



# A PHILOSOPHY OF BOUDIN



MOWATA STORE,  
Mowata, Louisiana

as told to Sara Roahen by Bubba Frey, August 2007

MY NAME IS BUBBA FREY. I'll be fifty-one my next birthday and I haven't ventured very far from Mowata.

I used to be a rice and crawfish farmer, and then around the early '90s all my equipment that I had gotten from my grandfather and my daddy, it was obsolete. For me to stay in farming, I would have had to pick up probably 1,000 more acres and spend a bunch of money on equipment. And at the time, the store came up for sale over here. Back then it was still a little grocery store, and people still shopped there instead of going to the big Walmarts or Winn-Dixies. They were making a little bit of sausage here before, and boudin.

And then through the years, things were changing. Canned items, sometimes they were a year old; I had to take them home and use them myself or throw them away because they got too old. Home staples—groceries and stuff like that—just weren't going to cut it in here. So through those years I started making sausage and the tasso, deboned stuffed chickens, bacon. I've started raising guinea [hens] and chickens. I will make 400 pounds of boudin in one given day.

I learned through my great-uncle Lawrence Frey. Every time he made boudin, I was there to help him. I would follow him everywhere he'd go. I knew that one day these people weren't going to be around here anymore—it was going to be shoved underneath the table and forgotten forever. When we'd make boudin we'd grind it up, and they'd taste it: What do you think it needs? A little bit more pepper or salt or whatever, so everybody would give their input.

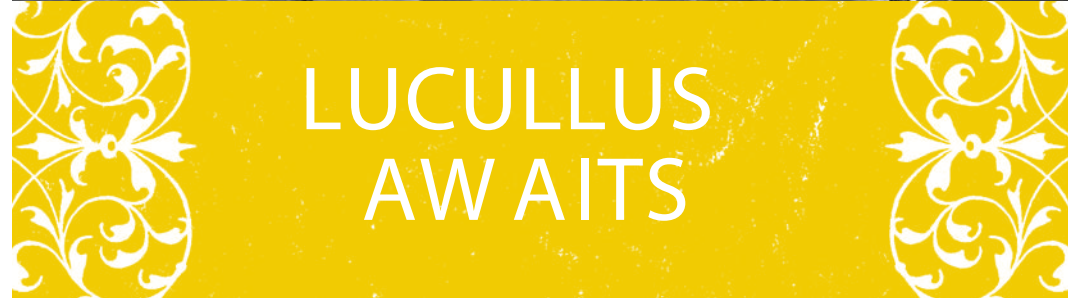
Here at the store, I'm making it almost identically to the way that my uncle was making it. Now, I don't put the internal organs in it for the simple fact that that generation is all dead and gone now. The young kids today, if it doesn't look like a chicken nugget or a French fry, they're not going to eat it. Now, if you tell somebody that you got kidneys and heart and liver in there, you know they ain't going to touch that with a ten-foot pole. So I leave the internal organs out. And people come in and say, "it tastes just like the boudin my mama used to make." In fact, I had one man come in here; he argued with me that I put too much liver, and I just had to tell him—you know the customer is always right, so I just had to tell him—"next time I'll cut back a little bit on it."

I have very little grease in mine. I don't profess to have the best boudin in the world, but mine is the least greasy, I can tell you that. I don't tell too many people what I do around this part of the country, because everywhere you look there's a boudin shop. Right there in Eunice, there's three or four major boudin operations. One of them went out of business—Johnson's. They were the ones that started making boudin first in this part of the country. If you got boudin anywheres in the Eunice area, you got it at Johnson's or you didn't get it at all. And it was only on Saturday mornings, and I seen it over there to where if you drove at five o'clock in the morning, people were already lining up outside the door of his grocery store. Now if you got there late on a Saturday morning, if you stood in line and didn't get any boudin, the worst part was that you didn't get any boudin. The best part was you knew what went on in Eunice the whole week before. 🍷

### HOW MOWATA GOT ITS NAME

There was a Mr. Atterbury from around New York [who] came down before the Depression, and they bought up pretty much all the land around here. They had the corn farm, they had the cotton farm, and right around here it was called the rice farm. There was a severe drought at the time, and the community of Mowata didn't have a name yet, so they were going to call it More Water. Southern Pacific Railroad is the one that would map out the spurs and stuff like that in the little towns, so they were in charge of bringing the sign. So all the dignitaries got together at the train depot the day that they were supposed to christen Mowata as More Water, and when they pulled the sign out of the boxcar, it was a misprint. And it was printed M-o-w-a-t-a, like broken English. And that's how it got its name.

Photograph on page 10 by Sara Roahen.



In the French Quarter, a bountiful collection of culinary antiques

by Nathalie Jordi