Long journey home

Travels of Acadians recreated with poetry

BY ANGELA BOURNEAUX

ST. JAMES - When the first Acadians arrived in this area two centuries ago, even the densest, thickest woods failed to shelter them from the British soldiers. They had courted British soldiers and their families, and to escape from their homes, they burned their homes, and packed their belongings in boats which they launched onto the Mississippi River to escape to safety in New Orleans.

The Acadians were the first settlers in Louisiana, and their land was owned by the French and Spanish. They were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in the Mississippi Delta, where they founded the town of St. James.

The Acadian Museum in St. James is a place where you can learn about the Acadians and their struggles. The museum is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. To get there, take Highway 603 for 12 miles and turn left onto Highway 603 South. The museum is on the right.

See JOURNEY, Page 29
The poem, which Grand Point native Roselyne Matheson wrote for her High School graduation in 1981, tells the story of the Acadians. The poem is about the Acadians being driven from their homes in Canada and forced to migrate to the United States and France. The poem begins with the lines: "The Acadians were driven from their homes, from the land they loved, from the land they knew."

Matheson, a professor of English at Northern Michigan University, wrote the poem in 1981, and it is now included in the school's history curriculum. According to Matheson, the poem was inspired by her own family's history, as her ancestors were among the Acadians who were driven from their homes.

"The Acadians were driven from their homes, from the land they loved, from the land they knew," Matheson wrote. "They were forced to leave their homes, their family, and their way of life."

The poem describes the harsh conditions the Acadians faced in their new homes, including poverty, disease, and discrimination. Matheson's poem provides a powerful reminder of the history of the Acadians and their struggle for survival.

Through her writing, Matheson hopes to honor the memory of the Acadians and celebrate their resilience. She believes that their story is important for all Americans to know.

"I wrote this poem to honor the Acadians and to remind us of their courage," Matheson said. "Their story is a reminder of the importance of perseverance and the power of the human spirit."