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**LA PASSION DE LA LOUISIANE**

J'ai la passion de la Louisiane, cette enfant prodigue de la francophonie. Qu'elle revienne vite au sein de la famille!

**Aout 1912 p. 4 col. 1-2**

**Cajuns in the Falkland Islands?**

Before the last couple of months, it is safe to say that very few Cajuns had ever heard of the Falkland Islands. I don't know if I had ever stopped to contemplate what life would have been like for us on those windswept isles.

But there, but for the grace of God, go the Trahans, Thibodeauxs and Boudreauxs of South Louisiana. Here is the story. After the Acadians were expelled from Acadie (Nova Scotia) by the British in 1755 the French began looking for someplace else to send its loyal citizens. Thus the Acadians began an odyssey which took them to the far corners of the earth—Guiana and Uruguay (South America), Belle-Isle-en-Mer (off the coast of France), Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (off the coast of Newfoundland), Guadeloupe, Martinique and Santo Domingo (Caribbean) etc.—and to the Falkland Islands. About the only place that France never tried to send the Acadians was to Louisiana.

In 1764 a certain French officer named Pernety took possession of the Falkland Islands for Louis XV. Since Pernety was from the French city of Saint-Malo, the islands were called *les îles Malouines*. This is the root of the Spanish name for the islands: the Malvinas. In 1764 he founded the port of Port-Louis and landed the first group of *Acadiens*. Thus Acadians were the first permanent settlers on the islands. They began raising sheep, naturally.

In 1765, about the time the first Acadians were arriving in Louisiana, a new group of 100 Acadians landed in the Falklands, bringing the total number to 150 and the first Acadian births there were recorded.

In 1767 France sold the islands to Spain.

What became of the Acadians? Some stayed and some left—probably for Louisiana. Some may have gone back to France and become part of the approximately 3,000 Acadian refugees who sailed from France to Louisiana between 1777 and 1788.

If France had not had the irritating habit of selling the land out from under us, we might be standing in a blizzard surrounded by 500,000 sheep rather than poling our pirogues down the bayou surrounded by 500,000 alligators.

In his book *History of the Acadians*, Bona Arsenault says, «In the Falkland Islands, however, the Acadians took root. But if that is so, cher, why were there only 1800 people in all of the Falkland Islands? There are more Broussards than that in Lafayette. And I didn't hear any Cajun accents on the news reports.»

David Emile Marcantel