The History of the Acadians is a tragic saga which cannot be detailed here. Suffice it or say that the Acadians developed as an ethnic group from 1605 to 1755 off the East coast of Canada, known as the maritime provinces, among which the principal is now known as Nova Scotia. The Acadians lived in Acadia in a near classless society, based on a quasi feudal system in which the Lord was replaced by the head of the family, and its justification for being was defined, if that is the proper word, by the Catholic Church. The Acadians lived in peace, maintained their neutrality in the conflicts between France and England and between French Canada and the English American Colonies, and were known as "neutrals". In 1755, the British forces in America, in order to take possession of the Acadian territory which France had ceded to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, imprisoned and evacuated all the Acadians they could capture, burned their homes and crops to starve out those who might escape, and, by offering a bounty to their soldiers for "Indian scalps, murdered those not captured. The vessels carrying the Acadians brought them to the English Colonies on the Atlantic seaboard where they were unloaded as wards or prisoners of the English King. Some were turned back by the colonies and transported to England from where, after a period of imprisonment, they made their way back to the Northern coast of France. There they remained, foreigners in their native land, until resettled in Louisiana by the Spanish. Of those who landed on the seaboard, some made their way to French Canada, some, relatively few, remained in the colonies, some few returned to Acadia, and most made their way to New France as Louisiana was then known.

The Acadians arrived in Louisiana tired, poor, quaintly dressed in their native clothing, speaking a French barely known in Louisiana, to be met by a Spanish Governor whose treasury was all but bare. Besides their great need and sorrow, they brought with them dreaded smallpox. It is little wonder that Governor O'Riley found it necessary to issue a public statement justifying his permitting the Acadians to unload.

As the Acadians landed along the rivers and bayous, they were given directions to reach the Opelousas country and the Atakapa Indian Country where unclaimed lands lay in abundance.

The Acadians settled and occupy today the major portion of South Louisiana below the 32nd parallel.

The tropical lands of the bayou countries, the high flat prairies between and beyond the bayous, and the swamps extending miles back from the Gulf of Mexico provided then and now a virtual Elysium for the hunter, the trapper, the farmer and the cattle grazer. Each type of terrain held and holds today its peculiar fascination not only for the Acadian but for all who visit the Acadian country.
The Acadians are a hospitable warmhearted, friendly, funloving, industrious people whose economy, politics and government were based on the family. Patriarchs divided their lands among their descendants and collateral relatives. While today the Acadians are hardly distinguishable by sight from the minorities living among them, except perhaps their more pronounced Latin and French facial features, they have preserved to this date outstanding cultural traits which they brought with them originally from France to Acadia. One American contemporary author has titled a chapter in her book as "So Near and Yet So Far" which well describes the closeness of the French Language and traditions of the Louisiana Acadian to the mother country of France, separated by miles of land and ocean, and by three and a half centuries. Besides traditional French names, Acadians bear names such as Soirez, Castille, Farris, Frey, Klump, Abshire, Reed, McCauley, McGee, O'Connor, and Israel, testifying to the strength of Acadian culture in which these minorities were absorbed. The non-Acadian has always been impressed with his warmhearted reception by the Acadian who is a good conversationalist and is noted for his smiling response, not in approval perhaps, but always in understanding and sympathy.

The French language brought to Louisiana by the Acadians, its authenticity well preserved to this day, was the language of the tiller of the soil, of the artisan, and of the fishing villages of northern France. The Acadian french is predicatory French which, remarkably, is still spoken in some of the rural areas of France. The Acadian today has preserved his original thrift, frugality, industry, and courage. The Acadian farmer still rises before the sun, teaches his sons to predict the weather from day to day, sets his eggs to hatch and plants his vegetables and crops according to particular phases of the moon, and recognizes his blood relatives to even the tenth degree.

The Acadians of Louisiana have developed their own peculiar music which is still preserved in its purity in many areas. The Acadians have developed a distinct style of dancing to express their music. The traditionally Acadian instruments are the French accordion, the violin, and the homemade steel triangle, also called "ti fer". Their music can be heard in the many dance halls in southwest Louisiana where dance gatherings called Fais-do-do are regularly staged on Saturdays, Sundays, or Wednesdays. These dance halls are a commercial outgrowth of the old bal de maison (house dance) which are still much in vogue in many areas, but which are neighborhood gatherings not usually open to the general public.

The Acadian architecture, in its purity, is also unique, and is characterized by a steep-gabled roof covering the enclosed portion as well as the traditional galerie, with its kitchen partially or wholly detached from the living and sleeping quarters. The Acadians had large families and the attic space under the steep roof was utilized for the boys' sleeping quarters and when so used was called the garconniere. Entry to this attic or garconniere was usually by an exposed staircase on one end of the porch. Most dwellings were surrounded by barns and sheds for the work animals and cattle, and by cages and couchoirs, for the fowl. The Acadian dwelling is a comfortable, practical and unpretentious structure. Of course, with the accumulation of wealth, some more imposing structures were built utilizing other styles of architecture but maintaining the functional aspects of the basic Acadian style.
With the exception of a few who became large planters, the Acadian farmer engaged in subsistence farming; raising rice and corn for their bread; hogs, goats, cattle, chickens, geese, ducks, guinea hens and turkeys for their meat; and cabbage, beans, peas, turnips, coushas, cantaloupe, et cetera, for the balance of his diet. He raised horses and mules and oxen for his work animals. The Acadian farmer, to this day, purchases very little of his necessities other than his pickup truck, his television set, his kitchen utensils, his farming tools and his shoes and clothing.

The Acadian's politics are as close to him and as much a part of his life as his music, his dancing, and his religion. He takes an active and personal interest, almost to a man, in all local, state, and national elections and can say, with some justification, that he was personally responsible for his candidate's election. While there are all shades of social and economic views among the Acadians, it is generally said that Acadian Southwest Louisiana is liberal in contrast to English-speaking North Louisiana.

THE GREATER OPELOUSAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS MATERIAL WAS PREPARED AS A SPEECH AND GIVEN TO MANY CIVIC CLUBS THROUGHOUT THE STATE IN 1965 BY MR. PAUL C. TATE OF MAMOU, LOUISIANA IN CONNECTION WITH THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE ACADIANS IN LOUISIANA IN 1765.

MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU BY DR. KATHELEEN F. WALKER, EXTENSION HOME ECONOMIST, ST. LANDRY PARISH.

February 1981

1000 copies

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