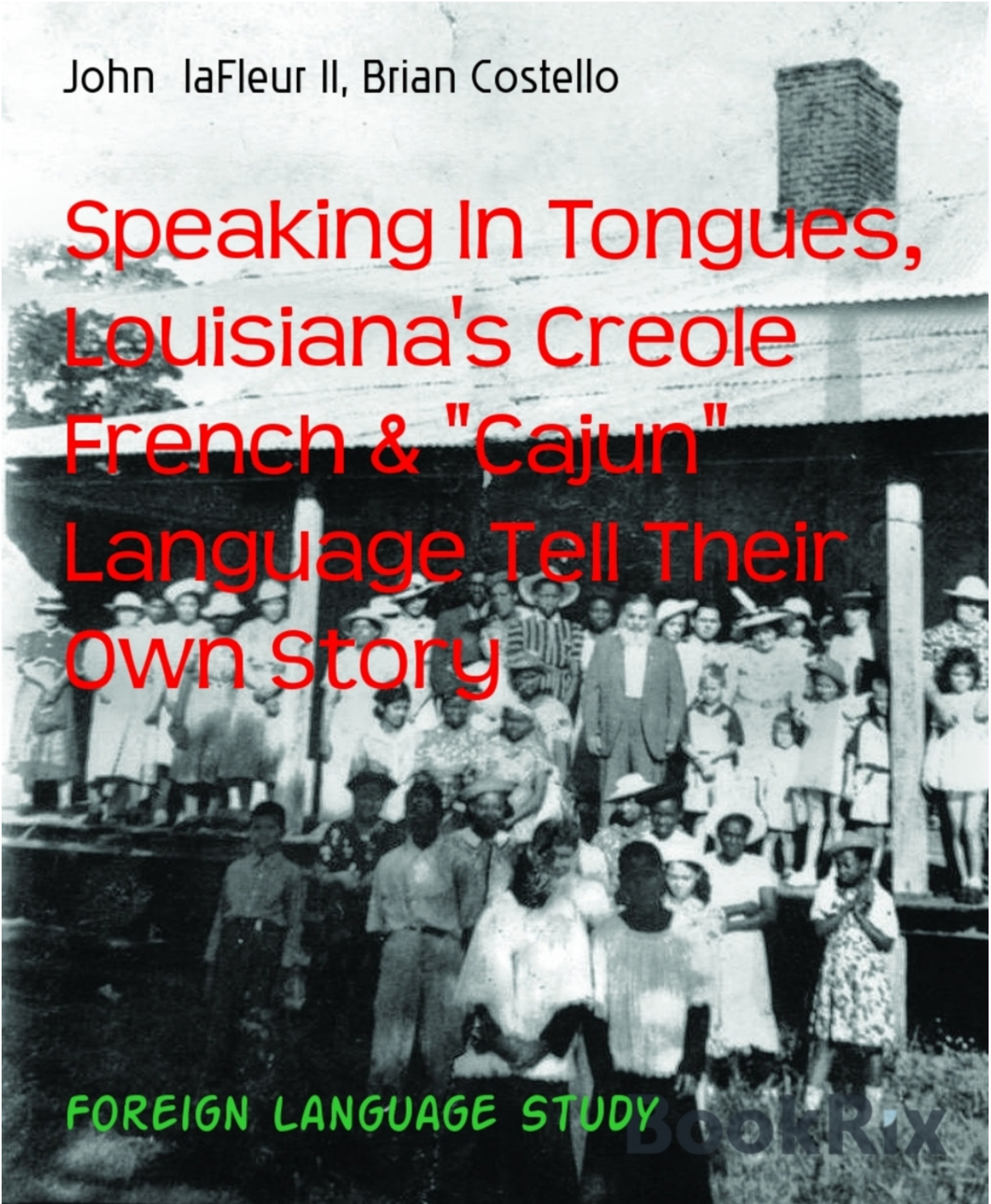


John laFleur II, Brian Costello

Speaking In Tongues, Louisiana's Creole French & "Cajun" Language Tell Their Own Story

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To all of the forgotten French Creole & Metis peoples of North America from the Great Lakes region to Missouri and Illinois to Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and including the French maritime world of Creole people everywhere and to my parents, John A. LaFleur & Marie Mae Ardoin, I do dedicate this little book.

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Louisiana's Unique Creole French Language & Cultural Heritage: An Introduction by John laFleur

Though long mislabeled "Cajun" French our Louisiana (creole) French language was first revealed to North America after the début of New Orleans' *Picayune Creole Cookbook* of 1901. Its unique feature of providing original Louisiana Creole French language titles for our indigenous recipes took America and Europe by storm, because it revealed our overlooked and generally, almost-forgotten historic language as a living language; a language endowed with charm and an exotic sophistication which reflects a culture and civilization far older than both American, Acadian and Spanish 'Louisiana.'

This Old World French Creole language tradition is not unique to Louisiana, but still exists, however weakly, in the former North American colonial French Creole and metis pockets still known around the Great Lakes, Missouri and Illinois regions. These states were once part of France's "Upper & Lower Louisiana" which constituted a singular cultural fabric of the almost forgotten French colonial and metis (French & Indian racial mix), world of "La Nouvelle France" which once comprised the vast territory of the "Louisiana Purchase" mentioned in American history classes, however superficially.

Who would've guessed that *file'* and *pacane* were among the many Mobilian-Choctaw trade language gifts (as well as culinary gifts), to Louisiana's francophone and creolophone peoples which has and continues to exist in her historic language traditions long before the arrival of the Acadians, which group inevitably assimilated not only this Louisiana-

based language, but every component of her long present creole & metis culture as their own.

Even its sister language of "Louisiana Creole" (meaning, its africanized half-sister tongue, also referred to as "Gumbo"), was discovered to be poetic and comparable to the simplicity of early French and Classical Latin and Greek verse by no less an authority than Dr. James Broussard, author of *Louisiana Creole Dialect*, 1942, LSU Press. See Dr. Broussard's very interesting Preface wherein he makes the distinction of what was then referred to as "Creole French" in Louisiana.

See also Dr. William A. Read's *Louisiana Place Names of Indian Origin. A Collection of Words*, 1931 edited and with an introduction by George Riser. Read was the first scholar to study and to designate Louisiana's creole French as "Louisiana French," which the Cajunist movement confusingly relabeled as "Cajun French" with the rise of CODOFIL.

This same old lingua franca of the old French colonial maritime world-including "la louisiane" was the basis for the evolution of what is now loosely known as "Louisiana Creole" or more precisely, "Louisiana-Afro-Creole.

These dialects remain two distinctive yet, kindred, French creole languages.

Acadian French too, has its roots in the old, non-standardized medieval French of the former French Creole world.

The distinction between these two Louisiana French Creole languages is carefully noted in the writings of George Washington Cable of 19th century New Orleans. Cable carefully makes a distinction between the Louisiana Colonial French which was, and is still referred to as "Créole" in distinction from its Louisiana-African-derivative, or "Gumbo" (loosely re-labeled "Louisiana Creole" today!), which was spoken by illiterate former slaves who sought to reproduce