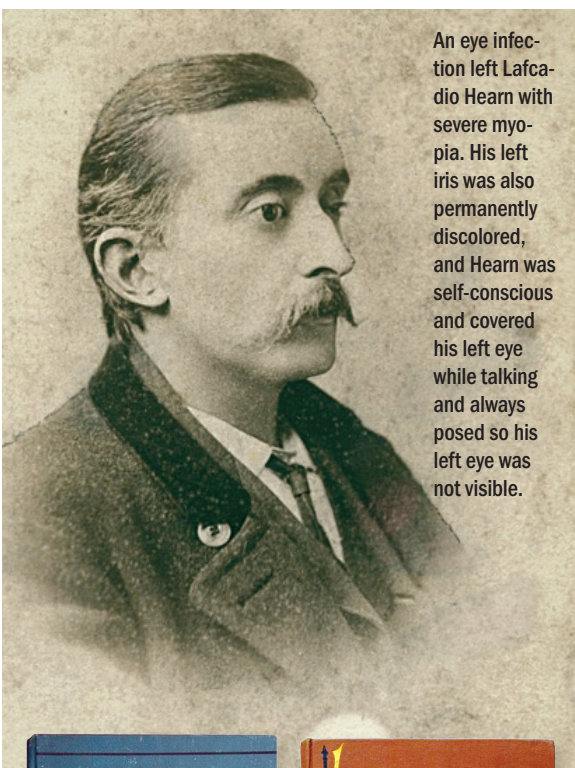




WHAT
HAPPENED

Hearn's
"La Cuisine
Creole,"
was published
in 1885.

The image we have today of New Orleans as beautiful and mysterious, dangerous and decaying, is due in large part to **Lafcadio Hearn**.



An eye infection left Lafcadio Hearn with severe myopia. His left iris was also permanently discolored, and Hearn was self-conscious and covered his left eye while talking and always posed so his left eye was not visible.

GIFT OF MR. G. WILLIAM NOTTE THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

Hearn, born in Greece and schooled in England, moved to New Orleans from Ohio in 1877. He was a journalist who worked for the Daily City Item and the Times-Democrat newspapers. Hearn eventually began writing about New Orleans for national magazines including Harpers' Weekly and Cosmopolitan.

Through his writing, Hearn "virtually invented the notion of Louisiana, more specifically New Orleans, as idea and symbol," writes S. Fredrick Starr who edited a collection of Hearn's writings, "Inventing New Orleans," published in 2001.

Hearn wrote about Creoles, voodoo, ghosts, the city's food, crime, corruption, mosquitoes and weather.

"Times are not good here. The city is crumbling into ashes... but it is better to live here in sackcloth and ashes than to own the whole state of Ohio," he wrote in a letter to a friend in Ohio.

Hearn wrote books about local culture, too, including, "La Cuisine Creole," a cookbook; "Gumbo Zhebes," a collection of Creole proverbs; and a short novel, "Chita, A Memory of Last Island."

Hearn left New Orleans in 1888 and eventually moved to Japan, where he became revered and beloved by the Japanese for his portrayal of their country and culture.



Lafcadio Hearn lived at 1565 Cleveland St. between 1882 and 1887 where he wrote "La Cuisine Creole" and "Gumbo Zhebes."



After honing his skill writing about people and places in New Orleans, Lafcadio Hearn moved to Japan where he became a national celebrity for his writings of Japan. He married a Japanese woman, Setsu, shown here.

"TIMES ARE NOT GOOD HERE. THE CITY IS CRUMBLING INTO ASHES. IT HAS BEEN BURIED UNDER A LAVA FLOOD OF TAXES AND FRAUDS AND MALADMINISTRATIONS SO THAT IT HAS BECOME ONLY A STUDY FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS. ITS CONDITION IS SO BAD THAT WHEN I WRITE ABOUT IT, AS I INTEND TO DO SOON, NOBODY WILL BELIEVE I AM TELLING THE TRUTH. BUT IT IS BETTER TO LIVE HERE IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES THAN TO OWN THE WHOLE STATE OF OHIO."

LAFCADIO HEARN



When a publisher refused Lafcadio Hearn's manuscript of Creole proverbs, "Gumbo Zhebes," left, Hearn promised a book of recipes, not to contain his name, a cookbook called "La Cuisine Creole." Both books were released for the 1884 Cotton Exposition.