

NEW ORLEANS TRIVIA

Creole is a chameleon term. It's a variety of tomato, an exotic cuisine and a poetic architectural style. It also refers to people, but the definition varies, depending on who you ask. One thing is true of Creoles everywhere: they have always been colonial (versus European immigrants). The original New Orleans Creoles were thoroughbred French, who were the first generation to be born in the colonies. The word Creole derives from the Spanish Criollo or the Portuguese Crioulo (again depending upon whom you ask), which distinguished a person born in the colonies from an immigrant or an imported slave. In present-day New Orleans, there are people of various combinations of French, Spanish, West Indian and African ancestry who proudly call themselves Creole.

Cajuns, on the other hand, are descended from a specific group of Catholic, French-speaking trappers and farmers who were exiled from Nova Scotia by the ruling English-Protestants in 1755. About 10,000 eventually settled in Southwest Louisiana, in what is now called Acadiana. Some later came to New Orleans neighborhoods like Westwego. Over a million people of Cajun descent live in Louisiana. Bobby Hebert, the former star quarterback of the Falcons, is of such heritage and is known in sports broadcast circles as "The Cajun Cannon".

Longfellow immortalized their story of loss and exile in his epic poem, "Evangeline." But Canada's expulsion was Louisiana's gain. Cajuns brought New Orleans their joie de vivre, lively music and famed cuisine.

