Louisiana Acadian History
Described At Local Meet

The history of the Acadians, and the 200th anniversary of their arrival in South Louisiana, was described by the Thomas A. Vermillion, Dean of the UIU College of Agriculture, at the meeting of the Lafayette Civic Club this week.

Vermillion said that the whole nation is aware of the fact primarily due to Longfellow's famous poem, "Evangeline," written nearly 150 years ago, which tells the story of the Acadians' exile from their native land in Nova Scotia.

In tracing the Acadian history, Vermillion pointed out that originally the region of eastern Canada, referred to as Acadia, was claimed by England in 1604, but the region was first explored by Jacques Cartier in 1534. As a result, several conflicting claims occurred. France's first permanent colony in the area was Port-Royal founded in 1605. This marked the beginning of an Acadian college in the new world two years prior to Jamestown, three years before Quebec, and 15 years before the landing of the Pilgrims.

The first Acadia setting in Louisiana was at St. James on the Mississippi River. According to Vermillion, they numbered approximately 400. From St. James through the Atchafalaya River and bayou, the Acadians spread to St. Martinville, Lafayette, and surrounding areas, and took the Lafayette Bayou Country below Thibodaux. Vermillion pointed out that their Lafayette is the center of Acadia land. The "Caliles," as they are now called, 1862, Louis XIV French, have the most delicious cuisine anywhere, and enjoy a "jolie de vie" (livelihood) which is highly commendable.

As a member of the French-American de la Louisiane Acadiane, Vermillion disclosed a "colored flag adopted by the group as their official banner. It contained a flour de lys, representing the French background of the Acadians, a castle of Cadiz in honor of the Spanish ancestry, and a small star since Acadia is a free state in the nation not represented by a star in Old Glor-y."

Through their migration over the following few years, the Acadians settled in several places from Maine to Iowa, with some important by England.

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