Acadiana people find their roots in France

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LOUDUN, FRANCE — The yellowed document doesn't seem that impressive and is difficult to read. But to John D. Breaux and Macklyn Breaux Domingue, both of Lafayette, it's priceless.

The document, a copy of a baptismal record from Notre Dame Church in Loudun, France, proves their forefather, Vincent Breaux, lived in the region before leaving his homeland in 1642 to help colonize Canada.

The brother and sister traveled to France last week with a group of Acadian descendants from Canada and the United States tracing their forefathers' footsteps in France before and after their deportation by the British in the 1700s.

For some, like John D. Breaux and Domingue, it has been an emotional journey.

They sat in the Notre Dame Catholic Church, built in the 14th century, the same church that they now know Vincent Breaux visited. The faded baptismal record of his godchild lists Vincent Breaux as her sponsor.

"I have goose bumps," John D., said Sunday outside the same church. "They prayed here."

The Acadian museum in Loudun had other surprises for the Acadian ancestors.

Hector Beauchesne of British Columbia, Canada, confirmed that an Acadian Landry is his ancestor.

A baptismal record from the church indicates she was a godmother at a ceremony in La Chaussee, France. As Beauchesne made his discovery, standing nearby, Nanette Soileau Heggie and her mother, Cecilia Landry Soileau, both of Lafayette, found a Landry ancestor in their family tree. Their Landry and Beauchesne's Landry were related.

"It's amazing," Soileau said. "I had no idea I would find people I'm kin to."

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