and the like. This means that a list of the necessary groceries and equipment must be sent ahead of time, so that all will go smoothly when the demonstration gets under way.

Depending on how far out of town the demonstration is held, Mrs. Fontaine may either take the fishery products with her, or may contact a local broker or marketing specialist for assistance.

"We always use things that are available in the area," she emphasizes.

Both availability and regional attitudes toward food are important factors in recipe and product development as well as in giving demonstrations, she says.

A classic in the "availability" category is the NMFS booklet on catfish cookery which includes a recipe calling for macadamia nuts. A product of Hawaii, these nuts are readily available only in areas where grocery stores maintain a well-stocked gourmet section.

It is a source of regret to Mrs. Fontaine that she has been unable to try the macadamia nut recipe.

Gumbo provides a good example of the effect of regional attitudes. In the North, gumbo frequently emerges from the kitchen as a weak-kneed soup with lots of seasoning, little substance, and only an occasional seed or sliver of okra to betray the cook's intention.

Along the gulf coast, gumbo is subtle and substantial, a meal in itself, and the subject of violent and vociferous argument between cooks who hold opposing views.

"Gumbo isn't gumbo unless it contains either file or okra—that's what makes it gummy," Mrs. Fontaine explains, adding confidentially, "personally, I like it with both."

Unfortunately for gumbo fanciers, northern cooks tend to regard okra as no better than a weed, while file—actually a blend of mild spices—is as rare in northern groceries as macadamia nuts in Pascagoula.

One of Mrs. Fontaine's more unnerving experiences with a demonstration involved neither regional prejudices nor unavailable ingredients, but the mysterious disappearance of a carload of groceries.

She was taking "one of the Florida girls and two other home economists" to Hattiesburg for a fish cookery demonstration at the University of Southern Mississippi. It was a prodigious undertaking, involving two cars "and lots of equipment."

The fish to be used in the demonstration was carefully loaded into the car belonging to the girl from Florida, while the equipment was to travel in Mrs. Fontaine's car. Suddenly the driver of the first car announced that she had to go see about a tire, and left the test kitchen.

"We waited and we waited," Mrs. Fontaine recalls, "but she didn't come, and she didn't come. We knew we couldn't wait *too* long, because we had to allow time to drive about 200 miles and prepare the fish, and we were beginning to get a little nervous, because she had the fish.

"Well, finally we just couldn't wait any longer, and we decided we could always stop at the supermarket and pick up some more fish."

So the other home economists crowded into Mrs. Fontaine's equipment-laden car and started out for Hattiesburg. "And 20 miles out of Pascagoula, there was Teena, sitting in a service station waiting for us.

"We never did know just how she expected us to know we were supposed to meet her there."

The group arrived at their destination without further difficulties, and the demonstration went off beautifully, proving once again, in Mrs. Fontaine's opinion, "that even when things start out badly, everything turns out all right."

This attitude, in addition to her competence in the kitchen, is probably a major reason why home economists come from all over the region—and from other sections of the country—to study seafood preparation at the Pascagoula laboratory.

With becoming modesty, Mrs. Fontaine was pleased when a home economist from Maryland came for training at Pascagoula, because macadamia nuts are readily available in the student's home area. "So she can go back and try that catfish recipe."

Boss Brawner had a slightly different reaction, and remarked with understandable pride that the student's willingness to go all the way to Pascagoula for the training available there was "just one more deserved tribute to 'the Fontaine Finishing School.' " □

(Above) In 1971, NOAA honored Mrs. Fontaine with its Public Service Award—$1000 and a plaque. From left, Mrs. Fontaine, Howard W. Pollock, Deputy Administrator, and Dr. Robert M. White, Administrator. (Left) Time out to relax with children Douglass II, Patrick, and Rebecca.