Acadian archives comes home to memorial

ST. MARTINVILLE — What did Louisiana’s first Acadians eat for breakfast? Why did they oust the governor? What was their favorite sport?

Find the answers in Ensemble Encore (Together Again): The Acadian Memorial Multimedia Archive, a new source of information on Louisiana’s 18th century Acadians available only on the Internet.

Since mid-January, internet users have been discovering the culture, history, and genealogy of Louisiana’s Acadian pioneers at http://www.acadianmemorial.org

Ensemble Encore makes the results of scholarly research on Louisiana’s early Acadians widely available for the first time, according to USL history professor Carl Brasseaux.

“Much of this information had only been available from microfilmed colonial documents or hard-to-find scholarly publications,” said Brasseaux, director of the Center for Louisiana Studies at USL.

Because existing database software packages could not accommodate the relational and text content requirements for Ensemble Encore, Vidox, a Lafayette-based multimedia company headed by Chris Allain, created a customized engine and user interface for the archive.

Brasseaux and Allain will be available to respond to questions about the archive at a presentation on Ensemble Encore at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20, at the multimedia history center located on the second floor of the Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville.

Following presentations at seven libraries across the state during January, the St. Martinville program concludes a series of public sessions intended to acquaint the public with the contents of the archive.

“Ensemble Encore has been well-received from Shreveport to Houma,” said Memorial director Jolene Adam. “This final presentation at the Memorial marks a homecoming for the archive.”

The presentation begins with a vignette about an Acadian pioneer, followed by an introduction to the contents and use of the archive by Adam. Brasseaux and Allain will then offer comments and answer questions.

Texts in the archive relate how some 3,000 Acadians exiled from Canada found refuge in Louisiana, highlighting their adaptations and contributions. The archive’s database also contains the world’s most comprehensive collection of biographical information on Louisiana’s Acadian pioneers.

Completion of the this phase of Ensemble Encore coincides with Louisiana’s FrancoFete, a statewide celebration of Louisiana’s French heritage, and Congres Mondial Acadien, an international reunion of Acadians planned for South Louisiana Aug. 1-15.

For more information about the Memorial, call 394-2258. It is located on New Market Street next to the Evangeline Oak.