Grand Pre, Too, Likes Evangeline

By JOHN PINKERMAN

GRAND PRE, Nova Scotia - Most Americans, when young, read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "Evangeline." It told of the suffering of the Acadians in Nova Scotia. They suffered because they were normally docile French in a land of frequent French-English wars.

Here on a northern shore of Nova Scotia, where the Avon River flows into Minas Basin and eventually into the Bay of Fundy, the French-conscious Canadian government has established Grand Pre National Historic Park.

The park is a beautiful site and it effectively restores the dignity of the Acadians who in 1755 were expelled by the British and scattered over several areas of the then British American colonies.

The park includes an Acadian church - used as a museum with exhibits that portray vividly the industrial nature of the Acadians. There is an impressive bust of Longfellow on the long walkway to the church and it rests with honor among willows, horse chestnuts, pines, poplars and other trees standing erect in a deep green grassland.

There even is Evangeline's well, a tribute to Longfellow's poem - fiction that had more relation to the Acadians' real life than much of the recorded history of those stalwart people.

The gardens and the flowers, in season, are striking and in the rear of the church there is a lush orchard of about 50 apple trees the park's way of giving evidence of the hardworking nature and the agricultural skill of the Acadians.

The park is a place of quiet and likely would be a place of great interest to many Americans.

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EXOTIC DISH

WILLEMSTAD, Curacao (N.A.) - Curacaus are fond of "Chicaron de Pollo," a tantalizing dish featuring tender chunks of chicken. It's normally served up with a hot onion sauce, but visitors are cautioned to test their tastebuds before going the whole route.

This was one of many settlements of French-English struggles but it was one that brought the Acadians their troubles. Acadian was the name given the areas forfeited by France long before the unfortified French settlers.

The Acadians had been here since 1695 and they had steered a middle course, trying not to arouse either the English or the Indians. Their downfall was long in coming but intensified when they refused to take an oath of absolute allegiance to the English crown. They demanded that they not be forced to bear arms in support of England. Even as they were persecuted from 1713 (the year of Utrecht) until expulsion 42 years later, they farms industriously and are given credit for starting the apple orchards that so important in Nova Scotia's agricultural economy today.

Now, with the history of the Acadians preserved and restored since 1908, their place in Canadian and American life is secure. The vast number of Louisiana and Mississippi names on the park's visitor registry is evidence that there are many in the United States who go beyond the reading of Longfellow's "Evangeline" to honor a brave people.