

LA PAROLE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADIAN MUSEUM

By Warren A. Perrin, Chairman

April 30, 2021

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS!

If you know anyone else who would like to receive this newsletter, send their name and email address to darylinb@plddo.com.

HELP PROMOTE CAJUN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Acadian Museum is closed due to the pandemic but we have a vision! As part of our 31st anniversary, your tax-deductible contributions¹ can help fund these important projects:

- Find the [lost location](#) of our first Acadian settlement.
- Promote Acadiana as a World Heritage Site "twinning" with [Grand-Pré, NS](#).
- Transcribe and digitize our tapes of rare and valuable interviews.
- Work to promote French immersion schools.
- Expand and categorize our holdings of cultural treasures.

Please donate¹ [online](#) or by sending your check to The Acadian Museum, P.O. Box 53597, Lafayette, LA 70505.

UNSUBSCRIBE

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send your request to darylinb@plddo.com.

¹The Acadian Museum is a Louisiana 501(c)(3) nonprofit. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Don't Wait! Help Us Reopen this Summer!

Good news! The Acadian Museum in Erath, Louisiana, plans to reopen as soon as possible this summer, once it becomes safe to do so. And we have a whole new crop of volunteers ready to staff the museum on a regular basis.

To help in our recovery and reopening, please consider [donating](#) to our operating fund. From now through May 6, **each of your tax-**

deductible contributions will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000 as a part of a generous gift from Warren & Mary Perrin.



Since its inception, the museum's collection has been threatened by floods. Our building in Erath is located a few feet above sea level but has no natural protections. Bayou Tigre runs through the town, allowing a direct access for storm-generated waters. During the last 50 years, it has experienced 15 flood/hurricane events. For Rita, the museum sustained major damage due to 36 inches of water inside the building. Thankfully, our excellent collection of 200 VHS tapes was preserved and we are securing funding to help convert them to digital format, as well as for many other goals we hope to achieve (see column at left).

With the deadline fast approaching, please help us with your donations NOW. [Click here](#) or go to the following link to make your voice heard in favor of our future and preserving our unique Cajun culture: solagivingday.org/acadian_museum_giving

The Acadian Heritage & Culture Foundation, Inc. is a Louisiana 501(c)(3) nonprofit. All contributions are tax-deductible

Big Happenings at the Museum

We recently had a productive meeting at the Acadian Museum to discuss several topics dealing with maintaining our heritage and culture. The meeting – attended by people from Lafayette, Abbeville, LeBlanc, Kaplan, Erath and Henry La. – featured intense and dynamic discussions about keeping the French culture alive, including supporting the ongoing development of French Immersion classes.

One outgrowth of the meeting is that Layla Melancon, the parent of a French Immersion student in Erath, will head up a new organization to promote all things dealing with the Francophone cultures in Vermillion Parish which will be financially supported by the museum, a 501-c-3 non-profit corporation which will be able to provide tax deductions to donors. Layla will be reaching out to other cultural and historical organizations in Vermillion Parish to see their support and coordinate activities.

We will soon be organizing a French Table at the Erath Café, hosted by owners Mayor Taylor Mencacci and his wife Amy, and slated for Friday mornings at 10 o'clock. If successful, we will try to expand the program at a convenient time for young people and students to attend. We will have the museum open all day on Fridays so participants can visit before or after the French Table.

The museum has been closed during the pandemic, but we are making plans to reopen and are reaching out to ask for your support by offering to volunteer, either full-time (agree to accept a given day) or part-time (help host a group or after-hours tour by appointment only). We plan to have the museum open afternoons from Tuesday through Friday. Our volunteer coordinator Carlin Trahan will prepare a monthly schedule making slots available for people to volunteer for certain times. As a volunteer you will be given access to the museum and be able to open it at any time for special visits or research and become a member of our newly formed organization—yet to be named. To join, email: info@acadianmuseum.com

Several of our ongoing projects are coming together nicely. Ryan Bernard (known to Erath friends as “Toby”) is setting up a YouTube channel where we will be able to show videos dealing with our history or culture. Dr. Jason Theriot’s [“Frenchie” podcast](#), sponsored by the museum, is already featuring interviews he made with World War II veterans who served as French translators in Europe during that brutal war.

We have also obtained a grant to help digitize 200 VHF recordings of local people telling their stories of growing up in Vermillion Parish. Please let me know if you want to be more active in supporting the museum and helping us as a volunteer.

Unfortunate Deaths of Two of Our Strongest Supporters

The little town of Erath, La. was recently shaken by the deaths of two of its most important WWII veterans within a seven-day period. Both of them were longtime supporters of the Cajun French language and culture and both supported the Acadian Museum since its founding in 1990. Both were aged 98 and both had long ago been proclaimed Living Legends by the Acadian Museum.

Willis Granger, the father of Acadian Museum benefactor Weldon Granger, died of natural causes at his Erath home on April 12, 2021. During WWII, Willis served on the USS *Cacocin*, a US Navy flagship that was instrumental in



Willis Granger with his wife Edith

planning the European invasions. The father of 11 children, he worked as a field hand and sharecropper after the war, before settling into a lifelong career with the Diamond Crystal Salt Company at nearby Jefferson Island, La.

Considering the family's humble beginnings, the success of his children was remarkable. The family included three Doctors of Physiology: Dr Harris Granger, Head of Physiology and Cardiology at Texas A&M University and Medical School; Dr Neal Granger, Head of the Department of Physiology at LSU; and Dr Joey Granger, Dept of Physiology, University of

Mississippi Medical Center and president of the American Society of Physiologists.

His second son Weldon Granger graduated from ULL and later obtained a Doctor of Jurisprudence from South Texas College of Law and created the law firm of JonesGranger, the largest firm in the U.S., specializing in federal litigation within the railway transportation industry. The rest of the family were no less remarkable. You can read about the Grangers [on our website](#).



Lee Bernard

Sadly, Living Legend **Lee Bernard** also died on April 19th at the age of 98. A lifelong resident of Erath, Louisiana, Lee served as a French translator for U.S. forces during WWII and was the subject of the historical LPBS documentary, "[Mon Cher Camarade](#)."

It was at Lee's Canal Service Station in Erath that the legendary D.L. Menard wrote his classic song "The Back Door" while pumping gas for customers. All these years, Lee was a prime example of a dedicated and loyal citizen, supporting the Civil Defense organization and the local sports teams. You can read more about his life [on our website](#).

Both of these veterans played important roles in World War II and be featured in upcoming podcasts as part of [the Frenchie series](#) hosted by Jason Theriot and sponsored by the museum.

Six Named for NS Francophonie Award

Six Nova Scotians are the first recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's Award of Excellence for l'Acadie and Francophonie of Nova Scotia.

The award, created in August 2020 by Lt.-Gov. Arthur J. LeBlanc, recognizes people whose social, economic, or cultural contributions have made a difference in the Francophone community and in Nova Scotia as a whole.

"I am delighted that these distinguished individuals have been selected to receive the award," said Lt.-Gov. LeBlanc. "Their efforts have not only contributed to the Francophone community, but they have also played a role in preserving, promoting and celebrating our important Acadian history, heritage and culture. I very much look forward to presenting them with the award when the circumstances permit."

The award recognizes outstanding citizens across three categories: Francophone, Francophile (someone who is not Francophone but supports and promotes French language and culture), and Youth under age 25.

The first two award winners in the Franchophone category were Jude Avery of Larry's River and Louis Deveau of Dartmouth, NS. Winners in the Francophile category were Rebecca Lancaster of Halifax and Sally Ross of Tantallon, NS. In the Youth category, winners were Adrien Comeau of Saulnierville and Mbathio Thiam of Coxheath, NS.

New Article on *Traiteurs* by Mary Perrin

Congratulations to Mary Perrin on her excellent article *Human Condition: When the traiteur stopped the bleeding*, featured in *The Advocate* on March 21. Mary's article recounts a funny and somewhat eerie story about traiteurs that was told to her by noted Cajun music legend D.L. Menard. You can read about it here:

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/entertainment_life/article_ea034940-82b9-11eb-911a-db1286942758.html.

Famille Beausoleil Donates to French Immersion Program



The Famille Beausoleil Association recently presented a generous donation to the Leblanc Elementary French Immersion Program. The faculty were extremely appreciative and are hoping to be able to invite Famille Beausoleil to attend a French Immersion Cultural Day next year if the pandemic protocols are removed.

Pictured above during the award presentation are (L-R) association secretary Brenda Broussard, French immersion teacher Magali Foret, association president Alan Broussard, LeBlanc Elementary principal Rachelle Brown, and French immersion teacher Kelly Such Stewart.

The donation was made in memory of Charles and Rose Broussard and Don Louis Broussard who were past Board members and who all passed away in the past 18 months.

Old Acadian Trail in New Brunswick

Kathy Cormier sent this to us from New Brunswick in the Acadian parts of Canada:

We would like to inform you about a new project we are working on this year. We are in the process of forming a walking trail on the Solomon Garden property. We have it registered as "The Old Acadian Trail along the Petitcodiac River" or in French "*L'ancien Sentier sur le long de la riviere de la Petitcodiac.*" I will keep you informed of any developments and hopefully when the world returns to normal you will be able to walk it.

The Petitcodiac is the river that runs through Moncton, New Brunswick.

L'Academie Cadienne Now on TV

L'Academie Cadienne is a live television show airing on Lafayette, Louisiana's Acadiana Open Channel (AOC). The show is designed to promote the understanding and speaking of the French language. The show airs the first and third Monday of each month from 7-8 pm and can be viewed on Cox Cable - Channel 15; LUS Fiber - Channel 3; and can also be live-streamed at aocinc.org/watch (select Channel 1).

The show's format is "open mic" so viewers are encouraged to call in with questions and comments during the show at 337-366-8951. Although French is preferred the show will

entertain questions or comments in English and translate those to French as best they can.

Recent topics have included the history of small communities in Vermilion Parish such as Cossinade, LeRoy and Maurice, as well as gardening terms, vegetable names, and general news of the week. The current host is Robert Richard, a native of Kaplan currently residing in Scott, La.

Suggestions for show topics, French words that need to be explained, or English terms we wonder how to pronounce in French are all welcome. Comments can be called in or emailed to academiecadienne@gmail.com.

Viewers are encouraged to join the show's Facebook group at [L'Academie Cadienne](https://www.facebook.com/LAcademieCadienne) to be informed of show topics and other items of interest.

Bergeron's Familiar Voice Goes Silent on KRVS

Pete Bergeron is saying "Au revoir" to "Bonjour Louisiane" on Monday, ending a 41-year run as host of that Cajun French radio program on public radio station KRVS. This article in *The Advocate* tells the whole story:

https://www.theadvocate.com/acadiana/news/education/article_d945100e-8e6a-11eb-9b76-ffa7278f8888.html

Bergeron was inducted as one of our first Living Legends on July 28, 2001. You can read more about why we chose him on our website at:

acadianmuseum.com/legend.php?viewID=36

Coast Guard Ship Renamed

Dr. Daniel N. Paul has been a friend for 40 years and supported me when I started my petition. Dr. Paul is a Mi'kmaq elder, author, columnist, and human rights activist who is perhaps best known as the author of the book *We Were Not the Savages*, which was an important contributor to the North American Indian movement.

Though in his 80s, he is still very active in trying to get names of British criminals removed from places because they committed genocide on both Mi'kmaq and Acadians. We got this recent update from him:

I'm happy to announce that I've been informed that the [Canadian] Coast Guard Ship Cornwallis has been officially renamed Kopit/Hopson 1752. Great news to celebrate on Easter!

If you know a little about Acadian history, you should recognize the names.

Indigenous Reflection on Bison in Louisiana

An article recently published by Jeffery U. Darensbourg and Carmen Price appeared in the compilation *Southern Cultures* by University of North Carolina Press. The article recounts a bison hunt which took place in 1780 around Vermilion Parish and going westward toward Lake Charles.

According to an abstract published with the article:

The Ishak, an Indigenous Nation of Louisiana and Texas, traditionally hunted bison, called the "grass things" in our traditional language. The French memoirist Louis de Milford recounts a visit with an Ishak party on a bison hunt on the prairies of southwest Louisiana in the late 1700s.

A century later, an Ishak woman giving a narrative of traditional Ishak foodways to anthropologist Samuel Gatschet fails to mention bison at all. By that time, wild bison were extinct in Louisiana. In this essay, the loss of bison culture for the Ishak and an ancestral longing for its return are explored by a contemporary member of the tribe.

The article can be purchased by going to:

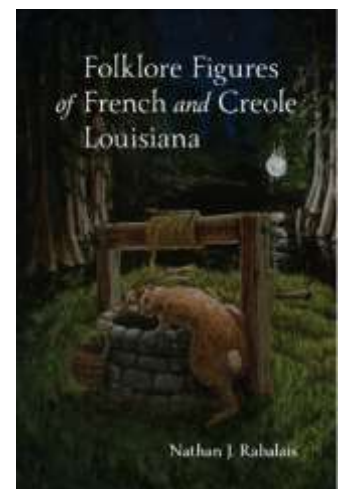
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/786951>

Darensbourg also sent us a link to the [first film ever made in the Ishakkoy tribal language](#).

Book on French and Creole Folklore Figures

LSU Press has this to say about Nathan Rabalais new book: *Folklore Figures of French and Creole Louisiana*:

Nathan Rabalais examines the impact of Louisiana's remarkably diverse cultural and ethnic groups on folklore characters and motifs during the 18th and 19th centuries.



Establishing connections between Louisiana and France, West Africa, Acadia, and the Antilles, Rabalais explores how folk characters, motifs, and morals adapted to their new contexts in Louisiana. By viewing folklore in the light of its immigration history, he demonstrates how folktales can serve as indicators of sociocultural adaptation as well as contact among cultural communities. In particular, he examines the ways in which collective traumas experienced by Louisiana's major ethnic groups—slavery, the

Grand Dérangement, linguistic discrimination—resulted in fundamental changes in these folktales in relation to their European and African counterparts.

Rabalais' book is available from [LSU Press](https://www.lsu.edu/press) and other booksellers or by contacting Nathan directly (nathan.rabalais@louisiana.edu)

Ancient Dike Structure Found in Acadie



Acadian historian, Living Legend and [tour operator](#) Richard Laurin (shown above), shared with us his discovery of a probable pre-deportation structure east of Canning, NS, and consisting of a huge cross dike along the ancient *Rivière-des-Vieux-Habitants* (today's Habitant River) where the Saulniers, Comeaus and Trahans lived. Today, the fragile structure that remains runs along the mouth and the entire south side of the Habitant River shoreline. Says Laurin: "We firmly believe it predates the English presence in the area."

Centuries later, what remains of the construction site is longer than a football field and is at least 100 feet wide. Amazingly, it was all done by hand and managed to block two cycles per day

of the highest tides in the world. By accomplishing the irrigation and desalination of soils submerged there for more than 8,000 years, this masterful *aboiteaux* dam gave the inhabitants – who lived there between 1680 and 1755 – much fertile farmland which later became known as the "bread basket of old Acadie."

To all those who embrace the history of this valiant, triumphant people and to those who have thought about the harmony that must have reigned among Acadians living in little villages of thatched cottages before the Deportation came, this represents a major legacy to the golden age of the first Acadie.

You can send questions or comments to Laurin's support group via email (info@novacadie.ca) or by using the website www.novacadie.ca

Related links include a podcast [Rattrapage du samedi 24 avril 2021 \(radio-canada.ca\)](#) and a video: <https://youtu.be/vsSgDQIXG88>

Acadiana Memories

It's time once again for Acadiana Memories! Please mark your calendar for Monday, May 10th 2021, for another exciting session of Acadiana Memories. It is an interactive history program held on the second Monday of each month. We reminisce about people, places, and events of long ago. The program is from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the conference room at Hospice of Acadiana, 2600 Johnston Street, Lafayette 70503. Everyone is invited.

Evangeline Exhibit Opens May 15



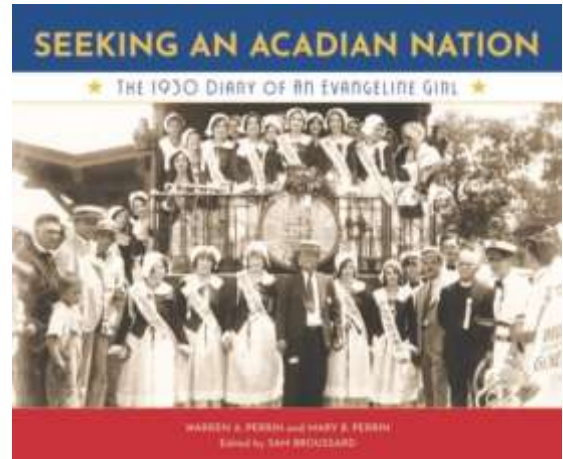
A very interesting exhibit on Evangeline will open on May 15 at the West Baton Rouge Museum Port Allen, La. Titled “Evangeline: Evolution of an Icon,” the exhibit

will involve a painting from our collection titled *Evangeline—Milking Time* as well as the musical score from the 1928 film *Evangeline* that was filmed in St. Martinville.

The historical painting, pictured above in its original beautiful ornate frame, was painted in 1870 by Scottish artist Edwin Douglas as part of his Shepherding Series which was first displayed in 1877 at the Royal Academy in London and again that year at the Imperial Jubilee Exhibition in Liverpool. In 1907, the image became an icon in Cajun culture when it was used in the book *Acadian Reminiscences* by Judge Felix Voorhies of St. Martinville. Then, in 1974, after Dr. Joe Kochansky acquired the work from Louisiana artist George Rodrigue, the large oil on canvas was again exhibited, this time at the University Art Center in Lafayette.

According to the West Baton Rouge Museum press release, the exhibit will provide “a glimpse into Evangeline’s evolving status from her inception through today, as a legend and heroine, to a brand image and celebrity, and ultimately into a cultural icon.”

Read Our Books on Evangeline and Other Topics



Speaking of Evangeline, our latest book traces the movement toward Acadian reunification starting in the 1800s and continuing to the 1930s with visits of the “Evangeline Girls” to Canada organized by Louisiana State Senator Dudley J. LeBlanc, which then led to ongoing cultural exchanges between the Acadians of Canada and the Cajuns of Louisiana. This attractive coffee table book includes a pictorial diary of the 1930 visit compiled in scrapbook form by one of the Evangeline girls named Corinne Broussard. [Click here](#) to read about this fascinating story or go to https://www.acadianmuseum.com/Seeking_Nation.html

And Even More Books and Souvenirs...

This is just one of several books and souvenirs that we have for sale in our [museum store](#). Other titles include:

- [Acadie Then and Now: A People's History](#) filled with articles by Cajun and Acadian authors from around the world and

curated by Warren Perrin, Mary Perrin,
and Acadian film director Phil Comeau

- [Acadian Redemption - From Beausoleil Broussard to the Queen's Royal Proclamation](#) by Warren Perrin
- *A Century of Acadian Culture - The Development of a Cajun Community - Erath (1899-1999)* by General Curney Dronet
- *Vermilion Parish (a historical picture book)*
- *Iberia Parish (a historical picture book)*
- *St. Landry Parish (a historical picture book)*

[Visit our museum store on the web](#) to read more about these fascinating books and to order more books, posters and souvenirs related to our Cajun culture.

Coming Soon: Acadian Museum TV!



If you value Acadian/Cajun culture and heritage and want to help preserve it, there is no better way than to help with our latest project! The Acadian Museum has a collection of 250 VHS video tapes of our local heroes, dating back half a century to our founding. [Your donations](#) can help make it happen.

Here is just one of the videos that we are queuing up for your enjoyment: D.L. Menard playing outdoors at Lake Peigneur with the Rees Family Band.

<https://youtu.be/9EHP2TV8Y4A>

Once we have a critical mass of these videos ready for viewing, we will launch the Acadian Museum TV Channel. [Click here](#) to help with your donations. In a few more months, we hope to launch the channel.