A close collaboration in the study of Acadian folk songs with Mrs. Elizabeth Brandon of Houston, Texas, brought me to visit Louisiana in the spring of 1956. Mrs. Brandon, a professor of French at the University of Houston, had recorded on tapes more than one hundred folk-songs with “Cadjuns” of the Evangeline country near Abbeville and St. Martinville, and had incorporated them in a thesis for her doctorate at Université Laval, Quebec, where I was one of her examiners. She had won the Doctor of Letters degree with great distinction. But the songs remained untranscribed in an appendix, awaiting eventual publication. Hence our collaboration under the auspices of the American Philosophical Society, of Philadelphia.

The reason Cajun folk songs in Louisiana are interesting to us in Canada is that they invite comparisons with those already recorded in French Canada—in the Province of Quebec and in the Maritime Provinces. More than 1,500 of these are now conserved in the archives of the National Museum and at Université Laval. Mrs. Brandon's collection on tapes is the largest and best for Louisiana, with as second best the published repertory of Thérèse Whitfield. Both Canadian and Louisiana sets offer striking similarities. This brings us enlightenment on the origin and sources of the songs: they were either brought over from France in the seventeenth century, or composed since in Acadia or Louisiana. The majority, like those of French Canada—the Acadians being distinct from the Canadians of Quebec—were brought over from France by the early settlers in the 1650s and 1660s. They are the most valuable, because of their quality as music and literature, and the best preserved. The others, composed by local singers in the

There is a Franco-Spanish flavour about the architecture of New Orleans with its delicate wrought iron balconies and slender pillars. The Pontalba apartments in the heart of the French quarter.
New World, are rather more numerous in proportion in Acadia and Louisiana than in Quebec. In Quebec they count about one out of twenty. The songs composed in America, while rather inferior in quality as a whole, are apt to hold our attention because they reflect surroundings and passing events since the days of early settlement.

The Cadjuns of Louisiana and the Maritime Provinces of Canada never considered themselves Canadians, for the good reason that Canada originally consisted of only the region occupied by the Huron-Iroquois nations, between Isle-aux-Coudres (below the present City of Quebec) and Hochelaga (Montreal). The name of Canada was gradually extended to the present-day area, from sea to sea. In the earliest phase of French occupancy on this continent, the name of Nouvelle-France was given to the all-embracing regions of the St. Lawrence, Acadia, the Detroit River, the Ohio and Missouri Rivers, Louisiana, and the Red River. Canada (Village-Dwellers) was the synonym of Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal.

Why should the folk-songs, folklore and language of Canada and Acadia be similar or different? And why should the diverse Acadian settlements in the Maritime Provinces and in Louisiana also be at variance within themselves? It is because the Acadians mostly came from the lower provinces of the Loire River in western France, especially from Poitou; whereas the French in Canada proper originated in more French provinces than one, especially Normandy, Isle-de-France near Paris, and the region of the lower Loire River. Quebec was made up of more varied elements, with cultural associations more diversified. The Acadians at the start were almost pure Poitevins, from the mouth of the Loire River facing the Atlantic. By their environment in the motherland they were prepared for the seashores of north-east America and later the lowlands of Louisiana. They were a fisher, dyke (aboiteaux), salt marsh and an inlet (bayou) and agricultural folk; and they were highly socialized, that is, fond of each other’s company, and less individual than the small homestead-holders of the interior both in France and Canada.

After the conquest of Canada by the British in 1759 and the deportation of the Acadians after 1755, the vast expanses of New France

The famous Evangeline Oak at St. Martinville, Louisiana. It is nearly 200 years old.
f staff. Quebec, the Detroit and Red Rivers, Missouri and Louisiana had their own local autonomies. And Acadia was occupied by the British, all save the St. John River (in the present New Brunswick), where the Cajuns were not displaced but remained on their own river and aboiteaux inland, especially in the Madawaska and Shippegan areas. The Annapolis (Nova Scotia) settlers were rooted out and shipped wherever the sea winds would drive them—often to be shipwrecked and drowned. Some of them ran into the woods for hiding and eventually reached the St. Lawrence, where we now find their descendants in not a few scattered clusters. Part of the sea-driven refugees landed on the coast of Virginia, where they stayed for a few years, mingling with the British settlers. Their story, as orally recalled, has been recorded in a little book entitled Acadian Reminiscences, The True Story of Evangeline, by Judge Felix Voorhies (published in New Orleans, 1907). And it has been made famous in literature by Longfellow's Evangeline. These exiles, like their fellows dispersed in other lands, had an anguishd longing for their compatriots wherever they might be found, and they would leave nothing undone until they had rejoined them. So the Virginia refugees, who had heard that in Louisiana there were French folk near the
The kitchen and slave quarters of the old Parish House at St. Martinville.

cost, trekked all the way with their scanty possessions through the tangled mountainous land of western Virginia, Tennessee, and Alabama and finally reached their destination, after they had lost not a few of their little bands through death because of old age and exertion. That is why now, two hundred years later, we find so many of their descendants in Lafayette, Abbeville, Kaplan, St. Martinville (Bayou Teche), Baton-Rouge, and elsewhere. Cadjun French is still predominant there, along with a folk life and a marked taste for festivals and social intercourse. If you wish to know more about them, read such books as Keyes' All this is Louisiana, and Mrs. Brandon's thesis on Bayou folklore, and French folk tales. Some of these were first recorded in North America by Alcée Fortier, one of their descendants, and published in the first number of The Journal of American Folklore. Fortier was one of the founders of this society, in 1888.

The Bayou Cadjuns of Louisiana are by no means the only French folk on the lower Mississippi River, although they form the majority and most conservative element. More than any others, too, they have contributed to the industrial development of their new land in the past two centuries. They are fishers, growers of sugar cane, cotton, and maze. Other French elements in their neighbourhood or mixed with them are the Creole French of New Orleans and inland, and the numerous Negro refugees of the Gulf of Mexico. The Creoles, together with many French and Spanish emigrants from 1720 to 1803 (when Louisiana was sold to the United States by Napoleon), are the descendants of white Europeans direct from France, Spain, and Mexico, and their speech is pure French, whereas Cadjun is a folk dialect close to that of Poitou, France. Many Creoles issued from the French nobility at the time of their emigration to America after the French Revolution. The so-called French spoken by the Negroes is a gumbo, that is, a negroid jargon quite unintelligible to all but themselves or students of their specialty. So the Louisiana French consists of three distinct branches: Cadjun, Creole, and Gumbo.
Mrs. Brandon's thesis is rich with the folklore of Vermilion (Bayou Vermilion or Evangeline). It is now being published in sections in the Bayou journal of Houston University, Houston, Texas, and the folk-songs are to be embodied separately in a monograph jointly prepared by herself and the author of this article. An interesting feature of this important collection of folk-songs is the differences between the Acadian repertory of Acadia and Louisiana. The songs, if old enough, are apt to be other versions of some theme belonging in common to old French, Canadian, and Acadian songs. If they post-date the Dispersion, they are different, for they were composed by the wanderers in the course of their migrations from the coast of Virginia to the bayous of the lower Mississippi.

Among the ancient songs of Louisiana that are derived from ancient France models, and known in Canada too, we find _Je vais me mettre rosier_ (I'll turn into a rose-bush), _Soigner mes choux_ (Tend my cabbages), _Vive le vin, vive l'amour!_ _J'ai déserté de France_ (I fled from France), _Les deux maris_ (The two husbands), _Il n'y a qu'un seul Dieu_ (There is only one God), _La destinée, la rose au bois, Dedans Paris yat une danse, La Passion de Notre-Seigneur, J'ai plumé le bec_ (or _L'Alouette_), _Si j'avais les beaux souliers_ (If I had smart shoes), _J'ai cueilli la belle rose_ (I have plucked the lovely rose), _Rossignol sauvage_ (Wild nightingale)—and so on.

Songs of Louisiana composition and with local colour are: _Jacquot Guillette, Come to-day de far away, Shoo-fly!_ (Je vois un gros nègre noir—I see an old darky), _Gabriel, c'était mon parrain, Fanny Lee, c'était ma marraine_ (Gabriel, my godfather, Fanny, my godmother), _Au pas, soldats ... jusqu'à la rue Canal_ (Step away, to Canal Street in New Orleans), _Charmant Billie_ (Charming Billie), _Dedans nos quartiers_ (In our quarters), _Je prends ma vieille selle_ (I take my old saddle), _J'm'ai fait un p'tit beau_ (I have chosen a small sweetheart), _Je prends mon violon_ (I take my fiddle), and so on.

One soon gets to know Cadjun names of...
An old Acadian house which has been restored in the park at St. Martinville. Note the outside or garçonnière stairway.

localities and of families; they become familiar and give local colour around Abbeville, Kaplan, Bayou Tèche (Queue de Tortue), Evangeline, Delembre, and St. Martinville. Common family names are Arceneaux, La Bave, Thériot, Praus, Langlinais, Dutel, Primeaux, Monledoux, Hébert, Landry, Leblanc, Chauvin, Broussard, Trahan, La Grange, Bertrand, Fontenot, and Delembre.

But we also find Creole names, especially in New Orleans, for instance: Del Norte, Bezon, Duchamp de Chatenier, Olivier de Vezin, de la Houssaye, Migne. In New Iberia, one-third of the names are Spanish. But the New Iberians speak French, going back though they do to an ancient colony of Spaniards exploiting a salt mine.

For a French-speaking observer from France or Canada, it is a pleasure to observe local terms or expressions. Yet these are not easily secured, for the Cajuns are very shy of their dialect. They have not forgotten Theodore Roosevelt's dictum: "One country, one language!" And having no French schools, the new generation abandons its mother tongue. It is spoken only at home and mostly by the old folk. Do you know the meaning of du ris de Providence (Providence's rice)? A variety of rice that grows without irrigation, when it

rains. Escalier à la garçonnière—an outside stairway in the rustic houses, because the boys, when arriving late after dance parties, climbed it discreetly without their parents hearing them. Une cabresse or rope braided out of horse hair which served as reins; le bridon, the bridle; la berce or rocking chair—which is common in this country; monter de la barrière—build a fence; les piègeois or trappers; la marche du siffleur or the whistler's walk from the smoke-house where ham was cured to the patron's dining room. (The slave carrying the smoked morsel had to whistle, which kept him from tearing off tidbits for his own benefit.)

Not a few French Canadians have migrated at various times down the Missouri and Mississippi to New Orleans, where their descendants now survive, and sometimes have become successful industrialists, like J.-B. Prudhomme, called "Docteur du Rot" of Natchitoches, an old settlement. Prudhomme's sons have to their credit the first experiments in growing cotton, and the invention of the cotton gin, on the land granted to their father by Louis XV, under the name of Côte joyeuse. Cotton is still the chief product there.

The Cathedral of New Orleans, a monument of historic significance at the Vieux Carré—so reminiscent of a Paris boulevard—is now
occupied by the Oblates Fathers, whose headquarters in Canada are in Ottawa. And the archivist there now is Father Prout. Consulted about his archives, he stated that the registers for baptisms, marriages, and burials begin with the year 1731 and are complete to the present. At the beginning, the whites and Negroes were listed together; but after 1787, separately. The parish accounts begin in 1825 in Spanish.

Cemeteries are an impressive feature of the Louisiana French culture, Acadian and Creole, especially at New Orleans and St. Francisville; for the French folk there religiously revere their dead, even beyond their means. The bodies are buried in costly stone monuments all above ground, for the water wells up when digging a foot deep. And the family keeps the tomb adorned with flowers as a testimony of prolonged attachment. When a widower stops bringing bouquets to the resting place of his deceased mate, other folk look around and, winking at one another, say, "Well, whom is he to marry now?"

The chief difference between the French culture of Canada and of Acadia and Louisiana is that Canada’s is in part folk or habitant and in part educated or academic, whereas the Acadians is mostly folk or rural. In Quebec, Montreal, and Three Rivers, seminaries, colleges, convents, monasteries, and hospitals, were founded in the earliest colonial days by the Jesuits, the Recollets, the secular clergy, the Ursulines, Hôtel-Dieu and the Congregation and Hôpital Général nuns. They firmly established the French scholastic tradition. The clergy was headed by bishops at Quebec and Montreal. But none of these institutions existed among the Acadians, who were left to themselves, isolated except for the pastoral guidance of visiting missionaries. The family, scarcely the parish, was the centre of group activities. The folk elements alone prevailed here almost exclusively. Canada’s culture, in contrast with Acadia’s, was improved or more complex, because of the constant admixture of city and academic learning and arts, no less than by the teaching of literary French (not to mention Latin and Greek, in the seminaries). Some of this learning penetrated into the rural districts through classical schools in the neighbourhoods. This difference explains why the Acadians and Cajuns still speak among themselves a patois French, which is of interest to linguists, but which they are apt to hide from outsiders.

The Ursulines’ convent and the clergy of New Orleans were the only exceptions to the rule, and the clergy for periods was Spanish, from Mexico. The Ursulines’ convent, established in 1727 by nuns that came from France (Dieppe) and Quebec, still continues to this day its educational work after more than two hundred years of steady activities. But its programme of education is now quite different. Sad to say—"il est triste à dire," as Sister Rivet, one of the elders, confessed—French is no longer spoken or taught under their roof in the modern building. The handicrafts like embroidery, lace-making for church ornaments, and wax work for altars, belong to the past. And the ambition of the present-day leaders is to abide by Teddy Roosevelt’s motto “One country, one language.” Everything is up-to-date, and many sports prevail among healthy americanized girls in the playgrounds. What a difference from the Ursulines of Quebec and Three Rivers, where the nuns are still “old-fashioned” and cloistered! This difference explains why academic French (though not yet the folk) is fast disappearing in Louisiana.
Yet French still holds its ground proudly at La Maison Acadienne Française at Lafayette, under the direction of Dean Arceneault. Here is a cultural centre which survives in splendid isolation as it were. But it cultivates few, if any, stimulating contacts with the folk culture of the country.

The culinary arts among the Cajuns are more advanced and refined than any other folk art. For the country is naturally rich in resources and foods. And the gumbo (soup or bouillon) is delicious. At least one famous restaurant, Antoine's, is a feature not to be missed by visitors in New Orleans. The Mardi Gras or Carnival season is an attraction which reminds one of Spain and Southern France.

Buildings and old streets, wrought iron balconies, courtyards and patios preserve the French or Spanish atmosphere in New Orleans, founded in 1717, after the early occupants departed or moved to other parts. For instance, the Vieux Carré with its balconies which are reminiscently Castilian, Rue d'Orléans or Grand Rue, Chartres Street, Iberville Street (Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, Canadian, was the founder of Louisiana in 1699), Toulouse Street with its Creole fan windows, Ursulines Street where the old convent is still standing, Esplanade Avenue, the Old Louisiana Bank, Jean Blanque's House, Patio Royal, Ronquette House, Patio of Maison Séguenurat, Maison de Commerce, Spanish Comandancia, the Court of the Two Lions, Casa Flinnard, Maison Jacob, Court of the Two Sisters, the Labatit Mansion, Patti's Court, Faisandier's Posada, Le Spectacle—the first famed theatre in New Orleans, O'Hara's snuff factory, Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré, the Labranche building with its cast-iron balconies, the Arts and Crafts Club, Cathedral Garden, Orleans Ballroom, Mayor Rolignac's, the Furet Furniture Shop which interested Lafcadio Hearn in 1882, Madame Délieuuse, General Beauregard's Home, the Haunted House, Audubon's First Studio, Madame Pontalba's Buildings, St. Louis Cathedral (1838), the Cabildo and its gates and arches, the Presbytère, and many others which make of New Orleans a tourist centre because of its past glory and Franco-Spanish atmosphere.

The Acadian Reminiscences or the True Story of Evangeline (1907) by Judge Felix
Voorhies (a Louisiana Acadian) should be read by anyone who is inclined to consider as pure fiction the epic poem, *Evangeline*, by Longfellow, as often happens, to the disappointment of all born Cajuns.

The author was well able to present this story, as it was handed down to him by word of mouth by his grandmother, who adopted Evangeline when orphaned at an early age. He repeats it in a simple narrative characteristic of the Acadians.

The story begins by telling of the native land of these Acadians and of the village of St. Gabriel from which they were driven when the French Province was surrendered to the British. It tells of members of the same families being separated and placed aboard different ships, some never to see one another again. The narrative describes their landing in Maryland, and, after some time, tells of hearing that members of their families had landed in Louisiana. This news brought encouragement and determination, in the face of great dangers, to travel to the beautiful land of the Teche. To this day travellers may visit the quaint town of St. Martinville on the banks of Bayou Teche and pay their respects at the grave-shrine of Evangeline and for a few fleeting moments relive the life of these early settlers.

The narrative describes the “stirring scenes which the old exiled Acadians had witnessed when they were driven from their homes by the British, and their sufferings during their long pilgrimage overland from Maryland to the wilds of Louisiana, the dangers that beset them on their long journey through endless forests, along the precipitous banks of rivers too deep to be forded; among hostile Indians, that followed them stealthily, like wolves, day and night, ever ready to pounce upon them and massacre them.

“Driven to the seashore [in their Acadian village at St. Gabriel, the exiles were] embarked for deportation, and thrown as castaways on the Maryland shores.” Others “decided to reach Canada the best way they could.” The Acadians for three years received the gracious hospitality of the Marylanders Charles Smith and Henry Brent, and after a while became prosperous. But they yearned to rejoin their friends and relatives in Louisiana. It is here that the story of Emmeline Labiche, Longfellow’s Evangeline, begins.
Emmeline "was an orphan whose parents had died when she was quite a child. She had grown to womanhood and was looked upon as the handsomest girl of St. Gabriel. She had just completed her sixteenth year, and was on the eve of marrying a well-to-do young man, Louis Arceneaux. Their love-dream was about to be realized, when they were driven to the seashore by the invader, and Louis was wounded and carried on board of one of the ships, and the lovers were separated."

She survived the midst of her people, at the home of the Widow Borda in St. Martinville, mourning her loss. They looked "upon her as not of this earth, but rather as their guardian angel, and this is why they called her no longer Emmeline, but Evangeline or God's little angel. She was exiled to Maryland like her folk, and with them, an adopted child, she undertook the dangerous journey to Louisiana. But her soul remained in the past. When they reached the Teche country, at the Poste des Attakapas, they found a whole population congregated there to welcome them."

Fate had it that, one day, she met her beloved Louis Arceneaux, who confessed being unworthy of her. He had pledged his faith to another. "Her mind was unhinged by the shock. It had been too much for her broken heart. She became insane, and never recovered her reason. Soon she expired without a struggle, with an angelic smile on her lips."

When, according to Leona Martin Guirard, in St. Martinville (p. 9), Edouard Simon, a native of St. Martinville, was a student of Harvard, he related the true story of the exiled Acadians and Emmeline and Louis to Nathaniel Hawthorne. There seemed to be no possibility in the tragic tale. But Longfellow, who also heard the tale, was interested and inspired. Shaking off the exact details of the original narrative, he composed his Evangeline, and in his poem he reunites the lovers before the end. Years after their separation, as a nun administering to the sick in an alms house, Evangeline saw the dying Gabriel. For a brief moment the lovers were reunited before he died in her arms.

At St. Martinville this romance is further immortalized by a monument to Evangeline and the famous Evangeline Oak, which is listed by the American Forestry Association, in the Hall of Famous Trees. It may have been planted as early as 1759. And the inscription on the plaque of the monument nearby is:

"Evangeline
Emmeline Labiche
Vieux Cimetière de St. Martin".