. Placage with a white man was sanctioned more or less by the group. "Un bon placage vaut mieux qu'un mauvais mariage,"[1] was an old saying among the Creoles of color. The socioeconomic advantages resulting from such a union were more important than the fact that it was not recognized by the law nor approved by the church. To have children lighter than oneself was also considered highly desirable. Such unions also meant blood ties with white families and greater opportunities in education, inheritance of property, economic advantages and protection. Placages were not exclusively contracted with white men of the upper-class.

The reasons which motivated white men to enter into placage were the following: The scarcity of marriageable women of their own race, the physical attractiveness of women of mixed blood and the pleasant companionship of these women. The woman of color made it an art to please her mate since the law did not protect her in case of desertion.

In time, as a result of these unions, a process of "bleaching" occurred. With the influx of the mulatresses from Saint Domingue, the population of New Orleans around

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[1]A good placage is better than a bad marriage.

around 1820 included a sizeable number of "quadroon"[2] women.

2. The Quadroon Balls

The quadroon balls probably started at the turn of the nineteenth century. At first they were no more than formal receptions for the purpose of introducing young quadroon girls to would be "protectors" in the most dignified way under the circumstances. In this way, they had the same function as a debutante party.

> Quadroon balls were of a very special nature. To them quadroon mothers would take their daughters who had reached the age to make an "arrangement." White men danced with them and when one had made a choice, he established her in a small house on Bourbon or Rampart Street, whereas she provided him his second home and his second family, repeating the cycle her mother had completed before her. Visitors to the city, taken to the balls, almost invariably extolled the voluptuous beauty of the quadroon women. Locally their beauty was explained as the result of selective breeding--only the most desirable as paramours, were chosen from generation to generation.[3]

In their heyday, between 1830-1850, the quadroon balls became semi-public elaborate affairs dominated by the personality of a new type of quadroon: the courtisane. As we shall see later, historical attention has been focussed on the quadroon courtisanes which has resulted in a one-sided

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[2]Quadroon is conceived in this chapter as a person of mixed blood with only a perceptible trace of Negro ancestry, or a person with no visible evidence of Negro blood but known to have Negro ancestry.

[3]Arlin Turner, George W. Cable (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1956), p. 15.

view of the curious institution of the quadroon.

It is more likely that the majority of quadroons retired to respectable and uneventful home life once an "arrangement" had been made. Comparatively few were intent on making careers as "golden skinned Pompadours." The latter did not attach themselves exclusively to one man but had an entourage of prominent white men. They are responsible for giving the whole quadroon complex its sensational flavor and in time the quadroon balls became part of the general antebellum myth.

To summarize we must assume that there were two types of quadroon: the quadroon courtisanes and the quadroon placee.

3. The Quadroon Courtisanes

Some writers speculate that the quadroon courtisanes appeared on the New Orleans scene with the arrival of free women of color from Saint Domingue. More elegant and sophisticated than their Louisiana sisters, their customs and manners were soon imitated. They scoffed at the old edict of Governor Miro, restricting their dress. They wore the obligatory tignons, but theirs were made out of madras silk tied in provocative ways and adorned with jewelry. Rather than becoming a symbol of subservient status, the humble tignon became an exotic sex symbol, the mere sight of it quickened the male pulse.

During the height of the quadroon ball era, the quadroon courtisanes were the celebrities of the time. They occupied the role of the Zsa Zsa Gabors of today. They were the object of gossip in newspapers and conversations. Their fashions, if not copied openly, influenced others. They were treated with respect in public and in shops for they were good customers and had powerful people protecting them. They had great personal freedom within the realm of good taste which they imposed upon themselves. Extravagant and unconventional behavior was expected of them and was part of their role. Duels were fought over them, and through them much property was passed from the whites to the free people of color. They were the mortal enemies of white women whose attempts to downgrade them were generally ineffective since the quadroons had captivated the imagination of their husbands and sons. They were a threat to domestic harmony. Should the quadroons schedule a ball the same night as a white dance, the men would turn up at the quadroon ball thus condemning white women to be wall flowers for the evening.

Dela Houssaye gave an interesting description of the private life of the quadroon courtisane in her serial novel Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orleans. Based on newspaper clippings and a manuscript written by her grandmother between 1800-1830, she described these courtisanes--as have others--as mercenary, vengeful vampires, yet glamorous and

irresistible. It is impossible to verify the authenticity of her source and the sources of other writers on the subject are equally obscure. In one of her stories, Madame dela Houssaye reproduced a letter written by a quadroon courtisane, which she claimed she copied from a newspaper of the time. The letter is addressed to the judge who had jilted the courtisane after spending several years in France with her where she was accepted in society as his wife. She tells him of her revenge---a revenge which ranges from kidnapping to incest and ruins the life of several persons.[4]

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[4]"When you'll receive this letter, Judge Alfred D..., I will be gone from New Orleans and your fury will not be able to reach me. Oh! how you will want to tear me apart with your nails and inflict upon me tortures after tortures. But none of your tortures could equal those that I have designed for you. You remember don't you, the oath that I made when you abandoned me so cruelly?

This oath, I have fulfilled and my vengeance has surpassed my hopes. The best proof that it was right is that God himself gave me the means and removed all obstacles on my path. Heaven gave you two children and it was by striking these children that I decided to strike back at you.

To dispell your suspicions, I feigned a pregnancy and an imaginary delivery. With the help of one of your servants, I had your little daughter kidnapped.

The box that I am sending you contains the clothes and jewelry worn by your daughter at the time of her abduction, the very clothes you advertised for so long. Examine them nothing is missing . . . you are convinced I hope.

I have warned you Alfred D.. that your wife would not survive the torments I prepared for her. She died of sorrow for having lost her daughter. And now, honorable judge, let me tell you how I raised your daughter: I made her the vilest courtisane that could be found in the gutters of New Orleans. I have sold her to all who could afford my price. At sixteen she has had at least twenty-five lovers and I managed to snuff out of her soul all instincts of honor and decency. I have dragged her in the most obscene orgies; I have shown her things that would make you blush and tremble

The quadroon courtisanes apparently fulfilled a role in the society of New Orleans. They provided color and spark to the New Orleans scene, and were secret object of emulation by the white and colored female population. To the white men who could afford them, they provided a type of companionship, entertainment and sexual diversion which the latter did not find in their own home. Kingsley Davis in a noted article points out that in a society where there is a sharp separation between the private world of the family and the outer world and where the wife is kept secluded, two classes of women will be produced, the one legitimate and

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as manly as you are . . . she is today the avowed mistress of old W. N. And this is not all; I have sworn to you that my vengeance would horrify mankind and that even demons would shudder from it in the depth of hell. Listen! Listen! I have drawn your son to me; I have used everything in my power to stir up in his heart an incestuous passion for a sister he had never known . . . Ah! ah! ah! what do you say of this, Judge? And I succeeded beyond all hopes . . . I do not recall who said that vengeance is the pleasure of the Gods but one thing for sure, he said a great truth. My heart beats with elation when I think of my vengeance! Listen some more! A little patience my noble judge! To meet the price that I set on the sale of your daughter, your son stole $10,000 and the police warned by me, will arrest him tomorrow and throw him in jail like a common thief, while waiting for his name (yours too) to be dragged in court and to be sentenced to the penitentiary.

And now judge Alfred D., a last surprise: go around 10 o'clock to No. 136 St. Louis Street. The door will not be locked, open it, climb the stairs and enter in the first room to your right. There you will find your daughter in the arms of her own brother."

Sidonie dela Houssaye, Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle-Orleans, 1800-1830 (Bonnet Carre, La.: Imprimerie du Meschacebe, 1894), pp. 63-64 (translation mine).

boring, the other illegitimate and interesting.[5] The disappearance of the quadroon courtisanes from New Orleans when the balls went out of existence at the start of the Civil War, raises several conjectures. Where did they go? Who took their place?

As to who took the courtisanes' place, the collapse of the economic system of New Orleans with the Civil War and the consequent legacy of poverty and racial antagonism, might lead to the conclusion that their place was left vacant. On a much lower level, organized prostitution started with the Union occupation leading to the blossoming of the institution into the Storyville era of the nineties. Both white and mulatto women were inmates of the palatial bordellos.

As to where the courtisanes disappeared to, there were occasional speculations in the newspapers a few decades later over what had happened to them. Probably the most famous ones left the city and the others who stayed passed over into the white race. Officials could be bribed into issuing new identification papers on which racial designation was altered. Many of the quadroons according to historical reports were indistinguishable from whites. In view

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[5]Kingsley Davis, "Prostitution," in Robert K. Merton, Robert A. Nisbet (ed.), Contemporary Social Problems (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), p. 281.

of the above, it is unlikely that their descendants are among the Creoles of color of today. The courtisanes were women of color but they belonged to an anomalous class which did not fit into the class structure of the Creoles of color. Their social life was among themselves and the white gentlemen they entertained. They did not entertain men of their own color, nor did they participate in the social life of the Creoles of color. Their marginal social position might be compared to that of the non-comformist artist group of contemporary American society which defies classification in the American social structure.

4. The Quadroon Placee

The other type of quadroon entered into lasting placage with a white man and attended the quadroon balls only as a means of making an alliance. Her placage was subject to the approval of her mother who chaperoned her.

> When a man made a declaration of love to a girl of this class she would admit or deny, as the case may be, her happiness in receiving it; but supposing she was favorably disposed, she would usually refer the applicant to her mother. The mother inquired into the circumstances of the suitor; ascertained whether he was able to maintain a family; and if satisfied with him, in these and other respects, required from him security that he would support her daughter in a style suitable to the habits she had been bred to, and that, if he should ever leave her, he would give her a certain sum for her future support, and a certain additional sum for each of the children she should then have.[6]

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[6]Frederick L. Olmsted, A Journey in the Seaboard Slaves States (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), vol. II, p. 244.

For many, placage was an accommodation to the legal bar against interracial marriage. The general modest and retiring behavior of these women made them acceptable in the society of free people of color and it is plausible that today many of their descendants are among the Creoles of color. No stigma was attached to being a placée. The Catholic Church generally flexible to the demands and needs of the time and of the particular society it serves, made only a feeble attempt to condemn the system. Open placage generally ceased after the Civil War when racial conflict no longer made it acceptable.

5. The Conventional Family of Color

It must be pointed out that colaterally to cross-racial placage in the nineteenth century, a substantial class of free people of color existed who had established conventional families. The achievements of that class were discussed in a previous chapter.[7] A few traced their white ancestry to a legal interracial marriage but the majority originated at one time or another as offspring of cross-racial placage. However, they did not perpetuate the custom. Sons of quadroons generally married free women of color and established conventional families. Sometimes the daughters of quadroons broke the pattern set by their mothers and

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[7]See cultural renaissance among the Creoles of color discussed on pp. 42-43 above.

entered into legal marriage with Creoles of color thereby continuously swelling the number of normal juridic families. Inherited wealth and superior education and culture made them eligible to membership in this class.[8] This class of free people of color which married within its own ranks, observed the Catholic mores and frowned upon cross-racial liaisons not because they were interracial but because they were outside the church. It is this last group which is chiefly responsible for perpetuating the Franco-Catholic values adopted from the white Creoles which has shaped the creole family of today.

C. The Creole Family of Today

1. General Characteristics

The creole family is characterized by its unity and patriarchal orientation. It is the result of generations of stability reinforced by the strong adherence to Catholic mores. The family is generally large. It is conjugal in the sense that the father is usually the head of the household and his wife the mistress of the house. Yet the creole family has certain features of the extended family; often a grandmother or maiden aunt lives with the family. A good deal of time is devoted to visiting relatives and second or

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[8] E. Franklin Frazier, The Free Negro Family, a Study of Family Origins before the Civil War (Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1932), p. 32.

even third cousins are included. In general the Creoles enjoy a family life which is rich in personal rewards. Households are lively. Neighbors, friends and relatives visit often. Those who come too often are called "door poppers."[9] Meals are eaten en famille. In the past there were always extra people at the table, today the practice has somewhat decreased. Parents and children participate in activities together. Before the days of television, whole families would sit on their front galleries in the evening dressed neatly saying good evening to all passers-by as they fanned themselves with latanier fans. The husband is the provider and authority figure in the creole family. Extra-family attractions do not lure the creole husband away from his home. The wife's role is conceived as that of a housekeeper and mother. She is not expected to work outside her home unless there is an economic necessity. In the sample, 78 per cent of the respondents had strong reservations about married women working. They considered running a home as the sole career of a married woman. The Creoles seem to take great interest in their children. Their display of affection is similar to the French; such as much kissing

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[9]Many creole superstitions, rarely practiced today, exist as means of getting rid of unwanted visitors. For instance if you sprinkle salt and pepper behind a person's back he won't come back. These probably stem from the prevalence of the practice of dropping in other people's home. For other superstitions see Chapter VIII.

on both cheeks. On the other hand discipline is strict. Parents expect obedience and respect and usually get it. Siblings are attached to each other and "stick together" as they say. School teachers have reported that creole youngsters are known for coming to the defense of a sibling involved in a fight. Children are expected to live at home until they get married. Should a young creole--man or woman--decide to move out and live by himself, Creoles would be suspicious of his motives and expect him to be up to "no good." It is after much hesitation that they consent to send their children away to college. Contrary to white society but similarly to Negro society, daughters are generally given more importance than sons. More sacrifices are made for their education, preferences have been expressed by expectant mothers to have a girl. The same is true in adoption patterns.[10] To summarize, in the creole belief system the family comes first, then the church, then the community and then maybe the world at large.

Most of the respondents in this investigation felt that creole family life was different from that of non-Creoles. They pointed to closer ties between members, more intimate communication, higher standards expected of the children, and the fullness and satisfaction of creole family life.

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[10]Rohrer, op. cit., p. 320.

The remainder said they knew too little of the "others" family life to be in a position to compare.

In its attachment to la vie de famille, family rituals and traditions, respect shown to parents, and loyalty to kin the creole family is not dissimilar to the middle-class French family.

2. Changes in the Creole Family of Today

One must not forget that the creole family lives in an American cultural milieu which is gradually seeping through the wall of resistance the Creole has built around his private life. To each of the general characteristics enumerated above there are some exceptions which require specifications. The forces of social change are constantly at work to bring the creole family more in line with the American family.

While the family is still comparatively large, the proverbial creole family with a dozen children is rare today though it still exists among the country creoles who have moved recently to New Orleans. Among the respondents between the ages of 15 and 19, the average number of children per family was 4.3, while for their parents it was 5.4. There was one case of a family of 12 children in each generation. In the sample, family size varied according to the same national trend. The creole family gets smaller as the educational and income level gets higher. While many

Creoles express conservative Catholic attitudes towards family limitation, this does not necessarily mean that birth control is not practiced by some.

Not all families are patriarchal, but those which are not tend to be of the egalitarian type and are seldom matriarchal.

The role of the parents varies between classes. The tradition-oriented middle-class artisan family was described above. Typically the wife takes care of the home and children, and the father goes out to earn a living. The father is generally the decision maker. This writer has observed that many children of this class have a tendency to say: "I will have to ask my father," when a permission has to be secured. In the lower-class, role definition is more blurred. It is not unusual to see an unemployed husband of that class taking care of the household chores while his wife is working in a factory. The lower-class has tended to assimilate more the family mores of the non-creole Negro. In the upper-class, married women tend to keep occupations they held before marriage and engage in activities outside of their family. The upper-class family has emancipated itself from many of the traditional creole mores through greater interaction with the outside world. It is generally more equalitarian in authority distribution and the individualism of its members is respected.

3. Some Traditions Observed by the Creole Family

Most of the traditions which typify the creole family are related to their Franco-Catholic background. It is around the crucial phases of an individual's life cycle--birth, puberty, marriage, and death--and their symbolic religious counterparts that elaborate family rituals are observed.

The christening of an infant, generally a few weeks after birth according to Catholic traditions, is the occasion for a big celebration. It is a gay affair and families often spend more than they can afford to assure its success. It is a family celebration held at home and relatives will make it a point to attend. The role of godparents is taken seriously by the relatives who assume it. Food and drinks are served and festivities may continue late into the night.

First communion is also the occasion for family festivities. Traditionally calas tout chaud[11] are served at the large communion breakfast. It is followed by a tour of the neighborhood calling on families whose children are also celebrating their first communion. In each home visited food and amusements are provided for the children. In the old days it was an opportunity for the girls to show off

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[11] Rice cakes served hot. See Chapter VIII for a description of creole food.

their elaborate first communion dress. Older respondents showed pictures of themselves wearing their communion dress, made by expensive modistes with imported European lace, with matching fan, parasol and prayer book. Sometimes three generations have used the same dress or its embroidered parts out of sentimental value. The celebration of confirmation at the age of twelve follows a similar pattern.

The creole wedding celebration does not differ substantially from that of other Catholic Americans. The trend is towards a formal reception outside the home. The long Nuptial Mass is still in vogue.

Many traditions surround the advent of a death in a family. The French custom of using the home rather than a funeral parlor is dying out but nevertheless still exists. Friends and relatives usually stay all night and refreshments are served. The gathering is restrained although some informants described it as a bouzin.[12] For some it is the opportunity for a family reunion or to see old friends not seen in years. The author knows of an old lady who recently lost her husband. In spite of her grief, she was overjoyed by the presence of her twelve children reunited together for the first time in twenty years. Most had traveled from California, Chicago and Detroit to be present at their father's

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[12]Creole word for a good time. See Chapter VIII for a list of creole words still in use today.

funeral. The custom of wearing mourning, identical to French mourning, is seldom practiced today although it was prevalent within the living memory of some respondents:

> "I remember when my grandfather died in 1918, the horses which drew the hearse were draped in black. My grandmother wore a long veil and my father wore a black band around his arm. I wore second mourning. The climate here doesn't lend itself to long mourning and the doctor advised my grandmother to cut hers short because of her weak health. Nevertheless she kept her deep mourning a year and after that she wore second mourning. The veil was replaced by a net around her hat. During the mourning period we used white stationary with black border and our handkerchiefs were also bordered in black. I believe the custom of wearing the heavy veil went out in the thirties."

All Saints Day is still observed faithfully. On that day Creoles like many other New Orleans spend the day at the cemetary and families visit each other from tombs to tombs. The tombs are previously white-washed and decorated with flowers. As a young respondent said: "On that day the whole family picnics at the graveyard."

La promenade du dimanche, so typically French, when all the members of a family take a stroll together on Sunday afternoon, has gradually disappeared as cars made strolling a hazard. However, visiting relatives on Sunday after Mass is still very much the custom. Generally the young visit the old or relatives tend to gather at the home of the relative with whom the old parents are staying.

D. Marriage

To the Creoles marriage is a sacred institution not

entered into casually. On the whole marriages are stable, divorce and separation rates are low. Again the teaching of the Catholic Church is reflected in their marriage patterns. Marriage is still the most important goal of the creole girl today according to the opinion of 91 per cent of the respondents.

In the past the creole girl started her trousseau as a young girl and entered into marriage at an early age.[13] She would not have considered marrying without the family's approval of her future husband. This factor and the low sex ratio might explain the substantial number of old creole spinsters today. The group was endogamous. Marriage between Creoles and non-Creoles occurred seldom and marriage with non-Catholics was extremely rare. Within the creole group there was a tendency for people to choose partners of their own color and from similar family background. Chastity was expected of the bride to be and to have children out of wedlock, a rare occurrence, was considered the breach of an important taboo.

As the creole group diminished in size and became less isolated it became increasingly difficult for the young people to keep intact the customs of the group. There is no

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[13]According to the sample, the average age at marriage for people born in the twenties was 21 for females, and 23 for males. For people born between 1900-1920, the average was 20 for females, and 22 for males.

substantial change of attitude towards chastity before marriage and there still seem to be considerably less illegitimacy than among non-Creoles. However, changes have occurred in other aspects. For instance today the creole girl no longer passes the time of day dreaming of her future marriage as she hand-stitches her trousseau. A "shower" and a few handmade articles contributed by older relatives has replaced the trousseau. People still marry with their family's approval but the parents' decision is no longer the final one. Reservation with respect to marrying outside the creole group is based on three major factors: religion, color and class.

If a Creole marries a non-Creole who is a Catholic, of the same social class and same color, little objection will be raised. Perhaps some old people will express fear that the young couple will neglect some of the old creole ways but young people will be quick to assert that they live in an American world.

1. The Factor of Religion

Most Creoles would think twice before marrying a non-Catholic. In the sample, only 15 per cent approved of the practice. Respondents also gave "belonging to the Catholic Faith" second place as the most important consideration in selecting a mate. It is not surprising since the Creole lives in a Catholic world. Family, church, school and

peer-group, all help to reinforce this attitude. The Creole has thoroughly internalized the notion that differences in ideology and attitudes between the Catholic and non-Catholic are handicaps to a successful marriage. Above all it is the disapproval of the group which seems to be his main concern. Should his children be raised as non-Catholic they would be excluded from the more important religious activities around which his world is centered. These activities mean a lot to him and he would not want his children to be excluded from them.

2. The Factor of Color

This factor, a delicate subject, is difficult to measure. Many latent values cluster around the factor of color. On the whole the Creole marries more or less within the range of his own color. This is the testimony of priests who have married thousands of Creoles over many years. However notable exceptions exist today and the trends are hard to evaluate. The majority of the respondents agreed with this writer who hypothesizes that on the whole there are more marriages between darker men and lighter women than vice versa. Traditionally the man is in the bargaining position. It is assumed by many scholars of Negro life that there is an esthetic preference for light-skinned female as well as a desire for the ambitious darker man to have children lighter than himself in order to improve his family's

status.[14] It is assumed that this would also apply to New Orleans where today opportunities for darker men to meet lighter women are more favorable in the school, church and social club situations.

On the other hand women who have married darker men have taken into account their educational and professional status and it is claimed by some that darker men "make better husbands" as they tend to put lighter women on pedestal and lavish more attention on them than would men of their own color. Others, less concerned with rationalization, felt that there just was not enough light men around who met their standards. In any case the sex ratio in New Orleans (88.1) is not in favor of the colored woman. The lighter woman though appears to be in a better position to find a mate in view of the fact that the black woman is considered by many as the least desirable mate.

Some light-skinned women married to darker men express the concern about the color of their children. The respondents agreed two to one that there is some foundation to the hypothesis that some light-skinned women who have darker husbands fear to have children darker than themselves or with a different grade of hair. In one case a near-white respondent said:

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[14] Davie, op. cit., p. 398.

> "Personally I am rather attracted to darker men. The first time I had a chance to meet some was at college. All my life my parents had forbidden me to associate with them and they consequently intrigued me. I wouldn't mind marrying a darker man providing he meets my standards. However the question of children bothers me. I wouldn't want them to be darker than myself and I certainly wouldn't want them to have 'bad' hair."

Another respondent made the following remark:

> "Mrs. D. married a dark man. Everybody likes him and he is a real gentleman. The problem with Mrs. D. today is that she expected her children to be like her and lets face it, her children are little Negroes. When her daughter was born she had fairly good hair but it eventually turned nappy. Each time you saw Mrs. D. she had a brush in her hand and was brushing that poor child's hair until it was coming out and they had to bring her to a hair specialist. Mrs. D. is very envious of her sister who married a lighter man than herself and whose children are like white. Mrs. D. is afraid that her sister refers to her children as black."

Color-consciousness with respect to marriage is still existent today although the creole culture discourages the expression of such attitudes. This was demonstrated by the inconsistency of the respondents who gave color as last consideration in their selection of a mate while they gave second place to color as a determinant of social standing.

Creole girls, especially those of light-complexion show much curiosity as to the color of the future husband of someone they know. In a circumspect way they will find out: "Who is he? Is he from New Orleans? Is he a Catholic? Is he from downtown? How does he look? Is he fair? Does he have 'good' hair?" Should he be substantially darker but of the same social and religious background than his future

bride, no open disapproval would be expressed but insinuating remarks might be made. Quoting an informant: "'paper bag' dances have gone out of existence but some Creoles still have the 'paper bag' in their mind."

3. The Factor of Class

Class values have already been discussed in Chapter III. As it applies to matrimony the main concern is with behavior expectation of a certain class. Family background in the sense of antiquity of family line and prestige of its members is considered less important. Like most Americans the Creole feels that afterall he is not marrying the family but the person. Therefore more and more he will seek personal rather than familial qualities. However, the reputation and social standing of the future mate is a determinant of the person's social class and as such it is given importance in selecting a mate.

E. Socialization Process

The socialization process is understood here as the training of the young in the ways of his culture; the process through which the intrinsic attitudes and values are transmitted from one generation to the next. We have noted already that the creole family is especially influential in this respect. With the Catholic religion, the family is chiefly responsible for giving a "creole personality" to the new members of the group.

Emphasis is given to correct behavior. Standards are high and restraint, discipline, and manners are stressed. Many rules and regulations which seem absurd to the non-creole Negro, govern the creole home. An atmosphere of permissiveness is notably absent. Creole parents are selective of their children's companions and the schools to which they send their children. Religious training comes early and all the Catholic mores are incorporated in the socialization process. Sex education is still somewhat old fashioned and reflect the conservative attitude of the Catholic Church on the subject. However nearly all respondents approved of sex education being taught in school which would relieve them to a certain extent of a duty which make them feel uncomfortable vis-a-vis their children. Girls are well protected by their parents and brothers. They are more closely supervised than boys.

Finally, the creole family still tends to instill in its young the pride of being creole and thereby not like the "other" Negroes. This varies of course between families. Some actively indocrinate their children with ideas of superiority while others tell them: "You are not Creoles nor Negroes but Americans."

In the next chapter the author has attempted to illustrate the socialization process in a case study of a young Creole.

CHAPTER VI

MICHEL DOMINIQUE: A CASE STUDY

A. Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate the socialization process of a creole subject and the resulting personality.[1] This case study is not intended to be representative of the creole group. Its purpose is to demonstrate the impact of the creole culture upon an individual today. The sociological rather than the psychological phenomena are of interest to us, although it is difficult to separate these from each other.

The subject, Michel Dominique, is a young man of 23, of average height and athletic build. He is of the griffe type, of rather dark complexion and negroid hair texture but of caucasoid features and bone structure. He displays to a great degree the behavior associated with Creoles in his fine manners and general comportment. He makes a good appearance, is pleasant looking and dresses neatly. He is reserved but poised, his speech is refined but in an acquired way. He appears of average intelligence and of

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[1] See Chapter I, p. 32 for methodology employed. The name Michel Dominique is fictitious.

average education. He reflects middle class values but his socioeconomic background is of the lower-middle class. Although darker than the average Creole, his family is considered creole by the community. He identifies closely with his creole cultural background. Both his parents have French family names and French was spoken by his grand parents on both sides. He is a devout Catholic and was born and reared, as were his parents in the downtown creole community of New Orleans. The subject is not married nor is he presently employed.

B. Life History

Michel Dominique was born in 1937 in New Orleans, the youngest of five children. His mother died at child birth and he was raised by his maternal grandmother and a maiden aunt. He was a premature baby of three and a half pounds and it was feared that he would never live because of his delicate health and the convulsive attacks he suffered until he was three. Although he did not live with his father and siblings, the subject saw his father every weekend. He distinctly remembers his father coming to get him every Sunday and holiday to spend the day with his brothers and sisters. He looked forward to these weekly gatherings. Mr. Dominique did not see his youngest son during the week as he was employed as a factory worker.

Michel was reared very strictly by his French-speaking grandmother and spoiled by his grandfather. The latter, a carpenter, used to bring something home to the child every evening. Michel's aunt was employed as a cigar maker. The four of them lived in a rented shotgun house typical of the New Orleans creole community. The subject has very pleasant childhood memories. He felt that he was treated with love and affection and had all that an average creole child could get and "the best of it too."

The family was staunchly Catholic. At the age of five, Michel entered the Corpus Christi kindergarten where he stayed for his elementary education. He liked school very much and although an indifferent student his conduct was excellent and he got along well with the other children. His grandmother very seldom allowed him to play outside after school and was generally selective of his playmates. If Michel wanted to sit on the gallery in the evening he would have to be dressed in starched clothes. He was taught to say good evening to everybody, though his aunt disapproved of his grandmother insisting that he address people as "Mam" and "Sir." Manners and courtesy were strongly advocated and left a lasting impression on the subject.

Michel spent three summers of his younger years with an aunt in Detroit. While he enjoyed the traveling experience, he did not care for his cousins. He disapproved

of their manners and ways and felt they were not of his "class." Although he enjoyed more personal freedom in Detroit, he was always glad to return home.

Michel graduated from grammar school in 1952. He had participated in many extra-curricular activities. Being reared in strict catholicism both in the family and at school, he belonged to the boys' choir, Saint Gabriel Boys Society and participated annually in the "Kiddies' Day." The latter is a yearly event sponsored by the church to raise funds for the school. It is a mark of prestige in the creole community to have one's children ride in the parade, and families go to considerable expense to provide costumes and fees. The subject recalls fondly that he "rode the float" three consecutive years.

Michel was very fond of the prestigeful Saint Augustine High School which he entered the same year he completed grammar school. While his school record does not show him to be a particularly brilliant student, his conduct and relationship to others were noted as excellent. He was described as a reserved, quiet, well-mannered and likeable young man.

While his general up-bringing reveals the mores of the creole middle-class, his sexual history reveals the patterns of lower class Negro culture. His first sex experience was at a young age "when I didn't know what I was doing."

He seems to be free of the typical puritan American guilt attached to sex. The subject is remarkably candid about the topic and has a rather wholesome approach to sex problems. His sex habits do not conform to the mores of the Catholic Church.

In general Michel's life was that of a sheltered and dependent child until he graduated from high school in 1956. The same year he entered a Negro business school from which he withdrew after six months. He did not care for the older veterans and the lower class element in the student body. An inactive period of six months followed which was to be repeated several times in his adult life. It is interesting to note that Michel feels no guilt concerning his occupational or educational inactivity. "Guilty of what?" he queries with a quizzical look. Nevertheless determined to follow his high school peer-group in college, he enrolled at Xavier University in the fall of 1957. Knowing that his family might hesitate to invest the little money they had in his education, he proceeded to enroll without their knowledge and told them about his step the day before school started. After some arguments money for his tuition was granted. The subject did not do well in his one year at Xavier University. The first semester was better than the second when difficulties over back payments and poor scholarship forced him to withdraw from the university. Michel said that although he did not show

it overtly this was a great disappointment to him. Now 21 years of age, the subject secured an unskilled job where his creole pride and propriety was in open conflict with his low occupational status. However, in the several jobs he held as porter in jewelry stores, he managed to gain some respect from his co-workers as an individual which compensated somewhat for his inferior status. The wearing of a work uniform was a great source of humiliation to him.

While his friends were continuing in college, Michel saw himself working in an unimportant job. He felt that his future was pretty dim and consequently indulged in a good deal of wishfulfilling fantasy. His salary was spent on expensive clothes and he lavished his hard earned dollars on his penny pinching college friends. Life became hedonistic with thoughts of the future repressed. He admits that inside himself he was thoroughly discontented during this period of his life.

In 1959 he quit his job to go to New York City on a six week scholarship granted by the American Ethical Society. This was to attend an encampment of young people coming from all over the world to collaborate in an experiment in international living. This was without any doubt Michel's major life experience thus far. As he said: "This was the first time I actually felt free of all cares,

I had never felt as though I could depend on myself before. This was the happiest time of my life. I got to meet people I cared for and I thought were interested in me." No doubt this was the first time this young man had the opportunity to test and prove himself outside the protective influence of his family and group and the confinement of the racial etiquette of New Orleans. He mentioned that it was the first time he actually had interaction with white people on intimate and equal terms. He expressed surprise to find white people not too different from Negroes when judged as individuals.

To readjust to the life of New Orleans upon his return was especially difficult for Michel. For months he was still living in the memory of his trip to New York and kept an active correspondence with the friends he made during the summer. Today one cannot speak to him for an hour before the subject of the encampment comes up. He treasures the scrap book he made of the encampment. He points with pride to the flattering personal dedication of fellow-camp members which no doubt are a boost to his ego.

Michel returned to his former job but lost it due to a misunderstanding with a Negro head-janitor whom he describes as an "uncle Tom." A period of unemployment followed during which he decided to devote time to developing his talent for dancing, which had been a social

asset to him in New York. Dancing was a perfect outlet for his narcissistic tendencies and a possible avenue of mobility. Motivated more by a desire to succeed than artistic interest he refused to admit to himself the obvious lack of opportunities in New Orleans for a Negro male dancer. He has worked on and off with several local dance groups. He worked temporarily as carpenter's assistant to his brother and was able to draw unemployment compensation for a while when the job terminated. Michel has not worked for a year. However, his grandmother agrees with him that it is preferable to stay home and be useful around the house and help relatives than to have a menial job in the white world. No embarrassment is felt by a lack of occupational status. The desire to get a job is aroused only when he feels the need to replenish his wardrobe. There is little anxiety regarding the future with respect to the more fundamental needs in life. Food and shelter and a little pocket money will always be available from members of the family. Companionship and recreation is always present in the creole community. It is difficult to look at this attitude through the American value system dominated by the Protestant ethic, with its fundamental belief in work for the sake of work and continuous desire for more material consumption. Michel's membership in Negro society and the creole subculture makes him look at the world in a different way.

Michel Dominique would be the first one to jump at the opportunity to assume the responsibility of an interesting and rewarding occupation. This writer is sure that he would do his best and muster considerable energy. However, Michel is not a fighter and will not make his own opportunities. Possibly this is the result of his minority status, his sheltered home and community life and personality traits which do not lend themselves to aggressive action.

Today his main complaint is his growing tension with his family. He still refrains from thinking seriously about his future. In all likelihood, he will shortly be called in the service. Possibly this might help him face the future more realistically and return to college which he wants to do but cannot because of lack of funds.

C. Selected Attitudes of the Subject

1. Attitudes Towards his Family

> "I wish I had a different family. Not financially better off but with more education, taste, and better informed. Sometimes they embarrass me. They also frustrate me because I feel they don't accept me nor my friends. They don't live up to my ideas of moral standards. I would like my father's side to be lighter in color and a little on my mother's side although they are fairly light. I would prefer a higher occupational status for my father although I am not ashamed to say that he is a factory worker. Otherwise I guess I am contented. After all besides my religion, they are all I have. I feel that no matter what would happen to me I will always have my family to fall back on. In the same way I have a strong feeling of responsibility

towards them."[2]

2. Attitudes Towards his Religion

> "I believe very strongly in my religion, it is my consolation and my only refuge. Perhaps I attend Mass and participate in the sacraments regularly out of force of habit, for I do it without effort."

The subject does not like to discuss religion nor be confronted with challenges as to the validity of some aspects of his faith. He believes in spontaneous evolution: "No matter what I read, I will never change my beliefs." He does not show interest in prying intellectually into the meaning of religion.

3. Attitudes Towards the Creoles

> "I am very attached to my creole community and its friendly people. Although at times they put me under considerable strain. I hate to admit it but I feel obliged to conform to what the community thinks is right. Few people will admit this but it is true. Everyone tries to please the people, it is just that 'darn' creole way. I am proud of being creole, I feel it gives me standing. Even though I am dark, people detect my creole background. I wouldn't want the creole way of life to die. I want the creole to stay the way they are and not be like 'American' Negroes. The Negro cannot understand what it is like to be a Creole. The creole way of life is higher but not such that it would be intermediate to white. It is still closer to the Negro. I feel it is a better status to be creole but actually I am fooling myself because the outside world doesn't give me a higher position."

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[2]The material dealing with the subject's attitudes is a paraphrase of interview data.

4. Attitudes Towards the Non-Creole Negroes

> "As individuals I make no difference between the 'American' Negroes and the Creoles. I am more inclined though to associate with Creoles, for I live in a creole neighborhood, go to church and went to school with Creoles. In regards to the 'American' Negro as a group, I must admit that I have a patronizing attitude towards them. I feel superior to them. I always visualize the non-creole Negro as being poor, black, loud, uneducated although I know I am just talking of the low-class 'American' Negro. However, I sympathize with them and resent whites taking advantage of them or poking fun at them."

At another occasion discussing changes in the creole community, the subject said:

> "Quite a few country and typical low-class 'American' Negroes have moved in the neighborhood within the last ten years. This has somewhat changed the creole atmosphere with their loud talking, public drinking, and frequent fights. The creole section will become mixed with so many 'American' Negroes that you won't be able to tell who is creole and who isn't."

5. Attitudes Towards Whites

The subject shows considerable ambivalence of feelings towards whites. Often his feelings are conflicting. On the race attitude test he was given, his score indicates an unfavorable opinion of whites yet in the person value test, he expressed a desire to be white, and specified: "I have always wanted to live like whites." It is important for him to make an impression on white people.

> "I have always been more intrigued by whites than by Negroes. For me to take a second look at a Negro, he must be extraordinary. I would have liked to have been white to enjoy the privileges of whites but not otherwise. I like the luxury they enjoy, the

> privileges they have and the nonchalant manner in which they accept that. What I don't like about them is that they are false, they don't know how to come down to earth, their pale color and their low morals. They'll do anything to get what they want. They couldn't be serious about their religion the way they go to church and treat Negroes. They even asked me in the middle of a Mass to move to the back of the church."

At another occasion the subject wrote the following in a letter to this writer:

> ". . . I noticed that I get angry at you for certain things you do whereas I wouldn't get angry at the average Negro doing the same thing. This South has given me an unconscious complex against whites. I have been doing a lot of observation in regards to this since I last saw you. I am also aware of the fact that even though we associate freely with one another, the color line still exists. I thought this would be interesting for you to know."

This author feels that the subject suffers greatly from racial discrimination, and represses a considerable amount of hostility. He is careful to avoid situations in which he might be rejected because of his color and is uncomfortable in situations where the racial etiquette is challenged and a courageous stand has to be taken. He feels guilty that he gives lip service to uplift movements but does no concrete work towards helping the cause of racial equality. However, he is able to see whites as individuals and forget their racial identity as he did in New York. This writer feels that the subject confided freely in him.

D. Psychological Analysis

Michel Dominique displays a tremendous desire to be accepted and liked by others. He shows a deep concern with

what people thinks of him. This is the motivation behind his wish for personal success: "I would like to go away, live a more aristocratic life and someday return to show New Orleans that I have succeeded." He has well internalized conventional American ideals and thinks of success in superficial and materialistic terms. However he has no realistic conception of the means by which to achieve his goals and engages in a good deal of wishfulfilling fantasy. Sometimes it is hard for him to separate facts from fantasy and it has resulted in an unrealistic self-concept. Avid for satisfying feedbacks from people, this author has noticed that he surrounds himself with people of lesser caliber who admire him for what they think is sophistication. Yet he considers as his real friends two or three persons who have done remarkably well and accept him for what he is. He avoids anxiety and his non-aggressive nature makes him a compliant person. He is a moral individual, sensitive to conventions and keeps high standards of behavior for himself. To conform becomes thus a means to be accepted.

The subject experiences many conflicts which build up tension in his system. His day dreaming activities ("I dream of complete contentment where I am free to do as I choose") and his ability to suppress mental anguish ("I brush out of my mind anything unpleasant")

are his principal escape values.

E. Sociological Analysis

Michel Dominique is a Creole-Negro-American. Each of these words symbolize a sphere of influence which has shaped his personality.

It is interesting to note that as long as the social institutions of the creole world were able to fulfill the needs of the subject through his adolescent years, there was orderliness and direction in his life.

Conflict started with exposure to the greater Negro world in his business college and university experience. Conflict became more acute when he was confronted with the white world in his work experience. He was made aware that his economic survival depended from forces outside the creole world. The Creole world had provided him with manners, dignity and pride but had not given him a solid education, nor had it prepared him for the traumatic transition from his school days to his work life, from a high status in his own eyes to a low status in the eyes of the dominant white world. The creole world sheltered him and protected him with a host of spurious values but then dumped him into an alien world. On his own Michel did not adapt too well to the reality of his new world. He readily absorbed the exterior trappings and the material goals of the greater American culture, but had no

conception of how to go about obtaining these goals. His strong creole moral training has prevented him from using expedient means to reach his goals and has thereby acted as a positive agent of social control. Michel feels rejected by the white world which he wants to emulate. In this sense Michel is a marginal man, the creole world is too small to meet his new needs and the white world ignores him. This also accounts for his ambivalence towards white people. He is drawn to them because he wants to "live like whites" yet he avoids them for fear of being rejected. His lack of occupational status is puzzling. Is it really better than low occupational status as he says? The Creoles do not attach too much importance to occupation as a mark of prestige. So many have to take a subordinate economic role in the white world which they effectively compartmentalize from their social role in their community. Recurrent unemployment is a problem of many Creole males so there again the lack of occupational status for a single young man is not viewed in the same way as in white society. Besides, Michel looks busy going to a few dance rehearsals and he loafs at home in front of the TV set instead of outside in the street in full view of the neighborhood. His creole world is still his refuge. His family, community, and religion provide him some measure of security and identity which the non-creole Negro often lacks. In this way the creole culture has a positive

function.

This writer wishes to point out again that it was purely coincidental that Michel Dominique was chosen as a case study. Should the subject have been more successful and outstanding probably a "rosier" picture of the creole culture would have resulted. Nevertheless one should look at the creole subculture as a positive reinforcement to a person's background not as an end in itself, for as a social system it has gotten too weak to provide daily answers for daily needs.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

A. Introduction

Having traced the emergence of the creole subculture and analysed its class and family system, we now turn to a description of other major social institutions. Creole social institutions do not depart radically in their characteristics from those of the New Orleans community. However, there are definite variations which can be identified as creole and it is on these that the author wishes to dwell.

On the whole the Creole of color shares the religious and economic institutions of the white society of New Orleans, whereas in his political and educational institutions he is more closely affiliated with the New Orleans Negro community.

B. Religious Institutions

The Franco-Catholic heritage in Louisiana has persisted through the years and New Orleans remains today one of the Catholic strongholds in the United States. New Orleans also has a considerable number of Catholics in its Negro population. With 70,737 members,[1] New Orleans has

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[1] Felician A. Foy (ed.), National Catholic Almanac, 1961 (Patterson, N.J.: Saint Anthony's Guild, 1961), p. 482.

the largest urban Negro Catholic community in the nation. In the absence of available figures, this author estimates that one-third of the Negro Catholics are Creoles.[2] Very few Creoles are non-Catholics. Therefore the assumption that adherence to the Catholic Faith is a characteristic of the creole subculture holds true. It must be noted nevertheless that a few prominent creole families are Protestant, due in part to the influence of the missionaries active in higher education during Reconstruction. Another instance of conversion occurred before the Civil War. Some Creoles of color, dissatisfied by the complacent attitude of the Catholic Church towards increasing racial discrimination, forsook the Roman Church to join the Free Masons where they were admitted on terms of equality by white members.[3] Other non-Catholics of creole origin are the few who have drifted away through marriage outside the Catholic religion or those who have left the faith for personal reasons such as divorce. Very often these people lose their creole identity in the process since the Catholic Faith is a dominant force in creole culture. In this respect we may no longer consider them Creoles. In the sample population, all the respondents

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[2]See footnote p. 20 above.

[3]Rousseve, op. cit., p. 41.

and their family were Roman Catholics.

1. The Franco-Catholic Background

France has always been considered the daughter of the Roman Catholic Church and wherever France has extended her influence in the past she has laid solid foundations for the propagation of the Catholic Faith. Her New World colonies became bastions of the church of Rome and the influence has remained to this day.

The Code Noir of 1724, stipulated that all people inhabiting the colony should be of the Catholic Faith and special provisions were made for the baptism and religious training of slaves.[4] Masters, slaves, and free people of color attended Mass and received the sacraments indiscriminatingly. The archives of Saint Louis Cathedral contain numerous references dating back to the eighteenth century to the baptismals, marriages, and burials of some slaves and many free people of color. In fact the twenty-third marriage held in the Cathedral in 1724, was the wedding of a free colored couple.[5] Free people of color were known to travel from distant parishes and sometimes from outside Louisiana to record the baptism of their children and thus at the same time secure an official proof of

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[4]Le Code Noir, op. cit., p. 2.

[5]Rousseve, op. cit., p. 40.

their free status. Saint Louis Cathedral has played an important role in the history of the Creoles of color and sentimental attachment to the old French Cathedral persists till this day.

The refugees of color from Saint Domingue contributed significantly to the reinforcement of the Catholic ties.[6] They participated in the founding in 1841 of Saint Augustine Church on the edge of the Vieux Carre. The church remained associated for a long time with both white and colored people of Saint Dominguan origin.

Another accomplishment of the refugees was the founding of the order of the Holy Family in 1842 by three young women of color from prominent families native of Saint Domingue.[7] This religious order was made up exclusively of Creoles of color at first but it was pressured in 1869 to admit a few descendants of freedmen. By an ironic fate of history, the order occupies today the beautiful old French building on Orleans Street which was once the scene of the quadroon balls. Today it maintains a school, Saint Mary's Academy, attended by many creole girls. The sisters

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[6]Of historical interest is the fact that Louisiana was under the Archbishop of Saint Domingue until 1787.

[7]Among the refugees of Saint Domingue who settled in Baltimore, four women of color founded in 1829 the first Negro religious order in the world: The Oblate Sisters of Providence.

admit freely the past history of their building and as they say in one of their brochures

> "where coy, beautiful and decorous young women used their gifts to attract and entertain men for earthly pleasure and gain, silent nuns now move in measured and calm steps, praying, working, and living a life of contemplation and love for the honor and glory of their creator."

During the post-reconstruction period, the Catholic Church compromised with the spirit of the time and started a trend towards the creation of colored Catholic churches. The Creoles of color were particularly incensed by this action but protested in vain. In 1895 the first church for the exclusive use of colored people was established. By 1920 there were seven "colored Catholic Missions," today there are fifteen (see Table VII). Saint Louis Cathedral, Saint Augustine Church, the "church of the Jesuits" (Church of the Immaculate Conception) and a few others remained bi-racial. Some practiced seating segregation until it was officially abolished in 1955, when Archbishop Rommel dramatically drove from church to church and personally yanked out the "screens."[8] Nevertheless separate colored Catholic churches have now been in existence for half a century and a pattern of segregated churches is being perpetuated by force of habit. However, the Creoles of color have continued to worship both at

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[8]Local term for segregation seating signs.

TABLE VII

CATHOLIC NEGRO MISSIONS IN NEW ORLEANS, 1961[1]

Number	Mission	Year of Founding
1	St. Katherine's	1895
2	St. Joan of Arc	1909
3	**Corpus Christi	1916
4	Blessed Sacrament	1916
5	Holy Ghost	1916
6	Holy Redeemer	1919
7	All Saints'	1919
8	*St. Peter Claver	1920
9	St. Monica	1924
10	*St. Raymond's	1925
11	St. David's	1937
12	St. Paul's	1944
13	**Epiphany	1948
14	St. Philip's	1949

[1]There are some Creoles in all of the above churches.

*Churches attended by a sizeable number of Creoles.

**Churches attended predominantly by Creoles.

Saint Louis Cathedral and their own churches.

2. Creole Catholics

As we have seen, a strong Catholic tradition had developed early among the Creoles of color and remains unchanged to this day.

The creole church par excellence is Corpus Christi, situated at the focal point of the creole community in downtown New Orleans. Founded in 1916, its membership has increased to 13,117 parishioners by 1947.[9] Its membership has continually increased and has resulted in the splitting of the parish into several other parishes: St. Raymond's (1925), St. David's (1937) and Epiphany (1948). Today, with a membership of around 15,000, Corpus Christi is considered the largest Negro parish in the United States. In spite of the steady out-of-state migration of many Creoles, natural increase and the in-migration of non-creole Catholics maintain the high membership. According to the Josephite fathers, the pastors of Corpus Christi, about 80 per cent of the parishioners would fit the cultural definition of "creole." Nearby Epiphany Church, with a membership of approximately

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[9]Charles S. Palazzolo, "Corpus Christi: A Sociological Analysis of a Catholic Negro Parish in New Orleans" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1955), p. 36.

6,000, is considered exclusively creole.

Corpus Christi is the socio-cultural center of the creole community. The church maintains a kindergarten, grammar school, community center and numerous organized social activities. A visitor to Corpus Christi on a Sunday morning will soon conclude that it is a "busy" parish. From 6 a.m. to noon, the church fills and empties every hour on the hour with a turnover reaching in the thousands. It is a wealthy parish and the envy of the neighboring Italian church, which practiced segregation until recently and now is beckoning the overflow from Corpus Christi. The eleven o'clock Mass, the "creole" Mass, is remarkable for the preponderance of fair-skinned Creoles in attendance. Seldom does one have the opportunity to see such a large assemblage of people of an intermediate racial type. Ranging from dark mulatto to near-white, the congregation would make a visitor feel that he is in Brazil or Hawaii rather than in New Orleans.

The Creoles are a devout people. Religious participation, such as attending Sunday Mass, receiving the sacraments, observing Holy Days of Obligation, is very high according to the testimony of priests. Among the respondents, 98 per cent said they attend Mass regularly every Sunday. Creoles show the cultural traits of Latin Americans and Latin Europeans in their frequent novenas, devotions to saints, and their observation of feast days.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and St. Anthony are considered their favorite saints and many creole children are named after them. All Saints Day and St. Joseph's Day remain the more popular feast days besides Christmas and Easter. The custom of making a big celebration of St. Joseph's Day, observed by the many Italians living near the creole community, is thought to have diffused to the Creoles. In the past, elaborate food altars were prepared in their homes, but the custom has decreased. "That was in the days when the Italians and the Creoles would go to each other's home freely before all that racial animosity," reported a respondent. St. Joseph's Day is also mi-careme when the lenten rules are relaxed for one night, and the celebration in the past was like a second Mardi Gras. All Saints' Day, the feast of the dead, has been discussed in Chapter V. The Catholic Creoles were the fortunate among Negroes in owning family vaults in St. Louis cemetery. Most of the tombs are in St. Louis #2 on Claiborne Avenue although some very old families have theirs in the prestigious St. Louis #1. Up until a few decades ago the Negro who did not own a family grave had to content himself with burial in Holt cemetery, a sort of pauper's field. Now that the new non-sectarian Negro cemetery of Mount Olivet has been built, an increasing number of Creoles bury their dead there, for St. Louis

cemetery has not had an available plot for years. In the sample, 75 per cent of the respondents owned vaults in St. Louis cemetery and took very good care of their ownership papers some dating back to ante-bellum days. Studying the old French registers of St. Louis cemetery is an adventure in family lineage and also reveals useful morbidity data relating to the free people of color.

This writer has attempted to describe the religious practice of the creole people. The influence of the Catholic religion on the daily life of the Creoles is emphasized throughout this thesis, especially when Catholic mores apparently strongly influence behavior. It is felt that observing the Catholic prescriptions is not necessarily the expression of deep religious conviction but is often motivated by the desire of the individual to conform to the expected behavior of his group. Observing the Catholic mores is expected in the creole group. In this way the Catholic religion is an effective tool of social control in the creole subculture.

C. Economic Institutions

In a society where the Creole has little control over the economic system, making a living becomes a vital concern. In the past when the Creole had a freer hand in the dispensing of his services, he showed a remarkable ingenuity in monopolising (certain segments) of the economy of New

Orleans. Today, Creoles do not have economic institutions of their own. Nonetheless a few traditional trends have remained in the economic spheres where the Creole is more his own master. These however are relatively unimportant.

1. Traditional Occupations

In a society where slaves performed all heavy labor, Creoles of color monopolized the service trades. They were the skilled artisans of New Orleans. Whites were either plantation owners or engaged in business or the professions. A few Creoles of color owned plantations and slaves and engaged in professions. The latter were generally as well off as the more successful whites.

> "By 1830, some of these gens de couleur had arrived at such a degree of wealth as to own cotton and sugar plantations with numerous slaves. They educated their children, as they had been educated in France. Those who chose to remain there, attained many of them, distinction in scientific and literary circles. In New Orleans they became musicians, merchants, and money and real estate brokers. The humbler classes were mechanics; they monopolized the trade of shoemakers, a trade for which, even to this day they have a special vocation; they were notably successful hunters and supplied the city with game. As tailors, they were almost exclusively patronized by the elite."[10]

One must not assume that the elite of color were numerically dominant in New Orleans. A great number of free people of color did not enjoy a very high standard of

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[10]Gayarre, op. cit.

living. The chasm separating the extremes in the population of color was similar to that which made for distinctions between the old white creole families and the Irish emigrants.[11]

Under the French and Spanish regimes the creoles of color had become associated with certain trades, notably the mechanical arts, woodcrafts and construction jobs. Their number increased with the arrival of the emigres from Saint Domingue. This explains in part why today one finds in Haiti and Louisiana the same old "creole" style furniture and briquette entre poteau type of construction built by colored artisans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Under American domination competition became stiffer for the creole artisans. Poor white migrants arriving in large numbers coveted the economic monopoly of the free people of color. The latter living more frugally than the "Kaintocks" or "Irish" and better trained in their skills were able to save more and charge less for their services and were a serious handicap to the newcomer trying to establish himself. Using the color of his skin as a badge of importance the white emigrant managed first to crowd the free people of color out of the less skilled occupation.

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[11] Everett, op. cit., p. 267.

Prior to 1840, most of the draymen, cabmen and servants in the largest hotels were colored, but by 1846 they had been superseded by whites.[12] They had more difficulty displacing the Creoles of color in the more skilled jobs in spite of political pressure being exerted to break their monopoly. The census of 1850, reveals that the free people of color were particularly dominant in the construction field, as carpenters, cigar makers and shoe makers (see Table VIII). It is interesting to note that today the Creoles of color are still very well represented in the construction field and as carpenters. While machines have largely replaced hand labor in cigar making, today the majority of workers in cigar factories are still Creoles. There are a few creole shoe makers but the advent of manufactured shoes has made this occupation obsolete.

2. The Role of the Creole in the New Orleans Economy

Today the Creole of color competes with the "American" Negro for the occupations opened to colored people in New Orleans. Proportionately he is still better represented than the non-Creole in the middle and upper status occupation. In the professions he caters to the need of the Negro community in New Orleans. If he is self-employed

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[12] Ibid., p. 195.

TABLE VIII

OCCUPATIONS OF FREE COLORED MALES OVER FIFTEEN YEARS IN NEW ORLEANS--1850[1]

Occupations	Number	Occupations	Number
Apprentices	4	Jewellers	5
Architects	1	Laborers	179
Bakers	1	Lithographers	1
Barbers	41	Mariners	10
Barkeepers	2	Market men	25
Blacksmiths	15	Masons	278
Boarding house keepers	18	Mechanics	52
Boatmen	37	Merchants	64
Bookbinders	4	Ministers	1
Brick makers	2	Musicians	4
Brokers	9	Music Teachers	1
Butchers	18	Overseers	11
Cabinet makers	19	Painters	28
Capitalists	4	Peddlers	9
Car men	39	Pilots	2
Carpenters	355	Planters	2
Cigar makers	156	Sail makers	2
Clerks	61	Sextons	1
Coachmen	10	Ship carpenters	6
Cooks	25	Shoemakers	92
Coopers	43	Stevedores	7
Doctors	4	Stewards	9
Engineers	1	Students	7
Gardeners	9	Tailors	82
Gunsmiths	4	Teachers	12
Hostlers	3	Upholsterers	8
Hunters	7	Total	1,792[2]

[1]Statistical View of the U. S., A Compendium of the Seventh Census (Washington, D.C.: 1854), p. 81.

[2]It is interesting to note that 1,463 (82 per cent) out of 1,792 were listed as mulattoes.

he enjoys a greater latitude of freedom in his occupation than when he is salaried. In the latter case, there always seems to be a white man somewhere in the background.

It is still in the construction field that one finds the "typical" middle-class Creole. His old guilds with their own union halls in some cases dating back to the last century, are strong. Locals like salle des artisans (Artisans Hall) and la salle d'economie (economy Hall) have been both social centers and centers of training for apprenticeship for many generations. The craft of carpentry, brick-laying, masonery, painting, plastering, etc. is generally passed down from father to son. The same is true in the managerial occupation of construction contractors. Not only do they cater to the Negro community but their services are often solicited by whites. "When we want some especially fine wood work done we always call upon the French Negroes," is a typical remark heard by this writer. The creole construction worker earns a good income but his number is decreasing. His sons often move up to clerical or professional occupations. Today many sons of craftsmen are working in the U. S. Post Office where the federal ban on racial discrimination in employment has facilitated their entry into the clerical field.

A unique custom among construction workers is an old tradition resembling the Acadians' coup de main and the Haitians' combite. It consists of giving the other fellow

a hand in the building, painting or repairing of his house in exchange for food, drinks and a convivial time and the expectation that the other fellow will reciprocate when the occasion arises. This is done among friends and relatives. Over the weekend a group of construction workers will assemble at the home of a friend and paint, plaster or set the floors of his house while beer is passed around and jokes and stories are freely exchanged. The wives generally assemble too and prepare gumbo and chicken for all. This custom, still practiced today, is significant in revealing the degree of "gemeinshaft" existent in the creole community. While in New Orleans it is characteristic of the Creoles, it is a typical work pattern found the world over in folk societies. Many a Creole fortunate to have relatives in the construction field have been able this way to build a type of home that his income alone would not have permitted.

Cigar making is another "creole" occupation. New Orleans has always been an important cigar manufacturing center. In the past cigars were rolled at home by members of an extended family. They called these "buckeye" factories. Cigars might be sold in the community by getting up a little store in front of the house or they might be sold to a distributor. Little by little these "buckeye" establishments were absorbed by larger factories. With the introduction of cigar-making machines the number of people

a cigar factory employs has decreased but the tendency is still to recruit workers among the creole women.[13] The pay is good and there was a saying among the Creoles: "If you want to marry a rich gal, marry a cigar girl."

Typically middle-class creole women are homemakers. The married women who work are generally in the upper-middle class professional and clerical occupations and the lower-middle class factory jobs and service occupations. Single girls out of school will generally work until they get married in occupations corresponding to their training. There is more employment available for Negro women than men. Creole girls providing they are light enough are favored by white employers. In a Negro business school, for example, the placement office receives many requests for "creole" girls to work as secretaries and other clerical positions in white firms. The reason for this in the opinion of one of the girls is that: "They hire creole girls because they can pay us much less than white girls and we look just like them. They've got themselves a real bargain." Of course those who pass for white on their job are generally in more

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[13]During his field trips this writer had the occasion to visit the El Trelles cigar factory. He was taken through the factory and noticed that the majority of workers were Creoles as far as one can tell by the physical appearance and the French names on the payroll. Whites and darker Negroes worked side by side with them. Several of the workers had been at El Trelles for more than twenty years and some had owned at one time a "buckeye" establishment.

specialized and higher salaried occupations. The author knows of a successful commercial artist and laboratory technician who as Negroes could never have secured the position they hold today. The same is true for men who practice segmental passing, sometimes with the connivance of their employers.

The women who work in clothes factories are the modern versions of another traditional creole figure: the seamstress. The grandmothers sewed at home, sometimes their French flair and expert needlework raised them to the rank of modistes. Today the work of their granddaughters in factories requires less skill but pays well. The author has not been able to determine whether it is a coincidence that the only two men's clothing factories in New Orleans are located in the creole community and draw the bulk of their labor force from the creole community. There is an expression among creole girls graduating out of high school which illustrates the situation. When asked about their future plans, many say: "I am going to Boncks College," or "I am going to Haspel University." Boncks and Haspel are, of course, the names of the two clothing factories.

Many housewives have sidelines as modistes, hairdressers, selling eggs and chickens or preparing special creole dishes catering only to their neighbors and friends.

In the study the respondents were asked to list their

occupation and the occupation of their parents and relatives. These occupations are reproduced below classified in occupational groupings. Since the sample is not socioeconomically representative, it was felt that it would be misleading to present numbers.

Professional

Accountants
College professors
Dentists
Lawyers
Librarians
Morticians
Musicians & music teachers
Nurses
Pharmacists
Physicians
School Principals
Social workers & counselors
*Teachers
Technicians--X-rays

Managers and Owners

Business owners & managers
*Construction contractors
Drugstore owners
Food & drinking establishment owners & managers
Food market owners
Manager of Housing authority

Clerical

Government clerks
**Mail carriers
**Postal clerks
Secretaries

Sales Workers

Advertising agents
Insurance agents
Real estate agents
Sales clerks
Salesmen
Shipping clerks

Craftsmen

Bakers
Cabinet makers
**Carpenters
Coopers
Electricians
Machinists
**Masons & bricklayers & tile setters
Mechanics, automobile
**Painters
**Plasterers & cement finishers
Plumbers
Printers
Repairmen, radio & television
Roofers
Shoemakers & repairmen
Tailors
Tinsmiths

**Many Creoles are in these occupations

*Creoles are well represented in these occupations

Operatives	Service Workers Cont'd.
Attendants, parking	Beauticians
Bus drivers	Cooks & chefs
Cafeteria workers	Detectives
*Cigar makers	Janitors & porters
*Clothing factory workers	Policemen
Draymen	Practical nurses
Factory workers, general	Waiters, waitresses & bartenders
Meat cutters & Butchers	
Taxi drivers & chauffeurs	
Truck drivers & deliverymen	Domestics
Service Workers	**Laborers**
Attendants, hospital & other institutions	Construction workers
Barbers	Longshoremen
	Riggers
	Warehousemen

*Creoles are well represented in these occupations

The median household income of respondents fell into the class of: $5,000-$8,000, while 69 per cent owned their homes.

Finally it must be pointed out that migration is an important factor delaying the economic progress of the creole group. The young creole of today with a college diploma in his hand will not shelve it away and take whatever position the white world of New Orleans might give him. Rather he will join his relatives in Chicago, Detroit or California, who a generation ago were faced with the same problem and have done better in a less restrictive social order.

D. Political Institutions

At no time in the history of New Orleans has the Creole as a free person of color or as a Negro been able to achieve a political status commensurate to his number and socio-economic achievements. Therefore no political institutions of any consequence, reflecting the needs and objectives of the creole group, have ever had the chance to emerge. When the Creole was legally defined as "Negro" after the Civil War and given an opportunity to exercise his voting rights, he became an active participant in Negro political aspirations while retaining his exclusiveness in other spheres. Thus, contrary to the expectation of this writer, misled by creole clannishness, the Creoles have been and still are a dominant force in Negro politics in New Orleans.

1. Political Background.

The civil status of the free people of color was defined in the Code Noir as early as 1724. In the eyes of the law they enjoyed the same rights and immunities as other free citizens. In practice, however, modifications were made by the colonial governors but infringement upon the rights of the gens de couleur was largely in the social realm. It must be pointed out that during the French and Spanish regime, no segments of the population had any political power since it was contrary to the legal and political organization of the

colonial system.

It is with the admission of Louisiana to the Union in 1812, that political activities began to develop in New Orleans. At that time the free people of color fought vigorously to retain the right of suffrage which had been extended to all free people in 1803 according to the terms of the Louisiana purchase. By 1812 suffrage was restricted to the white population. The free people of color insisted that they were included in the provision of the Louisiana Purchase which stated that all inhabitants of the territory would be permitted to enjoy all the rights of American citizens. Actually no specific mention had been made of this anomalous class. In spite of several attempts, the free people of color were effectively barred from political activities. With no political representation they became the victims of increasing civil restrictions until the Civil War.

After the Civil War, circumstances made it possible for the Creoles to make their political debut. Because of their wealth and education, some Creoles became the articulate leaders of the newly enfranchised Negroes.

Their first political move had historical significance. In 1863, the Creoles of color called upon the Governor of Louisiana to extend them the right of suffrage in a widely publicized appeal which reached the office of President Lincoln. Lincoln in a letter to the Governor of Louisiana

endorsed the policy of extending the franchise to those among the colored people who are "very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."[14] While previously Lincoln had not been disposed to extend the franchise to non-whites, he now had gone on record modifying his prior stand. In spite of Lincoln's suggestion the appeal was denied by the Governor on the basis that it would be "unfeasable to draw the line between the free men of color and the recently emancipated Negroes."[15] In general Creoles of color were not interested in the enfranchisement of the freedmen but were eager to secure the franchise for themselves so that their civil status would not sink to the level of the freed blacks.

In 1865, Negroes voted for the first time in Louisiana and the Creoles of color actively entered the political sphere. Four Creoles and one freedman participated in the formation of the Republican party in Louisiana. Two were voted into office in the general election of 1868. Major Francis Dumas, famous Creole octoroon born in France, lost the Republican nomination for governor by only two

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[14]Frazier, The Negro in the United States, op. cit., p. 124 citing Merwin Roe (ed.), Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1907), p. 216.

[15]Alice R. Dunbar-Nelson, "People of Color in Louisiana" Journal of Negro History II (1917) p. 71.

votes. However, Oscar Dunn, a non-creole Negro, was unanimously nominated lieutenant-governor and Antoine Dubluclet, a Creole, was made state-treasurer.

Other prominent Creoles active as political leaders at the time were: Dr. Louis Roudanez, J. B. Roudanez, Arnold Bertonneau, Aristide Mary, Thomy Lafon, Victor Mccarty, Laurent Auguste, J. P. Launa, Paul Trevigne and Formidor Desmazilieres.[16]

With the Republicans in power in 1868, a new state constitution was ratified. All official distinctions of race and color were abolished. Following the rise to power of the "Black and Tan" legislation came several stormy years. In 1872, Governor Warmoth was impeached towards the end of his term and was replaced for the last forty-three days by Pinchback, the Negro Lieutenant-Governor since the death of Dunn in 1871. At the expiration of his term, in January 1873, Kellog was elected governor and C. C. Antoine, a Creole, became lieutenant-governor. In 1876 the Democrats returned to power; this marked the beginning of the end for the active political participation the colored people ever had in the history of Louisiana. By 1896 the Louisiana State Government was once again pure white.

During the twenty-eight years (1868-1896) during which

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[16] Desdunes, op. cit., p. 174.

the Negro in Louisiana was allowed a brief excursion in politics, Creoles of color had been particularly prominent and some served with distinction.[17] Including those mentioned above, the following Creoles of color served in the "Black and Tan" legislation between 1868-1888:

State Officers

C. C. Antoine, Lieutenant Governor, 1872-76
P. G. Deslonde, Secretary of State, 1872-76
Antoine Dubluclet, State Treasurer, 1868-69

State Senators

Andre Monnette, 1868-70
J. H. Ingraham, 1870-72-74
A. E. Barbour, 1868-70-72-74
J. A. Massicot, 1872-74-76
Andre Dumonte, 1874-76
Robt. Guichard, 1874-76-78-80-84-88
Fortune Riard, 1874-76-78

Representatives

J. A. Massicot, 1868-70-72
C. J. Adolphe, 1868-70-72
Octave Belot, 1868-70-72
Joseph Mansion, 1868-70-72
Robt. Guichard, 1870-72
Aristide Dejoie, 1870-72-74
F. C. Antoine, 1870-74-76
Robert Issable, 1868-70-72-74-76[18]

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[17]See Henry Clay Warmoth, War Politics and Reconstruction (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930).

[18]A. E. Perkins, Who's Who in Colored Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Douglas Loan Co., Inc., 1930), pp. 49-53. N. B. Some of the respondents in this study are the descendants of these creole political figures. See Appendix C for a partial list of current creole family names.

Upon the white supremacist's return to power, overt retaliation against some prominent Creoles occurred and some were forced to leave the state. In 1891, to combat the return to the "fanatic caste spirit,"[19] a group of Creoles formed the Comite des Citoyens. Their official organ, the Crusader, was dedicated to fight the new segregation laws, win sympathetic public sentiment and solicit funds for their cause. The Comite concentrated especially on and were successful in defeating through judicial action, Act III of the Louisiana Legislature of 1890, known as the Jim Crow Car Law. It was this group that brought the Plessy vs. Ferguson case to the courts. When it reached the Supreme Court, it resulted in the now historical "separate but equal" decision of 1896. Two years later the State Constitutional Convention adopted the "grandfather clause"[20] which disfranchised nearly 90 per cent of the Negro population of voting age. By the time it was declared unconstitutional in 1915, the Comite had dissolved through the death of members and others had drifted away or left the city. A small core of

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[19] Desdunes, op. cit., p. 184.

[20] Anyone whose grandfather was not eligible to vote was automatically disqualified. Since the clause aimed at the generation before the Civil War, very few Negroes could meet these requirements. For instance in 1904, about 1,700 out of 651,000 Negroes were registered voters in Louisiana, whereas at its peak in 1897, 130,000 Negroes were registered voters.

"fighters" remained and supported local chapters of national Negro uplift movements. In those days, as a distinguished creole political leader told this writer: "The leadership and money came from downtown and the cases from uptown." Thus pointing out that the Negro political future was still guided by the efforts of the Creoles. In general Negro political activities in twentieth century New Orleans were at a stand still until World War II, but the foundations were being layed for a political renaissance.

2. The Contemporary Political Scene

The year 1940 marks the beginning of an aggressive Negro political movement in New Orleans. Since then it has rapidly grown and has precipitated a chain of events which are breaking the walls of segregation. The spirit of the eighteen sixties is back, it seems. A hundred years is a long time to wait for the enjoyment of granted civil rights and the colored people are becoming increasingly impatient now that they have attained a higher economical and educational level.

The Creole does not display his characteristic clannishness in his political behavior. In this respect he is more American and more Negro in his political orientation than in any other of his social attitudes. But perhaps he has also inherited the French love of political debate which his ancestors displayed so eloquently during Reconstruction. The

Creole is aware that through his ability to vote, civic and social equality will come to be. In New Orleans the Creole is still at the vanguard of the battle for civil rights. The presidents of the local branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and C.O.R.E. are Creoles. Several creole attorneys have won national attention in their handling of civil lawsuits; one is a city attorney. A Creole is the editor of the militant New Orleans Negro weekly paper. Even the young Creole is pitching in the battle for equal rights. He attacks the "Uncle Tomism" of the Zulu Parade in his school newspaper and belongs to the Junior N.A.A.C.P.

While the Creoles generally belong to numerous clubs which all have political features, participation in political parties is still rather low. All organizations are working together though to bring the Negro voting registration up to the 50,000 mark. Today 36,149 Negroes in New Orleans have met registration requirements with the largest registration still downtown in the Seventh and Ninth Ward. This is a large enough number of hold the political balance of power in New Orleans.

Among the respondents over twenty-one years of age, voting registration and participation was very high and the cases of disqualification relatively low.[21] The local

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[21]Voting registration blanks are ambiguous. This writer was given a sampling of questions by a creole lawyer and failed to pass the test. Since this writer had no difficulty registering, it is assumed that errors are overlooked in the case of whites but not in the case of Negroes.

Negro press motto, "A voteless people is a hopeless people," was taken seriously by all Creoles with whom the author had the occasion to discuss the political future.

E. Educational Institutions

1. The Background

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, education was a preoccupation of the elite and public education as we understand it today was of little consequence. This situation was especially true in New Orleans where education was largely a private matter of concern only to those who maintained a tradition of learning and culture in their families. By 1820, after the arrival of the emigres from Saint Domingue, the Creoles of color had gradually developed into a stratified society with an elite at the top. Members of the elite, most often of very light complexion, found little difficulty in securing educational services for their children either in schools or from private tutors. The situation had been facilitated by the presence of a great number of children of color with white fathers interested in the educational welfare of their offspring. They paved the way for the acceptance of other non-white children in private schools. Higher education was often completed in private schools in the North and in France. In the nineteenth century up to the Civil War the number of Creoles of color who received a foreign education can not

be exactly stated but would not fall below 2,000.[22]

The period between 1840-50 has been referred to previously as the golden age of the Creoles of color. It was also during this period that the first free school was founded by Madame Couvent, a wealthy black woman born in Guinea. In 1848, "l'Institut Couvent" as it was commonly called, opened its door to all free people and tuition was charged only to those who could afford it. This was to counteract the barring of free people of color from the public school system of New Orleans which had started in 1841. Even though the free people of color were taxed for the support of the white public school system, they were excluded from enjoying the benefits of these schools to which they were contributing $37,000 a year.[23] In spite of these handicaps, few if any free colored communities in the United States could surpass the Creoles of New Orleans in prosperity and educational attainments during ante-bellum days.

The Civil War brought many changes to the educational institutions of New Orleans. By that time the Creoles of color had developed from fifteen to twenty small private

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[22]Nathan Willey, "Education of the Colored Population of Louisiana" Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XXXIII, (July, 1866), p. 246.

[23]Ibid., p. 248.

schools of their own, the more exclusive ones drawing a color-class line.[24] According to historical reports, standards of scholarship were high and the pupils were equally fluent in French and English. In 1861 Negroes were admitted for the first time to the public school system of New Orleans. The experience proved impracticable and a bi-racial system was instituted in 1864. Many whites and Creoles of color had kept their children home rather than send them to school with the children of the freedmen. The Creoles attempted at first to be included in the white school system but when school segregation became official in 1877 they were barred from white schools. Cable gives a dramatic illustration of how some Creole girls were evicted from an integrated school on Royal Street. His story is based on an occurrence which he covered as a newspaper reporter.[25] With school segregation rigidly enforced the Creoles either kept their children home, sent them to their own little bilingual schools, or reluctantly sent them to public schools. In the latter case, Creole children often refused to sit next to non-Creoles and maintained a social distance by parental order. The Negro children retaliated by calling them "white man's bastards." Antagonism persisted up

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[24] Ibid., p. 247.

[25] "We have come said the White Leaguer, to remove the colored pupils. You will call your school to order."

to World War I when it gradually decreased, but it still has its repercussions today.

. . . It was done. As each name was called its young bearer rose and confronted her inquisitors.

. . . One dark girl shot up haughtily at the call of her name--"I am of Indian blood, and can prove it!"

"You will not be disturbed."

"Coralie-----,"

. . . A thin girl of mixed blood and freckled face rose and said: "My mother is white."

"Step aside!" commanded the White leaguer.

"But by the law the color follows the mother, and so I am white."

"Step aside!" cried the man, in a fury. (In truth there was so such law.)

"Octavie---."

A pretty, Oriental looking girl rises, silent, pale but self-controlled.

"Are you colored?"

"Yes; I am colored." She moves aside.

"Marie O---."

A girl very fair, but with crinkling hair and other signs of Negro extraction, stands up and says:

"I am the sister of the Hon.---," naming a high Democratic official, "and I shall not leave this school."

"You may remain; your case will be investigated."

"Eugenie---."

A modest girl, visibly of mixed race, rises, weeping silently.

"Step aside."

"Marcelline V---."

A bold-eyed girl of much African blood stands up and answers: "I am not colored! We are Spanish, and my brother will call on you and prove it." She is allowed to stay.

At length the roll-call is done . . . The girls who had been ordered into the street sobbed and shrieked . . .

One girl of grand and noble air, as dark and handsome as an East Indian princess, and standing first in her class for scholarship, threw herself at her teacher's feet, crying, "Have pity on me Miss---!"

"My poor Leontine," replied the teacher, "what can I do? There are good 'colored' schools in the city; would it not have been wiser for your father to send you to one of them?"

But the girl rose and answered: "Must I go to school with my own servants to escape an unmerited disdain?" And the teacher was silent . . .

Cable, op. cit., pp. 321-323.

In higher education, some Creoles took advantage of the new colleges founded mostly by missionary groups. Between 1865 and 1880 four Negro colleges[26] appeared on the New Orleans scene: New Orleans University, Straight University, Leland College and Southern University.[27]

Of historical interest is the school of Monsieur Medard Nelson which was conducted single-handed by this remarkable Creole, from Reconstruction days to his death in the thirties. Medard Nelson, a dark Creole, was educated in France and spoke several languages. His school, reputed for its vigorous classical curriculum, was attended by both white and colored students and many older respondents have learned to read and write French in his school. Today a Negro public school located in "palé land"[28] has been named in his honor.

2. Education Today

While some creole students attend public schools, the

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[26]Although these institutions were called colleges and universities, the term was used idealistically since most of the students were in the elementary and high school divisions of these schools. Their chief purpose was to train Negro school teachers.

[27]New Orleans and Straight Universities were merged into Dillard University in 1935, Southern University was moved to Baton Rouge while Leland was closed.

[28]Creoles refer to the back of town area of upper St. Bernard Avenue near Bayou St. John as "palé land."

majority of creole parents, if they can afford it, prefer to send their children to private Catholic schools. According to the opinion of the respondents, the reasons given for this creole preference were the following ranked in order of importance:

1. It is the rule of the Church
2. A better class of people attend
3. Catholic schools are considered better
4. Children will be with other Creoles

A little less than 50 per cent of the respondents felt that Creoles attach importance to this last point. Thus social class and religious considerations tend to transcend creole cultural identity. It is noteworthy though that Creoles who do not send their children to elementary Catholic schools will make a special effort to send them to Catholic high schools where they are more likely to make lasting associations which might lead to marriage.

a) Elementary Schools: Creoles generally send their children to grammar schools connected with their churches, such as the Corpus Christi and Epiphany elementary schools. There is one public school, Valena C. Jones, located in the heart of the creole community which competes favorably with the Catholic schools. This school which had an exceptionally efficient principal for many years and has been able to maintain high scholastic standards and a competent teaching

staff. Some children of the creole professional class are in attendance in this school. The school has a curious history. The original school was popularly known as "the bucket of blood" for it was housed in a cottage which used to be the abode of a feuding family frequently involved in brawls resulting in bloodshed.[29] By an odd coincidence the building was also painted red.

b) High Schools: The favorite high school of the Creoles is Xavier Prep, a coeducational school located uptown. It is run by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacraments, a white order. St. Mary's Academy, a girl"s school run by the Sisters of the Holy Family is located in the former Orleans ballroom in the Vieux Carre. It is an old school with a romantic tradition. They have graduated several students whose mother and grandmother received their education at the academy. The new St. Augustine High School run by the Josephite fathers is a boy's school. It occupies a modern spacious and well-equipped building in the best section of the creole community. This school is the center of many cultural programs for the community. A few Creoles go to public schools but to none in particular.

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[29]Older respondents insist that this family "couldn't have been creole for Creoles don't cut up like this."

c) Colleges: Xavier University, founded in 1915 as a development of Xavier Prep, is the college par excellence of the Creoles, although today they are outnumbered by "American" Negroes. Comparatively few Creoles go to Dillard which is located closer to the creole community. Thus it seems that the Creoles go uptown to college and the "American" Negroes go downtown. It is in the college situation that the rejection of the creole "way of life" is at its strongest. This writer noticed that his high school subjects identified more closely with the creole culture than the college respondents. No doubt greater interaction with non-Creoles and the diminishing influence of the family at that age, are responsible for this change. It is interesting to note though that at Xavier University, peer-groups still have a tendency to form along creole and non-creole lines with some notable exceptions. There are many more creole girls that boys at Xavier. Although sex differential in education favoring the female is a national tendency,[30] the difference seems to be proportionally greater among the Creoles than the non-Creoles. The fact that many creole boys enter the crafts which do not necessitate a higher education is partly responsible.

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[30]T. Lynn Smith, Fundamentals of Population Study (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1960), p. 256.

Creole educators in New Orleans seem to feel that the non-creole Negro completes his higher education more often than the Creole, irrespective of sex. Although the creole female has a better chance at occupation than the male and is pushed more by her family to continue her education, she tends to marry younger than non-creole girls and thus leaves college.

3. Conclusion

All respondents and their families unanimously endorsed the importance of education in providing better life opportunities. In each successive generation the level of education attained increased considerably.

The Catholic influence in the education of the Creoles cannot be overstressed. The school cooperates with the family and the church in making the creole belief system a Catholic one. Another important consideration is the presence of white teachers in Catholic schools which makes for a different experience than that of the all-Negro public school where Negro subculture tends to be perpetuated. The white fathers and sisters teaching school are a link of communication with the white world and are important in molding attitudes which more closely approximate the realities of the greater American culture.

In the educational institutions of the Creoles we find the source of two conflicting forces. Exclusiveness is

maintained by sending children to Catholic school where they are comparatively isolated from the mainstream of Negro life. However the higher they go up the educational scale, the more exposed they become to ideas and people outside the creole sphere of influence. At this point the young Creole tends to cast away some of the values of his group and thereby continuously weakens the creole culture.

Education is no doubt responsible for most of the change in attitudes which has occurred in the creole group during the past generation. The institution of education is becoming more powerful everyday as an agent of socialization but not yet to the degree it has in the greater American culture.

CHAPTER VIII

FOLKWAYS

In this chapter the author wishes to point out briefly some of the cultural traits of the Creole which sets him apart from the rest of the population of New Orleans. The creole language, food, musical tradition, customs and superstitions are all cultural survivals of another era. A society might change considerably in a century, yet folkways often persist long after they have lost their function and meaning. The creole culture is particularly rich in folkways. Some are only memories, others are about to disappear while others show no signs of weakening. The origin of the creole folkways is obscure because of the composite nature of the creole culture. However the French and West Indian elements are clearly evident.

A. The Creole Language

This gentle and naive language "qui fè vini dòlo plein lo zieux,"[1] could not have been called by a better name than creole. It was born in the colonies as the result of Afro-

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[1]Creole expression which maybe more logically than literally translated as: "which brings a lump to one's throat."

French cultural contact and its languid quality typifies the climate in which it developed. While it is a simpler language than French, creole can express nuances of feeling which lose their subtlety when translated into French. Creole is basically French. It is not a mixture of Spanish and French nor French and English though in a bilingual society some people will always mix the two languages in their speech, hence the expression "gumbo" French.

Creole originated in the master-slave situation. The master simplified his French as he addressed his slaves who in turn, unaccustomed to French, effectuated further modifications. The result was a language with a French vocabulary but with a simpler West African grammatical structure juxtaposed on it. The hard French sounds were either modulated or dropped by the Negroes, giving creole its characteristic soft pronounciation.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region, the creole language took birth. It developed in Martinique, Guadaloupe, Saint Domingue and Louisiana. The fact that the Louisiana creole language is so similar to the one of Saint Domingue--now Haiti--is further evidence of the cultural link between the two former French colonies.

Today creole is spoken only by a few old Creoles in New Orleans. It is more prevalent in rural parishes but it is fast dying out. The Louisiana creole of today is so mixed with standard French and Acadian French that it is

practically never heard in its pure form. However historical records attest to the fact that in the nineteenth century it was more similar to the creole language as it is spoken in Haiti today. While creole was predominantly spoken by people of color, the white Creoles got in the habit of speaking it among themselves.

Among the respondents, only the old spoke creole. However none was consistent in his speech patterns and mixed freely standard French with creole. Some of the respondents spoke excellent French which they had learned in the private schools mentioned before and in their cathechism classes. Those who spoke "good" French scorned creole, which they considered a country patois and a mark of illiteracy. The grandparents of all respondents spoke either French or creole. It seems that English supplanted French and creole as the dominant language about the time of World War I. In one family for example, the children born before 1915 were more articulate in French whereas those born later preferred using English. Women in general have kept up the creole language more than the men. The fact that they have less contact with the outside world and gossip among themselves more than the men accounts for that.

Today French and creole are spoken so seldom among the Creoles of color that it can be considered a custom of the past that will die out completely in the not too

distant future. A certain French intonation remains in the speech of many Creoles who do not speak French and some creole words have remained in their vocabulary.

The following is a selected list of French-creole words which are frequently used by the Creoles:

Armoire: a wardrobe, a kind of closet.

Bambocher: to make merry, to have a good time.

Bè: an affectionate term, a diminutive of bèbè. Often used at the end of a sentence such as: "What are you doing bè?"

Bouzin: a feast, a good time, a party.

Briquè: slightly derogatory term referring to the reddish "bad" hair or reddish complexion of a light-skinned Creole. Example: "Have you seen that briquè child?"

Chè: diminutive of cher, a term of endearment frequently used.

Cowein: a turtle dish but also a good time, a party.

Guignon: bad luck. This term is often used, such as: "This person is guignon to me," or "it is guignon to play marbles inside the house."

Gris gris: in the past a magic charm; today it is used facetiously in the sense of calling on magic such as saying when shuffling cards: "Let me put a little gris gris in this deck of cards."

Lagniappe: something extra, something for nothing.

Machouquer: talking incessantly, gossiping, "running

one's mouth." Sometimes pronounced "machouquette"(probably from the French machoire= jaw).

Marabou: soft black wavy hair considered beautiful.

Passa blanc: to pass for white. A person who passes is called a passè.

B. The Creole Cuisine

With respect to food customs, the Creoles are very French; they like le bon manger[2] and devote much time and care to the preparation of food. In the opinion of this writer, the average Creole eats better-tasting and more interesting food than other Americans except gourmets and the very wealthy. Of course it is understandable for creole cooking has made New Orleans famous.

The precursor of creole cooking is French cuisine, which was transplanted into the sub-tropical habitat of Louisiana, adapted to new ingredients and new food stuffs, and underwent the influence of Africans, American Indians, and Spaniards. The French brought the recipes and gave the instructions but the Negroes mixed the ingredients and cooked the food. They probably had a greater hand in making creole cooking what it is than they are generally

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[2]Good food. A broad smile appeared on the face of every respondent when the interviewer reached the section of the questionnaire devoted to food habits. The topic of food unleashed many a reserved tongue.

given credit for.

Louisiana creole cooking is very similar to that of the French West Indies. The creole "touch" is in the herbs and seasoning used wisely and artfully and the careful way the food is prepared. Creole cooking leans heavily on seafood since the bayous and Gulf of the Mississippi Delta abound in fish of all kinds. With the emphasis that the French culture puts on good food, generations of cooks have made creole cooking the most distinguished cuisine in the New World.

The following is a partial list of the more unusual dishes favored by the Creoles of color. Of course, rice and beans and gumbo are typical of French Louisiana and the French West Indies and figure prominently on the creole menu.

Calas tout chaud: rice sweet cakes fried and served hot. Traditionally served on first communion breakfast. They are reportedly difficult to make.

Chaurice: highly seasoned sausage.

Congri: a sort of jambalaya.

Couchon: a desert made with pumpkin.

Courtbouillon: a highly seasoned de-boned fish stew made from any of the large local fish. It is considered one of the choicest fish dishes.

Cowein: turtle meat served with a spicy tomato gravy. Turtle eggs are served with it.

Crayfish bisque: a thick soup made with stuffed crayfish heads, rice and seasoning.

Grillade: meat with a tomato and green pepper gravy.

Gumbo zhebes: gumbo to which herbs and greens have been added. Served traditionally on Holy Thursdays. Some old vendors still say on Holy Thursday: "Buy your seven greens for good luck!"

Hogshead cheese: a jellified meat made of hogs' head and spices.

Jambalaya: rice with meat and vegetables cut in small pieces served together well seasoned. Said to be of Spanish origin.

Pain patate: a cake made of sweet potatoes, eggs, flour and sweet condiments.

Panné meat: breaded meat. A great favorite of the Creoles; they "panné" everything.

Plantain desert: fried plantain served with sugar, similar to banana fritters. It is sometimes called "plantation."

Sagamite: hominy served with milk and sugar.

Stewed shrimps: a shrimp and rice stew with a hot tomato sauce. Non-Creoles call it "shrimp a la creole."

Stuffed food: Creoles love to stuff their food with bread crumbs, sea food, meat and plenty of seasoning such as stuffed bell peppers, stuffed crabs, stuffed egg plants,

stuffed mirliton (vegetable pear).

Cafe noir with or without chickory is of course traditional after meals. Today wines are seldom served, although among the old and more conservative families, dry wine in the best of French tradition is served with the meals.

Of all the creole folkways, the food habits are the more persistent. The latter are held in such a high esteem that they have diffused to non-creole people.

C. The Creole Musical Tradition

1. Creole Folksongs

As in the case of the creole language and food, creole music bears a strong resemblance to the music of the West Indies. The creole ballads of the nineteen century have the same Afro-French flavor and rhythmic structure as the Haitian meringue.[3] The content of the songs is similar, satirical, humorous and sometimes romantic. They are essentially secular songs, probably the invention of Louisiana creole slaves or brought over from the Antilles. They represent a harmonious blending of African rhythm and humor with French melody and sentimentality. The soft sounds of the creole language makes it particularly well suited for singing.

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[3]In the Mauritius Isle near Madagascar, the sega song and dance is practically identical in form and content to the Haitian folksong and the creole ballad of Louisiana. The sega is also the result of French-African cultural contact.

Today these songs are known only among very old Creoles and no longer are sung. The following song, Aurore Pradere, is an illustration:

Aurore Pradere, belle 'ti fille,
C'est li mo oulé, c'est li ma prend
Ya moun qui dit li trop zolie
Ya moun qui dit li pas polie
Tout ca ye dit sia!
Mo bin fou bin
C'est li mo oulé, c'est li ma prend.[4]

2. Street Cries

Another old tradition is that of the marchandes crying her wares. In ante-bellum days many free people of color of the poorer class were street vendors. The elite of color would also send their slaves out in the streets to sell the produce of their truck gardens. This custom, which is dying out today, added a picturesque charm to New Orleans. The vendors carried their wares on their head and a few were still doing so up until the thirties. The street cries were in creole but little by little English was substituted. Older respondents recalled hearing the

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[4]Aurore Pradere, pretty girl
It's her I want, it's her I'll get
People say that she is too pretty
People say that she is not polite
To what they say
I don't give a dam
For its her I want and her I'll get. (translation mine).

plaintive melodious cries of the marchande selling sweet potato cakes:

"Bel pain pa-tate, bel pain pa-tate,
Madame, ou-lé-ou le bel pain pa-tate!"

or the praline vendor:

"Pralines, pistaches!
Pralines, pacanes!"

and the calas vendor:

"Calas, calas tout chauds, belles calas
Madame, mo gaignin calas!"

In the Fall the ramoneur (chimney sweep) used to appear in his picturesque attire: black suit, black hat, and ropes and bunches of palmetto leaves thrown over one shoulder:

"Ramoné, ramoné
La chiminée du haut en bas!"

The chimney sweep would keep up his song while he worked so that no one would forget his presence and start a fire while he was cleaning the chimney.

Today in the creole community one occasionally hears the cries of the watermelon and blackberry vendors:

"I've got watermelon
Fresh off the vine,
Red to the rind!"

"I've got blackberries, Lady!"

In New Orleans the supermarkets are putting the street vendors out of business. However in the West Indies they are still very much part of the local scene.

3. Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras was celebrated in New Orleans as early as the eighteenth century. It was a spontaneous and joyous occasion particularly suited to the latin temperament of the city and of great appeal to the people of color. To them Mardi Gras meant above all singing and dancing. When the Americans came and started to organize the city, they also organized Mardi Gras and succeeded in snuffing out the spontaneous traditions and replacing them with large ponderous parades. From 1827, date of the first organized Mardi Gras carnival, the spirit of Mardi Gras started to change. Today it is nothing more than a tourist attraction kept alive artifically by the Chamber of Commerce. It is a pathetic sight to watch the crowds of today convincing themselves after many drinks that they are having a good time. Mardi Gras is an anachronism, it does not fit the anglo-saxon temperament which now dominates New Orleans.

Among the Creoles of color, carnival has also changed but it has retained more of the spirit of the past. Many features of the creole carnival are similar to carnival in the West Indies and Brazil.

North Claiborne Avenue is the traditional meeting place for the creole maskers on Mardi Gras Day. In the olden days a new creole song or an old song with new lyrics came out each year for Mardi Gras. It was supposed to be a Mardi Gras secret but the night before, everybody had learned the lyrics of the new song by word of mouth. Whole

families would go to Claiborne Avenue together for the day and bring food along. Clever rather than elaborate costumes was the rule. As a respondent said:

> "It is used to be more than it is now. Pretty women would shake up and down Claiborne singing: Aie, aie, aie mo pas l'aimer ca! We would dance and sing or sit around watching the maskers while exchanging food among our friends. The children would prance around showing off their costumes. Now they have opened so many bars that people go inside to drink and do their cutting up indoors, and you can't get them out away from their bottles."

a) The Mardi Gras Indians: Mardi Gras in New Orleans is world famous but few people outside the Negro population of New Orleans know of the most colorful and exciting feature of carnival in New Orleans: The Mardi Gras Indians. The custom antedates the twentieth century but its first appearance is not known. It was originally a downtown creole custom. Today the custom has been largely taken over by "uptown" Negroes and is associated with the lower-class. The Indian songs are still in creole even though the Indian maskers do not understand what they are singing about. The Mardi Gras Indians are dressed in gorgeous costumes embroidered with rhinestones and decorated with expensive feathers.[5] They will sew painstakingly all year and stop at no

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[5]The material and accessories for a traditional Mardi Gras Indian costume cost about $500.00. Counting the labor, an Indian costume would be valued at about $1,500. It is the custom never to wear the same costume twice.

expense for their one day of glory.[6] On Mardi Gras Day a tribe of Indians led by a chief and accompanied by tambourine players will tour the city from dawn to dusk. Each time they meet a rival tribe they engage in a mock battle in dance movements. In the past few decades several bands got carried away, drinking became excessive and the mock fights turned into real fights with serious casualties. Even though the Indians are meek again, they have acquired a bad reputation. Many creole children are afraid of them although few can resist peeking at them. When their theme song is heard in the distance:

> T'ouwais, bas q' ouwais
> Ou tendais
> A la caille-yo
> A la caille wais

everyone flocks to see them and a traditional New Orleans "second line" is formed.

> "When I was a child, I thought they really were Indians. They wore paint and blankets and when they danced, one would get in the ring and throw his head back and downward, stooping over and bending his knees, making a rhythm with his heels and singing--T'ouwais bas q'ouwais--and the tribe would answer--Ou tendais . . . They would dance and sing and go on just like regular Indians, because they had the idea they wanted to act just like the old Indians did in years gone by and so they lived true to the traditions of the Indian style. They went armed with fictitious spears and tommyhawks and so forth and their main object was to make their enemy bow. They would

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[6] See Marcel Camus' motion picture production of Black Orpheus for a similar attitude among the Negro maskers in Rio de Janeiro's yearly carnival.

> send their spy-boys two blocks on ahead--I happened to be a spy-boy myself once so I know how this went--and when a spy-boy would meet another spy from an enemy tribe, he'd point his finger to the ground and say, 'Bow-wow.'"[7]

Today 50 years later the Indian tradition is still the same. The origin of this colorful custom is obscure. This writer believes it came from Haiti where a similar carnival custom exists. The Haitian peasants in their rara carnival organize rival bands each with a king. They meet at a crossroad and the band that out-dances the other is the winner. Some of the words in the Indian songs are Haitian creole words which do not exist in the Louisiana creole.[8] In Haiti congo drums accompany the dancers, whereas in New Orleans hand tambourines have replaced the drums, but the ensuing rhythm and dance movements are Caribbean rather than Afro-American. The costumes might have been inspired from the Indian pow wows held yearly during the Spanish regime.

b) The Mardi Gras Balls: More sedate and similar to the white customs are the colored Mardi Gras balls originated and still largely controlled by the Creoles. About four balls are considered very exclusive and anyone who has seen them agrees that they compare favorably to the white

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[7] Lomax, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

[8] For instance the word caille = house does not exist in Louisiana creole.

carnival balls. A king and a queen and maids of honor preside and no expense is spared in the lavish decoration and tableau. The most prestigeful Mardi Gras organization presented their sixty-third annual ball in 1960. This year all organizations participated in the "Mardi Gras blackout" and no balls were given. Funds earmarked for the balls were donated instead to the National Freedom Fund to help the Negro win his battle for civil rights. Because of the current racial conflict in New Orleans, few Creoles left their home on Mardi Gras Day this year. They stayed home partly out of fear of the predicted racial clashes and partly as a deliberate protest against racial injustice. However the Mardi Gras Indians were out and everyone was happy to watch them pass and relieve temporarily the gloom of the day.

4. Creole Societies and their Marching Bands

One of the features of the creole craftsmen's associations mentioned before, were their marching bands. The bands would provide music for the various dances, picnics and parades which these organizations sponsored. The musicians dressed in dignified French military uniforms would often parade in the downtown creole community. The musicians played French marching music but somehow they added an extra syncopation which would delight the crowd which followed and kept time with them. It was out of this

marching music that jazz eventually emerged.

Another feature of these creole associations was the burial policy. Upon the death of a member, his funeral expenses would be taken care of and it was required of all members to attend the funeral. The society's band would accompany the procession playing funeral marches. Coming back from the cemetery the music would be in a lighter vein. As time went by the music played after the funeral became livelier and hordes of people would turn up at funerals just to see the band "cutting up" on their way back. Many Creoles then discontinued using funeral bands. They felt it was undignified at a Catholic funeral. In this case, the society would give the family the money set aside for the band's fee. Therefore the celebrated New Orleans dixieland funerals were more typical of non-Creoles.

The funeral societies have been put out of business by the Negro-Creole insurance companies but some of the organizations still exist as social clubs. Les Francs Amis, for example, has been in existence since 1860, but as the old musicians die off another colorful aspect of creole culture disappears.

5. Creole Jazz

No one knows exactly how jazz originated, but it is common knowledge that the creole and Negro musicians were the inventors. An early form of jazz was heard in the last

few decades of the nineteenth century. It was a combination of the Afro-Caribbean rhythms of Congo Square and the French quadrilles of the Orleans Ballroom. This was "creole" jazz, not the jazz we know today. The rhythm was more West Indian, the lyrics were in creole and the melodies were French. Many Creoles of color were employed as musicians playing for balls and picnics especially for the fun-loving white Creoles. They were trained musicians and consequently their music was more restrained than the music of the freedmen. Examples of early creole jazz still extant are old Mardi Gras tunes like Eh! La Bas!, Sale Dame, and Mo Pas l'Aimer Ca!

On the other hand the freedman with his tradition of blues, work songs and spirituals picked up the discarded brass instruments left by the Confederate Army and literally sang into them. A poignant and earthy music resulted.

These two different styles of music fused together in Storyville[9] where the sporting houses hired colored musicians. The creole pianist played with the Negro trumpetist and jazz was born. Jazz born in the bordello was a composite of marching band music, street vendors cries, French

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[9]In 1896 a New Orleans alderman, Sidney Story decreed a city ordinance restricting prostitution to a 38 block red light district between Basin, North Robertson, Iberville and St. Louis Streets. Much to the annoyance of the alderman the "girls" nicknamed their district Storyville.

quadrilles, Afro-Caribbean rhythms, and Negro blues. Thus, in the hands of the Negro and the Creole, New Orleans became the birth place of the most popular product America has ever exported to the world.

Subsequently the non-creole Negro had a greater hand in further developing jazz. The Negro music was "hot" and sensuous and the "gut-bucket" style was more in demand than the less effervescent style of the creole musicians. Furthermore social pressure was exerted upon the Creole musicians by their community for the creole people looked down upon jazz musicians. They sounded too much like the "uptown" Negroes. They effectively discouraged their sons to play outside of their own organizations. As a relative of a world famous creole musician recalled:

> "Hustling was just what grandmother called it . . . She told [him] that anybody who went on the stage, doing things in public, was just common. And she raised us not to boast about [his] playing.[10]

Nevertheless, the creole world produced some jazz greats, among them: Sydney Bechet, Ferdinand LaMenthe ("Jelly Roll" Morton), Papa Celestin and Alphonse Picou.

In 1917 Storyville, considered a menace to the fleet, was closed by federal order and jazz left the city. Jazz musicians took the river boat for Memphis and Chicago and conquered the rest of the world in less than two decades.

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[10]Lomax, op. cit., p. 37.

From that moment jazz was no longer a New Orleans specialty. Today one would hardly believe that jazz was ever born in New Orleans unless one is lucky enough to see a jazz funeral or a downtown marching band. Then one can recapture for a few moments the feeling of old New Orleans in its dixieland days.[11]

D. Customs and Superstitions

1. Vodou

Of historical interest are the customs which surrounded the practice of vodou in nineteenth century New Orleans. The Creoles of color had little to do with the practice of vodou except that the most notorious leader of the cult, Marie Laveau, was a Creole of color. However, Creoles as well as whites secured advice from vodou priestesses and were customers in the latter's profitable trade in good luck charms and counter charms.

So much nonsense has been written about vodou in New Orleans that it is difficult indeed to extricate the few authentic facts from the accumulated myth that surrounds the practice. Each new writer on the subject of vodou in New Orleans quotes former writers and ultimately the original source turns out to be Moreau de Saint Mary's voluminous

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[11]See Roland Wingfield, "New Orleans Marching Bands" Dance Magazine, XXXIII, (January 1959), pp. 34-35.

essays published in 1797, which dealt with life and customs in Saint Domingue and not in Louisiana.[12]

Vodou has its roots in Africa but it originated in the New World, mainly in Saint Domingue.[13] The slaves brought over to Saint Domingue represented many different tribes with different languages and religious beliefs. However they all had dance as a common medium of religious expression and it is around the dance complex that the composite vodou beliefs emerged. Because of its eclectic nature vodou has also incorporated many of the Catholic rituals in its practice.

Vodou was probably brought to Louisiana towards the end of the eighteenth century by slaves in transit in Saint Domingue. However in Louisiana it never had the opportunity to develop to the extent it did in the West Indies.

Voudou is a cult through which the believer worships divinities to which he attributes his fortunes and misfortunes. It is an animistic belief in the sense that these divinities have spirits which inhabit many animate and inanimate objects. Through the medium of a priest or priestess spirits can be pleased or appeased by making offerings

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[12]See Moreau de Saint Mery, Description de la Partie Francaise de L'Isle de Saint Domingue, op. cit.

[13]Similar cults with different names emerged in Brazil, Trinidad, Cuba, and other Antilles. However the term vodou was used only in Saint Domingue (Haiti) and in Louisiana.

and by following certain rituals. These generally take place at a meeting where dances accompanied by drum rhythms and chants are used to create a state of exultation, bringing the believer closer to his god. The priest, believed to be endowed with supernatural powers, can dispense his power by selling magical objects or giving prescriptions capable of bringing and warding off evil.

In Louisiana vodou rituals had great appeal to the slaves for several reasons. It gave them a sense of solidarity and dancing provided them with a much needed release from pent-up emotions. Furthermore it gave them something to believe in and provided them with an effective tool of retaliation over their masters who greatly feared vodou vengeances and ill-omens. Authorities made every effort to repress the practice.

In New Orleans vodou consisted mainly of ceremonial meetings and dances held occasionally. Its main feature was the making of and selling of charms called gris gris. The priesthood was dominated by women who innovated and changed rituals to fit their needs. Thus no traditions were able to crystallize. The personality of Marie Laveau dominated the vodou activities of New Orleans in the nineteenth century. With her death around 1875, the practice died away and in spite of rumors to the contrary no survival of vodou practice has existed in New Orleans for a

long time. However a few of the vodou superstitions survived among the colored population. Not too long ago, a Creole was alarmed to find a dead black cat with a cross on its back on her front steps. An old woman had pictures of her enemies hanging upside down in her armoire. Some people put offerings in front of Marie Laveau's tomb in St. Louis Cemetery especially on St. John's Eve, the most important vodou feast day. Marie Laveau is still a legend in New Orleans and disobedient children are kept in line by the mere mention of her name. On Rampart Street a drugstore still sells "jinx" and "fix" powers which probably have their origin in the much feared gris gris of the early nineteenth century.

2. Superstitious Beliefs

Creoles are still inclined to be rather superstitious people. Their superstitions seem more of European than African origin. The same superstitions were shared in the nineteenth century by the white Creoles.[14] The Creoles are not the victims of their superstitions, it is more in the nature of an affectation. They can joke about them. Some reject them overtly while others observe them secretly.

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[14]See Lyle Saxon, Gumbo Ya-Ya (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945), pp. 167-170 and appendices. Note the similarity of the superstitions of the white Creoles with those of the colored Creoles reported in this study.

Most Creoles are familiar with many superstitions and some have remarkable recollections of them. The following is a sampling of superstitions which this writer has heard during his stay with the Creoles:

1. An egg layed on Good Friday is supposed to turn to wax.
2. Putting lock of wife's hair in wallet will make her be true to one.
3. Cooking cabbage on New Years: money for all.
4. If a girl whistles in the house the Blessed Mother cries.
5. Anyone that laughs too much on Friday will surely cry on Sunday.
6. If you hit anyone with a broom, you'll send them to jail, if they don't spit on the broom.
7. If you sweep after six p.m. you'll sweep all your money out of the house.
8. Scrubbing the steps with red brick brings good luck.
9. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, wash steps with overnight urine to keep people from "hoodooing" you.
10. When an old woman begs a silver dime on Monday morning, if you are the first to donate one, it will bring you good luck.
11. Good luck if a man is the first to cross the threshold on a Monday morning.[15]

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[15]It was reported that on a Monday morning, a creole old maid living alone, peeked through her front door in her nightgown and beckoned a male stranger in the street to cross her threshold. She became quite indignant when her intention was misunderstood.

12. If your left eye itches you are going to get a whipping or get into trouble.

13. If your left ear itches a stranger is coming, right ear--disappointment.

14. Don't put a shoe under bed--bad luck.

15. Placing hat on bed brings bad luck.

16. If someone drops a fork, a hungry woman is coming to visit; if they drop a knife a hungry man is coming.

17. If a dog howls, look outside to see which way his head is pointing. If his head is pointing up it means fire, if his head is pointing down it means death.

18. If a child digs a hole in the yard, he is digging someone's grave.

19. One birth in the family means one death.

20. One leg Horace in the neighborhood, attracts death.[16]

21. In the event of thunder cover all mirrors because the reflection may electrocute you.

22. If five persons die on your block you are the next.

23. If a baby looks in a mirror before teething, he'll be long before cutting teeth. He may also turn cross-eyed.

24. Never put a baby shoe above his head.

25. If a child constantly cries, it means bad luck.

26. Crossing over a baby will stunt its growth.

27. If an unwanted guest comes to visit, hide a broom placed in a shoe behind a door and they will leave. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the door sill and they will never return.

---

[16]One leg Horace is the "Porgy" of the creole community. He is supposed to be guignon.

28. If a creole family serves you gumbo with a fork, it means don't come back (heard from a non-Creole in Chicago).

29. Burying a dish rag under the steps will cure a wart.

30. If you urinate outside, a stye will appear on your eye.

31. Two matches with a sprinkle of salt on them will make it stop raining.

An old respondent added: "The Creole has all the superstitions and the white man all the money."

3. Superstitious Customs

There are some customs of a superstitious nature observed by a few old Creoles. In the event of a death, clocks are stopped at the hour at which the person passed away. All the mirrors in the house are covered. It is also considered an ill-omen to go to the funeral of one's own children.

In another custom it is believed that if a girl cuts her hair on Good Friday it will grow long and thick. Some people interprets this custom as a manifestation of humility on this religious day. However, whether motivated by devotion or vanity, the custom has lost much of its significance. As a Creole said: "Today girls don't want their hair to be long no more."

The piercing of ears is another French custom still practiced among the creole women. Generally it is done

when a baby is about nine days old, for at that age it is believed she will not feel the pain. Certain women render this service in the neighborhood, others go to a physician. Piercing of ears is supposed to improve the vision but more often it is done for esthetic reasons or because a grandmother has given the child at her christening a pair of gold earrings which have been in the family for several generations.

4. Lottery

New Orleans has always been a gambling town. Games of chances are part of the latin cultural tradition of the city. Lottery is a tradition which extends from the tip of Latin America all the way to New Orleans. When New Orleans fell more and more under the American influence the institution of lottery began to clash with the stern anglo-saxon disapproval of games of chances. To put the practice under control the Louisiana Lottery Company was authorized to operate in 1868 with the understanding that part of its revenue was to go to charity. The Company became so politically powerful that state and federal authorities declared lottery illegal in 1895. However, this was not the end of lottery in New Orleans. Its headquarters were removed to Honduras and its activities went underground. Lottery has always been a feature of downtown New Orleans and the Creoles of color are lottery fans. Possibly they

are more fond of their lottery than the non-Creoles and this might be another expression of their gallic heritage.

In the creole community a dignified Italian woman is the lottery vendor. Apparently she does not look upon her profession as lacking in respectability. She is a devout Catholic and takes the opportunity to sell tickets for her church bazar at the same time as she collects bets and pays off the few who win. For the Creole, lottery is a pastime and he feels that he has the right "to do a little dreaming" with his hard-earned money.

E. Conclusion

Like the French the Creoles are bon vivants and enjoy a good time. They like to visit, talk and laugh. They enjoy good food, music and dance and they like to take a chance on a lottery ticket. However on the more sophisticated level, the literary and cultural activities of the Creoles of color so noteworthy in the 1840's are absent today. These activities, so important in French society, do not occupy as large a place in American culture. Only the big metropolies of the United States offer such divertissements as literary societies, opera, symphonies, theatre and art exhibitions. In New Orleans these activities have a small following among the whites and are also segregated. The Creole who is sensitive to artistic pursuit is

generally hyper-sensitive to the humiliation of segregation. It is hard to enjoy an opera from the last row of the third balcony when one can afford to sit in an orchestra seat. The Creoles to whom cultural activities are important generally leave the city and those who remain generally yield to the more sensate cultural orientation of today. In this respect the Creoles have lost the French "style of life."

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to present the principal characteristics of a comparatively little known subculture, the Creoles of color of New Orleans. An attempt has been made to describe the emergence of this subculture, to follow its development and its present decline. In this respect this study is primarily socio-historical. It is sociological in the sense that the author has tried to describe and analyse the everyday life of the Creoles of today and attempted to understand how the world looks through the Creoles' value system. Finally the author has tried to depict the agents of conservatism perpetuating this subculture as well as the social forces which are producing changes.

In brief review the Creoles of color of New Orleans were defined as the descendants of people of mixed French and African ancestry who share the vestiges of the French culture of Louisiana known as creole. A century ago it would have been easier to identify a Creole of color. He was a mulatto rather than a Negro. He was a free man not a freedman. His cultural orientation was French not Anglo-American. He lived in downtown New Orleans rather

than uptown. He was a Catholic and a native rather than a Protestant and a migrant. In other words he contrasted sharply from those who were not Creoles, and above all he was recognized as a Creole of color by the society of New Orleans.

A century of change has blurred the picture considerably. Today the Creole is not as easily identifiable for he is no longer recognized as a separate class in the society of New Orleans except by himself. He is generally a mulatto but some Creoles are dark. His family name is often French but occasionally it is anglo-saxon. He generally lives downtown but not always. Most often his family has been in New Orleans for generations but some have come recently from other creole communities in Louisiana. However, he is generally Catholic and he identifies in various degrees with a certain way of life which has been described herein as the creole subculture.

In retrospect, the majority of the Creoles of color are the direct descendants of the free people of color who appeared on the New Orleans scene shortly after the founding of the city in 1718. Through cross-racial unions, the group grew rapidly in size during the tolerant French and Spanish regimes. Shortly after the Louisiana Purchase the emigres of color from Saint Domingue doubled the size of this class which numbered 5,000 by 1810. It was during this period that this group began to be known as Creoles

of color and had achieved enough stability and prosperity to form a society of their own with a social organization and a culture patterned after that of the French Creoles. In spite of increasing civil restrictions and discrimination under American rule, the Creoles of color reached the height of their socioeconomic development during the period of 1830-60. The Civil War a most significant historical event for all, drastically changed the destiny of the Creoles of color. They lost their intermediate status between the whites and the slaves when free men and freedmen were given an identical civil status. While the ex-slave gained a better status, the Creole of color lost his. Rather than be identified as a Negro, the Creole chose to isolate himself. He carefully maintained those elements of his French Creole culture and perpetuated these in his social organization, where every effort was made to maintain social distance between him and the non-creole Negro. In time this became difficult to maintain with the increasing americanization of the old French city of New Orleans.

Through education and political participation with the non-creole Negro and the continuous decrease in his number through emigration and cross-racial mobility, his isolation was partially broken. The Creole is now accepting his identity as a Negro, at least in his public life. In his private world he retains many of the old creole ways.

It is in the private world of the Creole that agents of conservatism are at play which have been able to maintain the creole subculture up to the present day. His family, religion and community are the three principal forces which attempt to resist "outside" influence.

The creole family is the primary agent of conservatism, it is also the nucleus of the creole subculture. In its attachement to la vie de famille , family rituals and traditions, respect shown to parents, and loyalty to kin, the creole family is not dissimilar to the middle-class French family. The creole family is characterized by its unity and patriarchal orientation. It is the result of generations of stability reinforced by the strong adherence to Catholic mores.

The Catholic religion is the most stable of all the social institutions of the Creoles of color. Catholic mores are the basis of their moral life and have had a pervasive influence on the general behavior of the group. Catholic traditions are so entwined in the family traditions of the Creoles that leaving the Catholic Faith would mean giving up many of the traditions to which the Creoles are attached.

The creole community is characterized by solidarity and intimate interactions between its members. It provides security and a sense of identity to the various individuals. Furthermore, the creole community acts as an

effective agent of social control on the behavior of its members. This was illustrated in the case study discussed in chapter VI.

The creole value system is transmitted by the family, church and community. It is dominated by the striving to maintain a status which sets the Creole apart from the "American" Negro. This status is maintained by attaching importance to family background and lightness of color but it is also maintained by striving for high standards of moral conduct and dignity in behavior. In essence, in the creole value system the family and the church are paramount in importance followed closely by his community and finally the world at large.

Agents of social change are at work in the social institutions over which the Creole has the least control, namely, economic, political and educational institutions. The latter institution is chiefly responsible for changing the conservative attitudes of the Creole. Interaction with the non-Creole in these spheres are largely of a secondary nature. However these secondary interactions are exerting a pervasive influence upon their primary ones therefore making it increasingly stressful to maintain a creole private world and a Negro public life.

Social change is taking place mainly on the lower and upper class strata of creole society. The upper-class Creole has greater interaction with the outside world and

is interested in becoming accepted in the greater American society not necessarily American Negro society. The lower class Creole less tied to traditions, tends to become absorbed into the Negro lower-class and lose his creole identity. It is the middle-class Creole who is the most conservative. Typically he is a craftsman, lives in the creole community, is a devout Catholic and prizes his family above all. In his creole world he finds his most important needs.

A. Trends

Ever since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there have been those who have pronounced the impending death of this creole subculture. It is true that the biological Creole legally became a Negro even though he may have been as white as those who promulgated the laws.

If this thesis has any merits at all, it lies in the fact that it has attempted to show that this creole subculture far from being in the throes of death, has perpetuated itself for the past 85 years despite tremendous odds in a virtual sea of anglo-saxon culture. It is probable that some elements in the creole subculture will eventually disappear and some may even be absorbed into the main cultural stream of American life. But for the time being the majority of Creoles prefer to remain "Creole," They are beginning to accept themselves as Negroes but they still want the added qualification of "creole" which

somehow does not make them quite like the "other" Negro. This qualification is precisely the creole subculture--that complex of values which they cherish, live by and live for.

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APPENDIX A

SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE

Roland Wingfield
Institute of Population Research
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge 3, Louisiana

SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CREOLE RESEARCH PROJECT

School:_____ 1/8

Date:_____ 1/4

1/2

3/4

1

Name:_____
Last First Middle Mr., Miss, Mrs.

Place of birth:_____ Date of birth:_____

Mother's maiden name:_____

Parents' Occupation:_____
Father Mother

Religion:_____ Religion of family:_____

Does any member of your family or relative speak French or Creole?

Yes:_____ No: _____

If yes, who?_____

Do you consider yourself: a Creole:_____
part-Creole_____
not a Creole_____

Does any member of your family consider himself Creole or part-Creole? Yes:_____ No:_____

If yes, who?_____

Have you ever heard your family, relatives or friends mention Saint-Domingue, Santo-Domingo or Haiti? If so explain briefly:

_____

_____

What is your definition of a Creole?_____

_____

_____

(You may use the other side)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Institute of Population Research
Department of Sociology
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge 3, Louisiana
April 1961

THE CREOLES OF COLOR:
A STUDY OF A NEW ORLEANS SUBCULTURE

(Respondent) Name:_____
Last First Middle Mr., Miss, Mrs.

Address:_____ New Orleans

Telephone:_____

Interview #:_____ I II III

Interviewed by:_____

Date:_____

Approximate duration of interview: Started:_____

Ended: _____

Total: _____

1. Do you consider yourself:
   1 a Creole
   2 part-Creole
   3 not a Creole
   4 don't really know

2. Does any member of your family considers himself Creole or part-Creole?
   1 yes
   2 no

   If yes, what members?_____

3. What is your definition of a Creole?_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   (for coding purpose)
   1 racial
   2 correct (natives of the colonies)
   3 language
   4 whites' conception (no Negro blood)
   5 as a French and Spanish cultural heritage
   6 no answer
   7 unclassifiable

4. Do you consider being a Creole as something to be:
   1 proud of
   2 not to be proud of
   3 no special feeling
   4 no response

5. Age at last birthday:_____ I II III

6. Sex: 1 M 2 F

7. Marital Status:
   1 single
   2 married
   3 divorced
   4 separated
   5 widowed

8. Place of Birth:
   1 New Orleans
   2 state of Louisiana
   3 state of _____
   4 foreign _____

9. Occupation: 1 student and part time work? 1 yes 2 no
   What? _____
   2 housewife and part time work? 1 yes 2 no
   What? _____
   3 _____

   Position in occupation: _____

   Occupational Status: 1 employed
   2 unemployed
   3 retired

10. Education: circle highest grade of school completed:
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 H.S.D. 13 14 15 16
    BA MA Ph.D Still in school? 1 yes 2no

11. Religion: 1 Catholic
    2 Other: _____ Convert: 1 yes 2 no

*12. Color Status: 1 1/8
    2 1/4
    3 1/2
    4 3/4
    5 1

    'marabout' hair: 1 yes 2 partly 3 no
    caucasoid features: 1 yes 2 partly 3 no

13. Family Name: _____
    1 French
    2 Creole
    3 Spanish
    4 Anglo-Saxon

14. Mother's Maiden Name: _____
    1 French
    2 Creole
    3 Spanish
    4 Anglo-Saxon

---

* Interviewers should make estimate rather than ask.

COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

15. Do you live in the Corpus Christi Parish area: 1 yes 2 no

16. How long have you lived in this area?
1 always
2 more than 5 years
3 less

17. Do you know the people on your block personally?
1 well
2 casually
3 don't know them

18. Do you know your neighbors?
1 well
2 casually
3 don't know them

19. Where do you generally shop for food?
1 circle market
2 elsewhere in the community
3 elsewhere outside the community

20. Can you detect a Negro, white or Creole <u>stranger</u> in this community?
1 yes, always
2 generally
3 no
4 other answers:_____

21. If you moved away, what would you miss the most out of this community?_____

22. If you moved away from this community what would you miss the least?_____

POLITICAL

23. Are you a registered voter? 1 yes 2 no 3 under age

If <u>not</u>, why not?_____

24. Did you experience difficulty in registering? 1 yes 2 no

If <u>yes</u>, explain:_____

25. Do you vote regularly? 1 yes 2 no

26. Do you have membership in a political organization such as a democratic club? 1 yes 2 no

If yes, which clubs?_____

RELIGION

27. What is your father's religion? 1 Catholic 2 Other:_____

28. What is your mother's religion? 1 Catholic 2 Other:_____

29. Do you attend church:
1 regularly every Sunday
2 generally only on feast days
3 irregularly
4 don't attend church

30. What is the name of the church which you attend?
1 Corpus Christi
2 St. Louis Cathedral
3 St. Peter's Claver
4 Epithany
5 Holy Redeemer
6 St. Raymond
7 Other:_____

31. Who do you consider are the favorite saints of the Creole people?
1 Blessed Mary
2 St. Joseph
3 St. Anthony
4 St. Jude
5 Others:_____

32. Which feast days do you consider the favorites of the Creoles?
1 All Saints Day
2 St. Joseph's Day
3 Other:_____

33. In what cemetery do the Creoles generally bury their dead?
1 St. Louis #1 #2 #3
2 Others:_____

34. If you own a family vault, how many generations were buried there?
1 Parents' generation
2 Grandparents' generation
3 Great grandparents' generation
4 Beyond, No. of generations_____

(Use front and back of this page for respondent's impressions of Creole christening, first communion, wedding, wake, funeral. If impressions are standard do not bother to note. However, in the case of older respondents, certain customs, beliefs and attitudes might be worth noting. (Ex.: wearing of mourning)

Put the questions thus:

How different are Creole christenings from those of non-Creoles? Explain.

How different are Creole wakes from those of non-Creoles? Explain, etc.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

35. Please pick out the statement that best gives your own personal opinion of the standing that such a job has: (show card # 1)

Occupation	Excel.	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Priest	....	....	....	....	....	....
Barber	....	....	....	....	....	....
Banker	....	....	....	....	....	....
Janitor	....	....	....	....	....	....
Carpenter	....	....	....	....	....	....
Undertaker	....	....	....	....	....	....
Shoe shiner	....	....	....	....	....	....
Supreme Court Justice	....	....	....	....	....	....
Taxi driver	....	....	....	....	....	....
Truck driver	....	....	....	....	....	....
Building contractor	....	....	....	....	....	....
Singer in a night club	....	....	....	....	....	....
Physician	....	....	....	....	....	....
Plumber	....	....	....	....	....	....
College professor	....	....	....	....	....	....
Lawyer	....	....	....	....	....	....
Restaurant cook	....	....	....	....	....	....
Working on the river (dock worker)	....	....	....	....	....	....
Architect	....	....	....	....	....	....
Restaurant worker	....	....	....	....	....	....
Dentist	....	....	....	....	....	....
Public school teacher	....	....	....	....	....	....
Insurance agent	....	....	....	....	....	....
Automobile repairman	....	....	....	....	....	....
Mail carrier	....	....	....	....	....	....

36. What social class do you feel you belong to? (Show card # 2)

1 upper class
2 upper-middle class
3 middle class
4 working class
5 lower-middle class
6 lower class
7 no opinion

37. In which of these groups do you feel the majority of Creoles falls? Group #_____

38. In determining the social class of a person, list in order of importance what you believe Creoles consider the most important points. (show card # 3)

1	occupation	....
2	wealth	....
3	education	....
4	family background	....
5	color	....
6	manners (breeding)	....
7	moral conduct (reputation)	....
8	personal fame (individual achievement)	....
X	other	....

39. Can you give me the names of some old prominent Creole families that you would classify as upper class?

_____

_____

_____

40. Do you feel that there are more Creoles of "better" class than non-Creoles? 1 yes 2 not necessarily 3 no opinion

41. Do you feel Creole people are more color-conscious than non-Creoles? 1 yes 2 no 3 don't know

42. Do you feel the lighter Creoles are <u>prouder</u> of their Creole background than darker Creoles?

1 yes
2 no
3 same
4 don't know

43. What do you think the <u>color conscious</u> Creoles attach more importance to: (in order of importance)

1	good hair	....
2	light complexion	....
3	keen features	....

44. What do you think Creoles feel about their white ancestry:

1 proud of it
2 not proud of it
3 no feeling about it
4 don't know

45. What would you rather be called: (in order of preference)

1	a Negro	....
2	a colored person	....
3	a person of color	....
4	makes no difference	....
5	no response	....

ECONOMIC INSTITUTION

46. What is your father's occupation?_____

47. What is your mother's occupation?_____

48. What is your husband's (wife's) occupation?_____

49. What are the occupations of your daughters?_____

_____

50. What are the occupations of your sons?_____

_____

51. Give me some of the occupations in which there are many Creoles:

1	School teachers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
2	Shoe repairmen	1 yes	2 some	3 no
3	Plasterers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
4	Bricklayers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
5	Painters	1 yes	2 some	3 no
6	Carpenters	1 yes	2 some	3 no
7	Working on river	1 yes	2 some	3 no
8	Postal employees	1 yes	2 some	3 no
9	Seamstresses	1 yes	2 some	3 no
10	Cigar workers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
11	Factory workers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
12	Hospital workers	1 yes	2 some	3 no
13	Laborers	1 yes	2 some	3 no

Other Occupations _____

_____

52. How do you feel towards women working outside the home?

1 approve
2 approve with reservations_____
_____
3 no special feeling
4 no opinion
5 disapprove, reasons:_____
_____

53. Do you own your own house? 1 yes 2 no

54. In which general bracket would your yearly family (household) income fall into: (show card # 4)

1 between $1,500 and $2,999 ☐
2 between $3,000 and $4,999 ☐
3 between $5,000 and $7,999 ☐
4 between $8,000 and $9,999 ☐
5 $10,000 and above ☐

55. Education of father: highest grade of school completed:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 H.S.D. 13 14 15 16 BA MA Ph.D.

56. Education of mother: highest grade of school completed:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 H.S.D. 13 14 15 16 BA MA Ph.D.

57. Education of husband (wife): highest grade of school completed:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 H.S.D. 13 14 15 16 BA MA Ph.D.

58. Education of children: (number of children _____)

Children	Age	Grade Completed	Diploma	In School?
#1 (oldest)	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#2	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#3	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#4	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#5	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#6	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#7	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#8	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#9	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet
#10	...	...	...	1 yes 2 no 3 not yet

Total number of children not yet in school:_____

Total number of children in school:_____

Total number of children out of school:_____

59. In your opinion, how much of an advantage to success is a high school education--would you say
1 great
2 some
3 little advantage
4 no opinion

60. _____ a college education--
1 great
2 some
3 little advantage
4 no opinion

61. Do you feel a girl should get as much education as a boy?
1 same
2 more
3 less
4 no opinion

62. Who do you think place the most importance on getting an education:
1 Creoles
2 non-Creoles
3 both the same
4 no opinion

63. Do you think Creole boys today get more education than Creole girls?
1 more
2 less
3 same
4 don't know

64. To which elementary schools do the Creoles generally send their children?
1 Corpus Christi
2 Jones Public School
3 Epithany
4 St. Mary's Academy
5 Others:_____
_____

65. To which secondary schools do the Creoles generally send their children?
1 Xavier Prep.
2 St. Mary's Academy
3 St. Augustine
4 Others:_____
_____

66. To which college do the Creoles generally send their children?
1 Xavier
2 LSUNO
3 Others:_____
_____

67. Why do you believe Creoles generally send their children to Catholic schools? Because:
1 These schools are better? 1 yes 2 no
2 A better class of people attend? 1 yes 2 no
3 They will be with other Creoles? 1 yes 2 no
4 Because of church teaching? 1 yes 2 no
5 Other Reasons:_____
_____
_____

Questions #68 and #69 are for older respondents:

68. What do you know about the school of Monsieur Medard Nelson at the turn of the century?

69. Do you know if any of your ancestors of color were educated in France?

70. Family tree: Get 1) the family name; 2) year of birth; 3) place of birth of 4 generations. Put "don't know" when respondent is not sure. Start from the bottom with respondent, work your way up. If possible get the race or free or unfree status of ancestors. Ask the help of other members of family. Leave extra copy with respondent to fill in all missing information later if he thinks he can obtain such. Tell respondent to omit any information which he feels is "private" to him.

PATRILINEAL LINE

MATRILINEAL LINE

Great grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

his wife:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Great grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

his wife:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Great grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

his wife:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Great grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

his wife:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Grandmother:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Grandfather:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Grandmother:
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Father:
1._____
2._____
3._____

Mother:
1._____
2._____
3._____

RESPONDENT

_____

1. Family name or maiden name.
2. Approximate year of birth
3. Place of birth.
4. Race or legal status: Creole of Color (CC); white (W); non-Creole (N); free person of color (FPC; slave status (S).

Questions 71 to 76 for older respondents:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

71. Have you ever heard your family, or friends mention the island of Saint Domingue (Santo Domingo) or Haiti? If so, explain:

72. Do you know if any of your ancestors, free people of color, were slave holders? If so, explain:

73. What do you recall hearing about the famous quadroon girls of the past century?

74. What type of family did these girls come from?

75. What do you recall hearing about the bad feeling between the non-Creoles and the Creoles in the past?

76. What do you recall hearing about the Creoles working in the Storyville district?

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

77. How many brothers and sisters does your father have?_____

78. How many brothers and sisters does your mother have?_____

79. How many brothers and sisters do you have?_____

80. How do you feel about marriage between Catholic and non-Catholic?
1 approve
2 approve with following reservations
_____
_____
3 no special feeling
4 disapprove
5 no response

81. Do you think marriage is the most important goal of the majority of Creole girls today? 1 yes 2 no 3 don't know

82. Do you think Creole girls have a better chance of making a "good" marriage than a non-Creole girl?
1 generally yes
2 not necessarily
3 don't know

83. Judging by your own observations, do you think that there are more marriages between:
1 light skin women and darker men
2 light skin men and darker women
3 same
4 don't know

84. How old was your mother when she married?_____

85. How old was your father when he married?_____

For single only, questions #86 and #87

86. In selecting a mate what would you look for the most in order of importance: (show card #5)

1	education level	....
2	interests in common	....
3	physical attractiveness	....
4	Creole background	....
5	same religion	....
6	good reputation (moral standing)	....
7	color	....
8	family background	....
9	Other:_____	

87. (For women only) How many children would you like to have?_____

For married only, questions #88 to #96.

88. How long have you been married?_____

89. How many children do you have?_____

90. How old were you when you married?_____

91. How old was your mate?_____

92. How many of your daughters married non-Creoles? _____out of _____ who married

93. How many of your sons married non-Creoles? _____ out of _____ who married

94. What was the family attitude at first?
1 approved
2 disapproved
3 mixed feeling
4 no response

95. Would you have considered marrying without your family approval of your mate?
1 yes
2 no
3 don't know
4 no response

96. Did you prepare a trousseau? 1 yes 2 no

FAMILY

97. Do you consider the Creole family of today more:
1 father centered
2 mother centered
3 no opinion

98. How would you compare Creole family life to non-Creole Negro family life? Explain briefly_____

_____

_____

99. Does your family eat one meal a day together?
1 nearly always
2 often (habitually)
3 seldom

100. Does your family assemble for Sunday dinner?
1 nearly always
2 often (habitually)
3 seldom

101. Do you have many guests and relatives eating with you?
1 often
2 seldom

102. Do you entertain guests formally?
1 habitually
2 seldom
3 never

103. Do you visit your New Orleans relatives:
1 frequently
2 seldom

104. Do you think there is less juvenile delinquency among Creole youngsters than among non-Creole youngsters?
1 yes
2 no
3 don't know

Ask of respondents 18 years old and over:

The following five questions are of an intimate nature. Be very tactful and reassure respondent of the scientific nature of this study. In due respect to the respondents' feeling, inform him that he doesn't need to answer them.

105. How do you feel about sex hygiene being taught in school?
1 approve
2 disapprove
3 no special feeling
4 no response

106. Do you feel more Creoles approve of birth control than they use to?
1 yes
2 no
3 no response

107. Do you feel that the attitude towards virginity before marriage among the younger Creoles can be termed as:
1 "modern"
2 "conservative"
3 no response

108. Do you feel that there are more children born out of wedlock among non-Creole than among Creoles?
1 yes
2 no
3 don't know
4 no response

109. Do you think there is a foundation to the theory of a prominent Negro sociologist that some light skinned women who have darker husbands fear to have children darker than themselves or with a different grade of hair?
1 yes
2 some
3 no
4 don't know
5 no response

MOBILITY AND CHANGE

110. If you had a good opportunity to move out of Louisiana, would you:
1 move without any question
2 consider it seriously
3 not consider moving
4 don't know

111. If you would consider moving seriously what would be your first choice:
1 California
2 Chicago
3 New York
4 Detroit
5 Other places:_____

_____

112. Have any of your relatives migrated out of Louisiana?
1 yes 2 no If yes, where did they go?_____

_____

113. Do you have any relatives living in the "Creole" community of West Los Angeles? 1 yes 2 no

114. Do many "country Creoles" move in this community from the country?
1 yes
2 some
3 no
4 don't know

115. Have many "uptown Negroes" moved in this community in the last 10 years?
1 yes
2 some
3 no
4 don't know

116. Are many Creoles moving out of this neighborhood to live in other parts of the city?
1 yes
2 some
3 no
4 don't know

If yes, where to?
1 Pontchartrain Park
2 Uptown
3 Other places:_____

117. May I ask you how you feel about people who "Pass"? Do you:
1 consider it a personal choice up to the person involved
2 disapprove
3 mixed feeling
4 no response

Explain:_____

_____

118. How would you classify racially the majority of the people living in the section of town between Esplanade and Elysian Fields, St. Claude and the river?
1 whites
2 passés
3 Negroes
4 mixed
5 Italians
6 no response
7 Others:_____

FOLKWAYS

119. Do you speak 1 French 2 Creole
1 no
2 a little
3 understand it
4 yes

120. Do your parents speak 1 French 2 Creole
1 no
2 understand it
3 a little
4 yes

Both parents?_____

121. Do your grandparents speak 1 French 2 Creole
1 no
2 a little
3 understand it
4 yes

All four grandparents?_____

122. Do you feel that women in general have retained the ability of speaking French or Creole more so than the men?
1 no
2 don't know
3 yes, explain:_____

_____

RECREATION

123. Do you read the Louisiana Weekly:
1 regularly all
2 regularly, social column only
3 occasionally
4 never

124. Do you listen to WBOK and WYLD?
1 regularly
2 occasionally
3 never

125. What do you do for recreation?_____

_____

_____

126. What social clubs do you belong to?_____

_____

_____

FOODS

127. Do you serve the following typical Creole dishes in your home?

1	Gumbo	1 yes	2 no
2	rice and beans	1 yes	2 no
3	cowein	1 yes	2 no
4	crayfish bisque	1 yes	2 no
5	gumbo zhebes on Holy Thursday	1 yes	2 no
6	courtbouillon	1 yes	2 no
7	shrimp creoles	1 yes	2 no
8	Can you suggest others:_____		

_____

128. Do you serve wine with your meals?
1 often
2 occasionally
3 on rare occasion
4 never

Sweet or dry wine?_____

129. Have you heard of the following Creole superstitions?

a. Ladies cutting their hair on Good Friday makes it grow thick. 1 yes 2 no Comments:_____

b. Piercing ears when baby is 9 days old. 1 yes 2 no Comments:_____

c. If 5 persons die on your block you are the next. 1 yes 2 no Comments:_____

d. Crossing over a baby will stunt its growth. 1 yes 2 no Comments:_____

e. Good luck if a man crosses the threshold on Monday morning. 1 yes 2 no Comments:_____

Other customs that you might suggest:

130. This is the last question. How would you describe the change in your community in the last 10 years and what do you think will happen to the Creole culture in the future? Explain:

END OF INTERVIEW

EVALUATE FOLLOWING ITEMS FROM OBSERVATION

Type of home: 1 two-family house, shot-gun type
2 other:_____

Inside home: 1 modern
2 old fashion

If old fashion, check the following items:

1	chandeliers	1 yes 2 no
2	chandelier-like fixtures	1 yes 2 no
3	high ceilings	1 yes 2 no
4	mantlepiece	1 yes 2 no
5	"creole" furniture	1 yes 2 no
6	needlework doilies	1 yes 2 no
7	many knick knacks	1 yes 2 no
8	framed family pictures	1 yes 2 no

Other observations:_____

_____

_____

Home decoration:
1 ordinary
2 simple in good taste
3 luxurious in good taste
4 luxurious in bad taste
5 other:_____

Condition of housekeeping:
1 immaculate
2 neat
3 casual
4 untidy

Respondent:

Behavior towards interviewer:
1 very friendly
2 friendly
3 reserved
4 cold

Appearance:
1 distinguished
2 average
3 rather ordinary
4 "sloppy"

Does respondent speak with a Creole-French accent?

1 yes, decidedly
2 yes, slight
3 no

Quality of French spoken by respondent?

1 excellent
2 colloquial
3 poor

Mark time you ended interview on front page

APPENDIX C

A PARTIAL LIST OF SURNAMES OF CREOLES OF COLOR IN NEW ORLEANS

A PARTIAL LIST OF SURNAMES OF CREOLES OF COLOR IN NEW ORLEANS[1]

Acore
Abatte
*Adolphe
Agenard
*Alexandre
Aguillard
*Alfred
Allain
*Amedee
*Antoine
Arceneaux
Arimaud
*Armour
Arnaud
*Aubry
*Augustine
Auzenne
Auzout
*Azemard
Badon
Babon
Bagnerise
Baquet
*Barthe
Bachemin
*Baptiste
*Barthelemy
*Baudoin
*Bazile
Bechet
Becnel
*Benjamin
Berger
Berteaux
*Bertrand
Berrand
Bevrotte
Biagas
Bibolet
*Bienaime
*Bijou
*Bissant
*Blanc
*Blanchard
*Blanchet
Blandin
Blandon
Blouin
*Bocage
Boiseau
Boissiere
Bonseigneur
Bordenave
Boudreaux
Bouisse
*Bourgeois
Bousquet
Boutte
Bozonier
Braden
Braud
Breaux
Bringier
Broussard
Broyard
Brule
Brunious
Bujol
Callier
Camas
Carlin
Carrere
Cassine
Castille
*Cazenave
*Celestin
Cereaux
Chachere
Chaligny
Chapital
Chapuis
Charbonnet
*Charles
Chauvin
*Chenier
Cherrie
*Christophe
Copelin
Coulon
Courseault
Cousine
*Cousteaut
Cureau
Dalferes
Daigre
Dannel
Dapremont
Daquin
Darensbourg
Daste
Daugeau
Davelier
*Davillier
De Blanc
De Caste

---

*These names are also found in Haiti.

[1]For a list of surnames of free persons of color in New Orleans in 1830, see Carter G. Woodson, Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830 (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1925), p. 31.

Decou
Decuir
Dede
Dedeaux
*De Fuentes
*De Grange
De Gruy
Dela Houssaye
Delay
*Delhomme
*Delille
*De jean
*Dejoie
*Delatour
Delvaille
Demar
Demasiliere
Demery
De Mesme
Demony
*Demoulin
*Depass
De Salle
*Desbordes
*Desdunes
Deslonde
Desobry
Despenza
Despinasse
Deteige
Deterville
Detrege
Dinvaut
Dobard
*Dominique
*Doucette
Dozier
Dreux
Dubuclet
Dufauchard
*Dumas
Dumeny
Duminy
Dupard
*Duplessis
*Dupuy
*Duvernay
*Duvigneaud
Epps
Estevan
Fagot
Favre
*Fenelon
*Fernandez
Ferrand
Ferrier
*Firmin
Flenoy
Fontenette
Fortin
*Fortuné
Fostère
*Fournier
*Francois
Frazier
*Fredrick
*Gabriel
*Garcia
*Gaspard
Gasper
Gausin
*Gautier
Glapion
*Gilbert
Gosserand
Gourrier
*Gregoire
*Guerin
Guidry
*Guignard
*Guilbeaux
Guimont
*Guillaume
Guillory
Guillotte
Haydel
Hazure
Hebert
*Henry
Honoré
Houlemard
*Hypolite
Ingraham
*Jean
*Jeanmarie
Jamet
*Joseph
*Jourdain
Journet
*Labat
La Branche
Labostrie
Lacabe
Ladmirault
La fon
Lagarde
Lalonier
*Lambert
*La Mothe
Landry
Lanius
La Rose
La Salle
Laurent
Laurat
Lavigne
Lazard
Le Beau
*Le Blanc
Le Boeuf
Lebrane
Lecesne
Le Cour
Le Croix
Le Duff
Le Frere
Legard
Legaux
*Legendre
Le Jean
*Leon
*Leonard
Leopold
Lepage
Llado

---

*These names are also found in Haiti.

Lemieux
Leufroy
Loquet
Lombard
Longe
*Lubin
Malveaux
Manadé
*Mansion
*Martin
*Martinez
Mathieu
Maurice
Mc Kenna
Medice
Meilleur
Melancon
Mercadel
Metoyer
Meyi
*Millet
Molaizon
*Molina
Monde
Monette
Moret
Morial
Mornay
*Narcisse
Olivier
Pagaud
Pedre
*Perez
*Perrault
Perroult
Peychaud
Picou
*Pierre
Piron
*Placide
Poché
Pompin
Populus
Porché
Poree
Porte
Prevost
Prudeaux
Querzerque
Ramie
*Raphael
*Raymond
Rebert
*Reynaud
*Richard
*Rigaud
Rillieux
Robichaux
Romano
Rosillon
*Rouchon
*Rousseau
Roussell
Rousseve
Rouzan
Saizon
Sara
Savivoir
Savoir
Saulet
Saulny
Sceau
Schexnayder
Senegal
Soublet
Soulé
Tassin
Tervalon
Tircuit
Toca
Tregre
Trevigne
Trosclair
Troullier
Trudeaux
Tureaud
Vagas
Valentine
Vallet
Valteau
Vaucresson
*Verret
*Victor
Villavaso
*Zamor
Zeno

---

*These names are also found in Haiti.

VITA

Roland Wingfield was born in Charleston, South Carolina and received his elementary and secondary education in France and Switzerland. Upon his return to the United States, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps with whom he spent two years in China and the Far East. After his discharge he began his undergraduate studies in 1949 at Columbia University in New York City. Two years later he transferred to the American Theatre Wing majoring in choreography and theatrical dance.

In 1957, he interrupted a professional theatrical career in New York City to return to the academic fold. In 1958, he enrolled at Louisiana State University where he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1960.

In September 1960, the writer was awarded a Research Assistantship in the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University. He is at present a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Roland Wingfield

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: The Creoles of Color: A Study of a New Orleans Subculture

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

July 28, 1961