Famous Hebert excites Cajun cousins

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ABBEVILLE — Bobby Hebert’s famous ability to scramble out of the pocket did him little good Saturday as the former New Orleans Saints and Atlanta Falcons quarterback was hemmed in by hundreds of autograph seekers at the Hebert family reunion.

The Cut Off native, nicknamed the “Cajun Cannon” when he led the Saints in their best years, took time to chat with youngsters and spent more than an hour signing footballs, hats, T-shirts and everything else fans thrust in front of him until every personalized request was filled.

He played for New Orleans from 1985-98 before wrapping up his career beating his former team as Atlanta’s signal caller. Hebert, his wife, Teresa, a Mandeville native, their four children and Hebert’s parents, Bobby Sr. and Paula Hebert of Cut Off, said their first trip to Abbeville won’t be their last.

“It’s great to be with all these Heberts, and the people of Abbeville have made us feel right at home,” said Hebert, who lives near Atlanta.

His father agreed. “Abbeville is such a beautiful city,” Hebert Sr. said. “It’s like being in Europe. It has that flair and that feeling.”

Members of the Giant Omelette Association dance following the completion of their extraordinary dish Saturday in Abbeville.

Mayor Brady Broussard presented the Cut Off clan with a key to the city. The Abbeville confrerie of the worldwide Giant Omelette Association, whose members include most of Vermilion Parish’s most prominent Heberts, cooked a 5,000-egg omelette for the reunion, a colorful ceremony held annually the first weekend in November.

Even those not tending the giant skillet Saturday knew it was not November.

Eddie and Elaine Hebert of Thibodaux said they met cousins for the first time. “I remember my grandmother singing some of the songs we’re hearing today” from the Cajun band Fa Tras, Eddie Hebert said.

Heberts from all over the state joined cousins from Quebec, Canada, the Caribbean Island of Martinique, Texas, Alabama, Connecticut and elsewhere.

Reunion organizer Russell Gaspard said more than 1,000 families registered for the FrancoFête Congres Mondial reunion.

An art exhibit called Esprit de la Louisiane, or the spirit of Louisiana, was featured at the Abbeville Cultural and Historical Alliance Center, along with genealogy information and other exhibits.

The two-day event closed with a French Mass at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, celebrated by Monsignor Glenn Provost of Our Lady of Fatima in Lafayette.

The LeBlanc family reunion is slated for Erath next weekend.