ST. MARTINVILLE — Would-be Acadians were having a good time in North America two decades before the not-so-fun-loving Puritans showed up on the Mayflower.

L'Ordre de bon-temps (The Order of the Good Times) was founded in 1606, 400 years ago, by the very first settlers of old Acadie and will be celebrated this year in St. Martinville. It is the theme of a one-day cultural, museum-style festival at the Acadian Memorial this month and will be the centerpiece of fundraising efforts for this memorial in the fall, according to Brenda Comeaux Trahan, director of the memorial.

“The idea is to pay homage to the men who prepared feasts for their friends, from the bounty of the new land when they settled in what would become Acadie, and to those men in Louisiana who continue the similar tradition of cooking game and fish 400 years later,” Trahan said.

A costumed actor will describe the feast as it would have been done 400 years ago as part of the annual Acadian Memorial Festival, to be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 18 in St. Martinville. There will be a more complete re-enactment of the feast in the fall.

The original Order was formed by Samuel de Champlain when he and a small group of Frenchmen tried to establish the first settlement in what would become Acadie in 1606. It was the first social club in North America.

“The club was formed to provide entertainment and to satisfy the appetites of the men during that long, harsh, Acadian winter,” Trahan said.

“Each was Grand Master in turn, holding office for one day. It was his function to cater for the company; and, as it became a point of honor to fill the post with credit, the prospective Grand Master was usually busy, for several days before … in hunting, fishing, or bartering provisions with the Indians. Thus did [the] table groan beneath all the luxuries of the winter forest: flesh of moose, caribou, and deer, beaver, otter, and hare, bears and wildcats; with ducks, geese, grouse, and plover, sturgeon, too, and trout, and fish innumerable, speared through the ice.

When the [noon] hour … struck … the Grand Master entered the hall, a napkin on his shoulder. … The brotherhood followed, each bearing a dish. The invited guests were Indian chiefs … seated at table with the French. … Those of humbler degree sat on the floor … eagerly waiting their portion of biscuit or of bread, a novel and much coveted luxury.

That tradition is behind the theme of the March 18 festival, “400 Years of Acadian/Cajun Men Cooking,” Trahan said.

The festival will feature a full day of events including a re-enactment of the Broussard and Hebert families landing on Bayou Teche near the Evangeline Oak, a parade of wooden boats, old and new, on the bayou, and, in accordance with the theme, traditional food, Cajun music, a children’s theater, craft displays and a flea market.

Plans are less definite for the fall fundraiser, Trahan said, but among the things being discussed are a re-enactment of the original feast — including Native Americans from Louisiana and from the MicMac tribe whose ancestors were at the table 400 years ago — and induction of chefs into the Louisiana version of the Order of the Good Times.