Replicamaker brings Nova Scotia roots home

By ANGELA SIMONEAUX

LAFAYETTE—More than 150 years ago, John Allen LeBlanc’s family was forced to leave Nova Scotia. On Sunday, they came back.

LeBlanc and his wife, Shirley, presented a scale replica of the St. Charles aux Mines Church to the church in Grand Pre, Nova Scotia.

“It was the second or third time we went to Grand Pre, I thought we have to bring some of the church back to show Louisiana,” he said. “I do replicas, so I decided to do a replica of the church. I wanted to show people in Louisiana what it was like, if they can’t go over and see it themselves.”

The actual church is built on the site of the original church, which the Acadians built in Grand Pre. British troops destroyed the original church and removed the Acadians from their homes. The church that stands today is a memorial to the

Grand Derangement.

LeBlanc’s replica is an exact scale model of the church in Grand Pre, and LeBlanc has pictures of himself measuring the actual building to prove it.

“We got the plans, we measured, we took pictures, lots of pictures,” Shirley said. “We were lucky, because the office in the back of the church had a drawing of the church, so we ran some copies of these.”

That really helped me out,” her husband said.

The model and a sister replica, which will be on display this fall in the Acadian Museum in St. Martinville, took about 360 hours to build. It has tiny doors, windows, and a tower with intricate details. It’s not just a replica of the church; LeBlanc used wood from Acadian heritage trees, as well as trees unique to his heritage, to make it.

There’s a little bit of every corner of LeBlanc’s family in that church.

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