After 250 years, the original Acadian homestead might have been found

Aaron Gonsoulin
aaron@gonsoulin@thevermilion.com

When explorer Joseph Broussard led a group of Acadians to New Orleans in 1765, their original homestead was a place of mystery in South Louisiana, and students and officials at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette said they believe they’ve found it after years of research.

“We have enough evidence that we think we may have made a discovery based on the material from the sites we looked at to have one of the original homesteads,” said Mark Rees, Ph.D., and a professor of anthropology at UL Lafayette. “No one knows much about it.”

The New Acadia Project combines archaeological survey and historical research with public outreach and community engagement in a collaborative effort to discover and investigate the lost colony of the first Acadian settlers, according to Rees.

Rees said he believes Broussard and the Acadians settled on the Teche Ridge, between St. Martinville and New Iberia, in the vicinity of the present-day village of Loreauville because they needed a new place to re-establish their community after they were exiled from Nova Scotia.

According to the Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab, the colonial government of Louisiana provisioned Broussard and the reported 193 Acadians to settle along the Bayou Teche in the Attakapas District.

Within months of their arrival, they were afflicted with a virulent epidemic, possibly yellow fever and as many as 34 died between the summer and winter of 1765.

The NAP which Reese works on includes Regina Lowe, a junior majoring in anthropology, who said their field work will help them answer questions they’ve been asking since the start of the project.

HOMESTEAD
continued on page 6