Acadian names: Determining their authenticity

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There are accepted guidelines for determining whether a name is authentically "Acadian." It must be from one of the families that lived in Nova Scotia between 1755 and 1754. Old names which date back to that specific place and specific period of time may be considered Acadian.

During the past 5 years, A.J. Gillis has compiled the history of 40 Acadian family names. The origins of the names are given, with the names of the first couples with that particular name to arrive in Canada from France.

These family name etymologies in "Monet des Cajuns," are available in French and English in book form for $15 at Acadian Village. Gillis also created a mailing list for an English version on the internet for the other to see one side and French on the other to see the other side. Contributions to frame describing the history of individual family names in French or English also will be available. Check out these family names — from A to V.

Arceau
(Pierre Arceau-Marguerite Dugas)
The first Arceau probably lived near d'Arceau, possibly in the region of the Carolinas although there are places called d'Arceau in other regions. A man who lived in land shaped like an arch of "arceau" would likely have been called Arceau, as would one who was in charge of an "arceau" which was a barn or a manure. Some variations of the name are Arceaux, Arceau and Arsenal.

Babin
(Armande Babin-Marta Mercier)
It stems from "Babet" or "Babon", French of the eastern name "babon". The name Babon and its French derivative were greatly favored by the Roman-Catholic church in France and large numbers of the Quebec gave this name to their children. White Habon is the most prominent. This list includes Babet, Babonnet, Babet, Babineau, Baboon and Babolet.

Belinaer
(Nicholas Belinaer
Belmor-Debraud)
The progenitor of the Belinaer family may sometimes have appeared in Canada and America. Researchers believe the name is derived from the French word "babon" which means "prince" or "master." It is one of those names that begins as a nickname which was very common in France into the 18th century when such identifying names were adopted as family names. Some variations of the name are Babon, Habonnet and Babonnet.

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