

The "French" Quarter is Half Spanish

But the Mardi Gras is a Pure French Custom Brought to New Orleans from the Old Country

New Orleans' French Quarter is as much Spanish as French; its flamboyant Mardi Gras hides an exceptional devoutness, and its famed Dixieland jazz was born at funerals.

A distinguished Southern author, Harnett T. Kane, reveals these and many other little known facts about his native city of "New Orleans: Jambalaya of the Levee" leading article in the National Geographic Magazine "tossed from France to his Hispanic Majesty." The Spaniards then "clanked in" to impress their architecture and customs, if not their rule, upon the city, including the Vieux Carre itself.

Mardi Gras Pure French

But the Mardi Gras—"Fat Tuesday"—is pure French, the author concedes. Origin of this colorful carnival was probably in pagan rites of spring. The early French settlers brought them from France in a simple form to which have been added the bizarre embellishments that now make the Mardi Gras one of the best known municipal entertainments in the land.

Promptly at midnight as Lent begins, the merrymaking ceases. Deeply religious New Orleans then flocks to churches of all faiths. One of them is triple-spired St. Louis Cathedral, devotional center for Louisiana's Catholic Creoles, descendants of the original French and Spanish inhabitants. It stands on ground occupied by three successive churches since 1718.

Mr. Kane says that the New Orleans jazz which was to spread over the entire country from Basin Street was first played by the Negro bands marching back from funerals. The resultant "wail and pound" comes not alone from African voodoo, he says, but from French and Italian opera, work tunes of the sugar fields, and the chant of rice handlers. "Tiger Rag," he notes, probably grew out of a French quadrille.

Duels were Frequent

Old New Orleans was a hotbed of dueling. A man might die according to Mr. Kane, merely because he happened to order the same courses commanded by a

proud and sensitive diner at a neighboring restaurant table. Fifty academies at a time gave instructions in using sword and pistol.

The city is built on low, flat Mississippi River delta land. Dikes hold back the mighty stream, while an elaborate pumping system keeps the city from drowning at each rain.

Although the water is a dangerous neighbor, it is also a blessing to the metropolis. New Orleans is a great port, transshipping huge quantities of goods between the heart of America and the world beyond the seas, particularly near by Latin America. Blockaded during the Civil War, the city was struck a blow from which it has recovered only in modern times.

Wealth Augmented by Oil

Nowadays its 'wealth is being

increased by oil wells on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, by an influx of heavy industry, and by expansion of such local industries as muskrat trapping, the catching of seafood and the growing of rice and sugar cane.

Despite "glossy statistics," however, New Orleans retains its identity and its coloration," the author reports. It remains, he says, "a gumbo—a composition of many peoples, many viewpoints, many riches . . . and also, a sum of assorted contradictions."

Mr. Kane's article is illustrated with 38 photographs, 28 in full color. The photographer was Justin Locke of the National Geographic staff.

Peeled raw sweet potatoes won't darken if they are dipped in lemon, orange or pineapple juice.

Allison tuna, first described scientifically in 1921, are no longer regarded as members of a distinct species. They are believed now to be large yellowfin tuna, which live in both Atlantic and Pacific Oceans according to the National Geographic Society's new book of Fishes.

The plant that produces corn-on-the-cob is a giant grass that has never been found growing wild, says the National Geographic Society. Cultivated in South America since prehistoric times, it was one of the foundations of the highly developed pre-Columbian civilizations in the Americas.

More than 25 million trees have been planted in New York state, by 4-H club members since 1926.

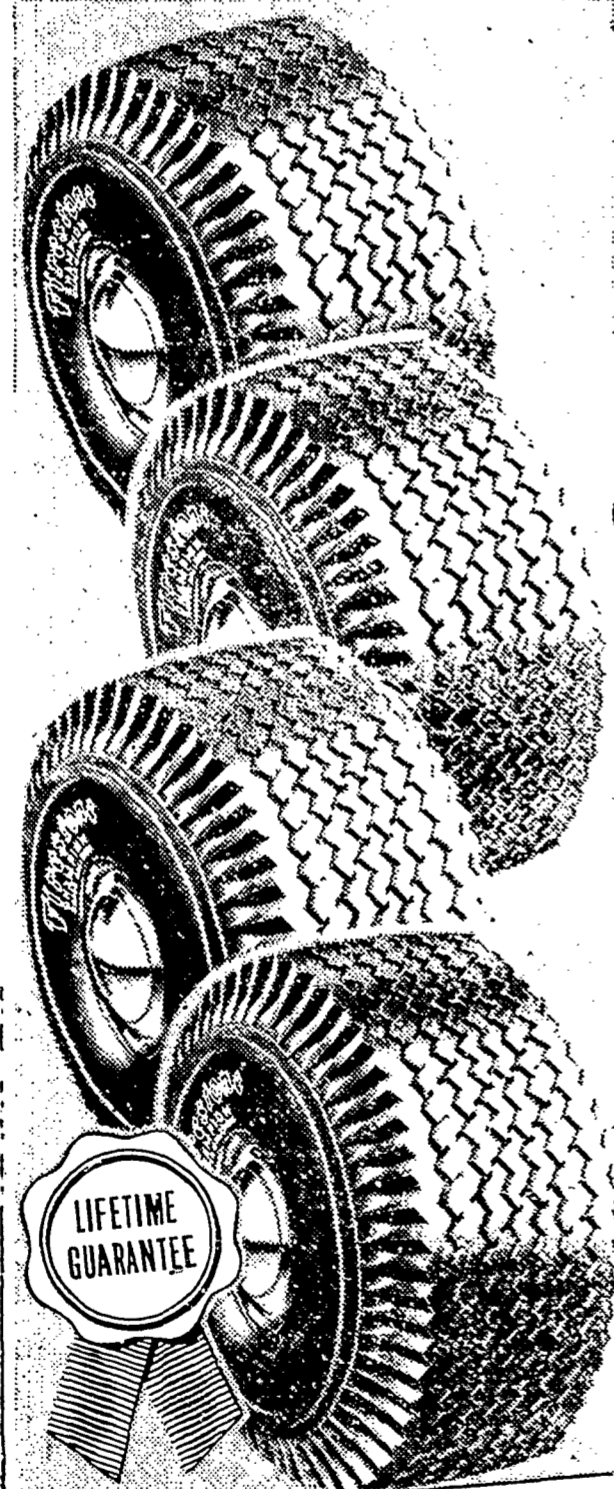
Seven ships operated by the United States, Canada, and Japan cruise endlessly in tiny circles in the North Pacific to report weather conditions every three hours, says the National Geographic Society. The ships are necessary as weather stations because of the scarcity of islands in the area.

Real dogs were models for the sculptured likenesses of the Egyptian god Anubis found guarding the ancient tombs, says the National Geographic Society. This race of black dogs with delicate limbs, sharp muzzle and pointed ears has long been extinct.

The annual Poultrymen's Get-Together will be held at Cornell University in Ithaca, June 21st and 22nd.

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