"I'm not moving"

Broussard founder's descendants live in town

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BROUSSARD
Jacqueline Holler said she doesn't remember much about her late great-grandfather, Valentin Broussard. But she's proud to live in the city that bears his name.

"I don't remember my family talking about him much," said Holler, 81, a mother of six and grandmother of five. "But I was born and raised here. My family's here. I'm not moving!"

Broussard's home, built in 1910, still stands on Main Street. Holler's mother, Adele Girouard, 91, lives in the home. But Girouard declined to speak about her grandson on how his vision developed into the city of Broussard.

Mayor Pro Tem Harold Holler, Jacqueline Holler's husband, compiled a history of the city for the Broussard family reunion that was held in Broussard in 1991.

The city started in the 1740s as the Acadian refugee settlement Colte Geles, about six miles south of the current city of Lafayette, Harold Holler said. It was located along what was once the Old Spanish Trail, a trade route that stretched from New Orleans to Texas, he said.

Valentin Broussard, who was born in the settlement on Dec. 17, 1825, developed a sugar cane and cotton plantation there, Harold Holler said. Broussard commissioned civil engineer P.R. Boldt to plot a town on a portion of the plantation. It included a church, cemetery, private school, public school and a railroad depot.

"He saw a need for a town amid all the sugar cane and cotton plantations in the area," Harold Holler said. "He was the town's first developer, who donated most of the land to get it off the ground."

The residents named the town "Broussardville" in his honor, Holler said.

"Someone wanted to name the city after another family. I'm not sure what they wanted to change the name to. But his daughter made one trip to City Hall. And that was the end of that."

It was later shortened to "Broussard," he said.

Efforts to change the city's name in the 1930s were quashed by one of Broussard's daughters, Harold Holler said. Holler said he was unsure which daughter prevented the name change.

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