City eyesore becomes center of history lesson

Ron Delhomme
St. Martin Bureau Editor

ST. MARTINVILLE—Seven years ago the buildings were
painted to front of the old City Hall
on New Market Street. The 100-
year-old building was beyond
repair and was considered a
barren eyesore.}\n
The Robert E. League, Jr.,
Chairman of the Board of Directors
City officials said it had to come down.

"Yeah, right," said Leonard
Barras, president. They thought working on it was a fool's errand.

Barras's wife, Patricia, and her friend, Jane Reilly, along
with a dozen or so locals, had
been working for years to
save the old building, and create a
world-class museum to the Acadians who
first settled the area.

Estimated as it was on the banks
of the Atchafalaya River, it had for
years been the property of the
Quinonie-Catholic Church, "the mother" church of the Acadians. In fact, they
needed was a few hundred
thousand dollars, architects, en-

gerous, scholars and endless

hours of labor."

"Not quite so bad," said Barras,
for a few more years, and here I am." Barras, a retired

The concrete floor was cracked
and the ceiling foundation had

"Today's Cajuns are Acadian, French, Akadian, a
mixture — last names no longer are the distinction."

Jolene Adams
Museum curator

"The National Park Service could
come up with, and the town will do all
the local citizens of St. Martinville is
approaching fruition.

"The Cajuns are a World Founda-
tion that and as solid as the old
building will be at the
center of the 1990 Congress on Missions and
Acadians — the World Acadian
family reunion, cultural events,
and seminars, Cajun and Creole music, shows, theater and film festi-
vals and academic conferences. It will

"Today's Cajuns are Acadian,
French, Akadian, a mixture — last
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"Today's Cajun," says museum
curator Jolene Adams in her
speech, "is a World Foundation that is
seeking members. For details, write
them at PO Box 370, St.
Martinville, La. 70582, or call 394-
2500.

HOW TO HELP: The Acadian
Memorial Foundation Inc. is
seeking members. For details, write
them at PO Box 370, St.
Martinville, La. 70582, or call 394-
2500.

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