Your name doesn’t have to be Broussard or Guidry to enjoy a visit to an authentic Cajun village — the Acadian Village off Ridge Road in South Lafayette.

The Acadian Village was officially opened to the public on the USA’s bicentennial — July 4, 1976. It was planned to typify a community of the French-speaking Acadian settlers.

The majority of the buildings at the Village are authentic and were moved from various locations to the present site. The replicas are the country store, chapel, and blacksmith’s barn.

The LeBlanc House, a two-room Acadian cottage, was the birthplace of “Cozyan Dud”, Dudley LeBlanc who was known as much for his invention of patent medicine HADACOL as for his colorful political career in Louisiana (at one time he was a state senator). The LeBlanc House was moved from Youngsville.

Beautiful patchwork quilts are displayed in the Billeaud House which was originally on the Billeaud Sugar Plantation near Lafayette in Broussard.

The Village’s chapel, the Chapel of New Hope, has pine flooring over 200 years old and the church pews are handmade copies in the style of the 1900’s. One original pew exists.

Other homes in the Village include the Bernard Home (circa 1800), the Narcisse Thibodeaux House, the St. John House, and the Castille House which contains a 19th-century Doctor’s Museum.

In the country store (a replica of an 1850 store) are Cajun crafts, postcards, T-shirts, cookbooks, calendars, ceramics, gift items, and much more.

During the holiday season, “Christmas Comes Alive — It’s Magic at the Village” is held at the Acadian Village (sponsored by the Junior League Club of Lafayette). Six of the Village Homes are festively decorated with colorful animated scenes. Also featured are live elves, Christmas music, marionette shows, and live entertainment.

The Acadian Village is part of the Alleman Center, named for Mr. and Mrs. Elias Alleman who donated the 32-acre tract of land in 1972. The Alleman Center covers the New Hope Day Developmental Training Center for the severely retarded, the New Hope Sheltered Workshop, and the Acadian Village.

The Acadian Village serves two purposes: (1) as an Acadian village, it gives everyone a chance to step back 150 years to the time of horse-drawn buggies, hand pumps, and spinning wheels. (2) All money from
admission and general store sales help support the
Village as well as the Lafayette Association for Retarded
Citizens.

To get to the Village, take Johnston Street (Highway
167 South) towards Abbeville. Take a right on Ridge
Road (Highway 342) before you get to the Acadiana
Mall. Off of Ridge Road, take a left on H. Mouton
Road and follow the signs to the Acadian Village.

The Village is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ex-
cept for the first two weeks of December when the
Village is open in the evenings for "Christmas Comes
Alive"). Admission is $3 for adults, $1.50 for senior
citizens, and $1.50 for students under 18. Call
981-2364 for more information.

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