

LES NOUVELLES DE LA FAMILLE DOUCET

NEWSLETTER OF LES DOUCET DU MONDE

DECEMBER 2012

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message from the president By Dean Doucet

It's membership renewal

Dear Cousins,

The previous newsletters have usually gone out in November and it has been an occasion to express our feelings about the many things that we have to be thankful for, our families, friends, etc.

This letter will go out just after Christmas. So I would like to reflect upon my feelings about Christmas. The greatest thing that we have to be thankful for is the birth of the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Without this, the greatest of earthly events, all other religious events would not exist, such as Easter. Religions would not be. Value systems, almost all built on the Judeo-Christian religions would not exist. Life as we know it wouldn't exist.

The great patriarchs of the Old Testament looked forward to the birth of the Christ, the Messiah. Since His birth all wise men and women have continued to look to Him. All of our basic concepts of right and wrong, all concepts of how to live, all concepts of how to deal with others, whether family, friends or business dealings are founded in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Because of the simple birth of the Babe of Bethlehem we have the great teachings of the Savior of the world. We have the perfect example that He showed us as to how to live to enjoy the greatest of happiness. Because of a simple birth in a manger we have the great Atonement wherein we can be cleansed of sin if we will repent. From that simple birth we have the great rebirth of the Resurrection, where we will become immortal individuals. The Resurrection combined with the Atonement makes it possible for us to live for eternity with God.

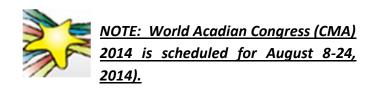
In addition to these great gifts to mankind, I want to mention one additional gift that Jesus Christ has given to us. In teaching the Apostles during His mortal ministry, Jesus indicated to Peter, as the chief Apostle and as representative of each of the Apostles, that with the priesthood power given to the Apostles that whatever they "bind on earth" would be "bound in Heaven." This is so important because husbands and wives can be "bound on earth" and their relationship continue into Heaven, with their children bound to them.

Through great love men and women create families on earth that can continue as family in Heaven. What a great joy to know that even after death we will continue to be one very large eternal family. All because of a simple birth in a manger in Bethlehem.

This is Christmas to me. You can't take religion out of the family of man and you can't take the family out of religion. The greatest gift of God to man was the birth of His Son into the world. The greatest gift of His Son is the ability to live with God forever as His eternal family.



Merry Christmas my loved extended family, Dean



DOUCET REUNION FOR CMA 2014 By: Carol Doucet

According to the Congrès Mondial Acadien 2014 web site, the Doucet family reunion is scheduled to be held in Grand Isle, Maine, which is located between Van Buren and Madawaska on Highway 1.

We hope to see updates soon about our family reunion on the CMA web site: www.cma.2014.org.

COMMENTS ABOUT CMA REUNIONS!

Every one of us remembers certain activities which we enjoyed at family reunions. We remember fondly speaking with old friends and making new friends.

Bruce Caissie, a very active LDDM member, has suggested that we pool our comments about reunions which we attended and share them with the Doucet Family Reunion organizing committee.

I'd be happy to compile your comments about fond memories and suggestions which you believe would lead to a great Doucet family reunion in Grand Isle, Maine in 2014. Send your comments and suggestions to me at: carold@doucetfamily.org.



COLLAGE PAR JEANNINE CAISSIE

Ce collage a gagné le premier prix au "Blue Hill Labor Day Fair" à Blue Hill, Maine. Félicitations, Jeannine!

COLLAGE BY JEANNINE CAISSIE

Jeannine's collage placed first at the Blue Hill Labor Day Fair in Blue Hill, Maine. Congratulations, Jeannine!

JULIANA L'HEUREUX: 'SCATTERED AND NEAR FORGOTTEN' TELLS ACADIANS STORY

(www.pressherald.com, September 20, 2012) Submitted by: Norman Doucette, Jr.

French-Acadians scattered throughout the world are honored by Bangor songwriter Joe Pickering, in a ballad he wrote in tribute to their bravery.

"Scattered and Near Forgotten" memorializes the 1755 Acadian expulsion from Nova Scotia, during a brutal act of war by the Colonial British, in an episode called, by the French, "Le Grand Derangement". It was during "The Great Upheaval", when the British accomplished their conquest of Acadia (Nova Scotia) in their successful efforts, during the French and Indian Wars, to control Canada.

Maine poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow memorialized the historic expulsion in his epic, "Evangeline." It became an internationally popular poem published in 1847, portraying the emotional turmoil suffered by Acadians when their families were ripped apart and their property was confiscated by the British.

"Scattered and Near Forgotten" is about the courage of the French-Acadians, who carried on, despite British tyranny, explained in the lyrics

"Let's keep alive their memories of Old Grand Pre,

Where they kept to hearth, farms, faith and history,

Forced from their homes, they did not give ground,

They would not bow down before the British Crown"

Musical background for the song's lyrics includes French-Acadian rhythm, performed by snare drum, the accordion, fiddle, bodhran, guitar and triangle.

"Scattered and Near Forgotten" is sung by Danny Mack, a Country Music Association of America award winning singer. Mack previously won an award for performing another song Pickering wrote titled, "The Ballad of Paul Bunyan."

"Scattered and Near Forgotten" could be a perfect anthem for the Acadian Congress scheduled in August, 2014, during the international celebration planned in Northern Maine with Quebec and New Brunswick, Canada. The Congress helps plan the reunions of dozens of Acadian families during three weeks of cultural programs. The Congress and cultural activities are expected to attract 50,000 people to Northern Maine and the Canadian Provinces.

Pickering wrote the ballad as a tribute to the French-Acadians, who did not bow to British tyranny, in spite of the toll the brutality took on them and their families.

Pickering says all people need to be aware of Le Grand Derangement.



"I wrote the song to educate the millions of people who do not speak or read French and are unaware of the historic expulsion the Acadians," he says.

"I know the Acadian expulsion was one of North America's greatest tragedies. But, for those brave Acadian who carried on, despite the disbursement, the tragedy has shown the bravery of the survivors who carried on."

Moreover, "Scattered and Near Forgotten" is written in English, precisely because it tells the tale of the Acadians plight, the generations of emotional pain, and their power to overcome, to all who don't speak French," he says.

He wrote the song in English to increase the impact of the ballad beyond the French speaking people. Pickering began his love for the French and Franco-Americans after serving in the U.S. Air Force in the Alsace Lorraine region of France in 1961-61.

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His wife's Franco-American heritage is inherited from her father's side of the family. Her name is Theresa Duclos Pickering, with the family's roots being in Montreal and Vermont.

"Scattered and Near Forgotten" was written after Pickering learned about the Acadian expulsion by following Les Franco-Americans. "The more I read, the more I wanted to create a tribute to this tragic history and recognize the bravery of the Acadian people," he says.

Pickering has written scores of other songs, most of them about baseball sports heroes and, of course, Paul Bunyan.

'A LIVING, BREATHING DISH'
Gumbo has experienced cultural influences, variations, evolution
By: Megan Wyatt (The Daily Advertiser,
Lafayette, LA—September 26, 2012)

It's only just 8 a.m. Tuesday morning and Ronnie Brown, affectionately known as The Gumbo Lady at Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park, is cutting up chicken thighs for La Cuisine de Maman's daily gumbo.

Although most people have only just eaten breakfast, the kitchen in Vermilionville is filling with the smoky-sweet smells much of Acadiana associates with a chilly Louisiana day.

"I know it's good when I see my bowls come back and they're empty, and I go back and talk to my customers and they say it's the best gumbo they've ever had," Brown said.

Gumbo's beginnings Arguably Louisiana's most famous dish, gumbo's origins can be traced back to the late 1700s in south Louisiana.

"We have accounts, written accounts, in the early 1800s right around the turn of the century in various parts of Louisiana," said John Laudun, a folklorist and associate English professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. "The word gumbo, people call it a melting pot of Louisiana. The word itself has interesting origins. We know that the African word for okra ('gombo') sounds sort of like gumbo."

The earliest gumbos did not start with the famed phrase "first you make a roux" that many modern-day area cooks use. Instead, either the

African okra—brought to the area by slaves—or the Native American Choctaw file powder—derived from sassafras leaves—were used to thicken gumbo.

The most primitive gumbos were not served over rice either. They were typically served over cornmeal mush, according to Laudun.

The addition of tomatoes to gumbo—what is now considered a Creole gumbo ingredient—is something Laudun said he believes came from Haitian refugees.

Everything from seafood (crab, shrimp, crawfish, oysters) to poultry (chicken, duck, quail) to pork (tasso, andouille) has been and continues to be used in gumbos, often in combination. Although modern-day gumbos are often thought of as a fall or winter meal, the oldest gumbos were served yearround with whatever seasonal ingredients were available.

Gumbo z'herbes, an old variation of gumbo mainly served during the Catholic season of Lent, typically had a variety of greens, such as collard, mustard, turnip, cabbage, spinach, lettuce and chard. Although rarely seen in restaurants, the dish is still made occasionally in homes.

Today, gumbo varies from one parish to the next in Louisiana. But the oldest versions of gumbo showed even greater variations as people experimented with different local ingredients.

"There's a lot of variation when people are first exploring an idea," Laudun said.

Gumbo by area Although Louisiana gumbos have been influenced by Cajun, Creole, Choctaw and African ingredients and cooking methods, modern-day gumbos tend to be classified by where in Louisiana they are prepared, not the ethnicity of the cook.

"The fact of the matter is if you have a Cajun and a Creole living in the same area, their gumbo is going to be pretty much the same," Laudun said.

The most noticeable difference in gumbos by region is the color, according to Laudun. In the southernmost parishes of Acadiana, roux tends to be lighter, close to the color of peanut butter. The northern parishes in Acadiana tend to have darker, coffee-colored roux.

The method of cooking a gumbo varies by region, too. (Continued on page 5)

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"Importantly, where does the roux process begin?" asked Laudun. "Down on the Teche, they cook their roux in the pot, then they'll have their seasoning vegetables, and that stops the roux from cooking further. Up around Lawtell, people are usually going to brown their chicken and meat first. They've made their roux earlier."

It is no coincidence that jarred roux sold at area grocery stores comes from the northern parts of Acadiana. It can all be traced back to the tradition of making the roux separately, Laudun said.

Almost all gumbos begin with the browning of ingredients, whether it's the vegetables, meat or roux that is browned.

"You've got a pretty amazing amount of flavor in very bite," Laudun said. "An onion is not allowed to be just an onion. The browning is an integral part of it."

The "holy trinity" of vegetables used in gumbos often consists of chopped onion, celery and bell pepper, but Laudun said that many areas use different ingredients in their vegetable trinities.

"In parts of southwest Louisiana, you might just have onions," said Laudun. "Along the Bayou Teche, you have onions, garlic, bell peppers and celery all chopped up."

While cooking her pot of gumbo Tuesday, Brown used chopped bell peppers, onion, celery, green onions and parsley as part of what she called "seasoning."

It's all about the place," Laudun said. "There is this idea of the 'holy trinity,' but what that is changes. If you were to ask about the 'holy trinity' or what older people call 'seasoning'—or seasoned vegetables—you could hear, 'file, garlic and onion."

Ultimately, Laudun says it right: "There are as many types of gumbo as there are people in south Louisiana."

Gumbo as we know it Almost every gumbo eater has preferences on how a gumbo is made, whether he or she is arguing over filé or okra, meat or seafood or a light or dark roux.

To Café Vermilionville's executive chef Michael Collins, who is originally from Ohio, the biggest learning curve to Cajun cooking was learning how to properly make a roux.

"Making a chocolate flour and oil roux was an interesting learning curve," Collins said. "I enjoy the food culture. To me it's—the food here is really homey. It's good, stick-to-your-bones, go-to-work-in-the-fields food."

Café Vermilionville offers two gumbos on its menu: a smoked, pecan-wood turkey and andouille gumbo and a gulf crab, shrimp and oyster gumbo. Both begin with a roux, followed by the trinity of vegetables.

At Vermilionville's Cuisine de Maman, however, Brown's method of making gumbo begins with a pot of water, followed by sausage and chopped vegetables. Brown then adds jarred roux, chicken base, filé, seasoning and kitchen bouquet to the boiling water before adding pieces of raw chick thighs to cook.

"If I make the roux over here, it'll take a lot longer, would take until 11 o'clock," said Brown, who begins making gumbo before 8 a.m. each morning.

The fresh vegetables matter more than a fresh roux, Brown said.

Those looking to make a roux instead of starting from a jar can take Collins' suggestion to avoid burning.

"Put it in the oven," Collins said. "That's the most even way to heat the pot because it heats from all the way around, so there's not the risk of burning it."

Mandy Migues, resident Cajun and French teacher at Lafayette High School, has been experimenting with a gluten-free gumbo recipe after recently being diagnosed with gluten sensitivity.

Using white rice flour instead of regular flower to make a roux takes longer to get the desired color, Migues said.

"The results are very similar to a regular roux. It just takes patience," aid Migues.

Migues, who grew up in southern Vermilion Parish, likes shrimp and egg gumbo best but considers chicken and okra a close second. She recommends patience and finding a great brand of sausage when making a gumbo.

To her, making the gumbo, eating the gumbo and talking about the gumbo are as important to the area as the actual dish itself.

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"I think gumbo is synonymous with Louisiana," said Migues. "It's a dish everyone eats and enjoys. We enjoy talking about how we make gumbo and what things we do differently."

And that, perhaps, is the beauty of gumbo. No matter how it is made or what gets put into it, gumbo is a dish that brings peole and cultures together in Louisiana.

"The dish is a living, breathing dish," said Laudun. "And as long as it serves a purpose, it will continue to serve its communities in different ways, in its many varieties."

Chicken and Sausage Gumbo

1 lb. smoked sausage1 gallon water, divided1/2 cup vegetable oil1/2 cup white flour1 1/2 cups chopped onions

1/2 cup chopped shallots 1/2 chicken, seasoned and cut in pieces 1 tsp. parsley flakes 1 dozen oysters, optional 1 to 2 tsp. gumbo filé

Boil sausage in 1/2 gallon water for 20 minutes. Cut in slices. Save water. Make roux with oil and flour until a dark caramel color. Add onions, smother for 5 minutes. Add shallots and stir in chicken pieces. Cover; smother on medium heat until oil separates from flour. If sticking, lower heat and stir often. Try not to add any water now. Smother for 15 to 20 minutes. Add other 1/2 gallon of water, sausage and water which you boiled. Bring to a slow boil for one hour. Add parsley and oysters. Boil 15 minutes. Season to taste. Add gumbo filé if desired. Serve over steamed white rice. Serves 6 to 8.

Trying to keep French alive in the land of Cajuns

Sean Cockerham

McClatchy Newspapers

the star.com

MAMOU, LA.—It's 9:30 a.m. and the drinking and dancing already are raging at Fred's Lounge, a *fais do-do* of Cajun French music, waltzes and two-steps, with cans of Miller Lite the breakfast of choice in this joint down a winding road past rice fields and crawfish ponds.



Patrons dance to Cajun music at Fred's Lounge in Mamou, La., every Saturday. The dance party, known as a fais do-do, is broadcast in French and is credited with helping to keep French in rural Louisiana.

The Saturday morning dance party is broadcast live from the windowless, 66-year-old bar throughout the south Louisiana prairie on 1050 AM out of nearby Ville Platte. The music has been credited with helping to sustain the Cajun French culture since just after World War II.

But Fred's 81-year-old manager, Sue Vasseur, known as Tante Sue de Mamou, worries about the survival of the Louisiana French culture. The current generation, she said, isn't picking up the French language, which is part of the soul of the Acadian people who settled in Louisiana in the mid-1700s, when they were expelled from the Canadian Maritimes after refusing to swear their allegiance to the British crown.

"I'm hoping it's going to continue. They are teaching French in our schools here now in Mamou and Evangeline Parish. So I think possibly some of it will rub off on our grandchildren, our greatgrandchildren," said Vasseur, wearing a pistol holster of cinnamon schnapps on her hip as dancers whirled to a rollicking 10-button accordion and a singer belting out a love song in French.

There's a major effort in Louisiana to reverse the trend and restore the French language. It's part of a resurgence in cultural pride, and there are signs that the decline in French speakers has slowed. Among the last hopes is the nation's largest French immersion program, in which every subject except English is being taught in French to kindergarteners through eighth-graders. Just under 4,000 students in nine parishes are in the program, typically with teachers imported from France, Belgium, Quebec and francophone African nations.

Bureaucrats and schoolteachers long sought to stamp out Louisiana French in the name of Ameri-

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canization. They almost succeeded. Cajuns and others who spoke the language were told it was shameful and a sign of ignorance. Students were punished in school, even beaten, for speaking it after the state board of education decided in 1915 to suppress French, a move that was strengthened six years later when the Louisiana Constitution forbade the use of any language other than English in the public school system.

There was little incentive to pass the language through the generations. It was estimated that there were about a million French speakers in Louisiana in 1968. Today the number is pegged at 150,000 to 200,000. Those who speak French as their first language tend to be older than 70, and their children often didn't pick it up.

Cajun and zydeco music, sung in French, has devoted fans worldwide. The cuisine is celebrated. People are fascinated by the cultures that sprang from the Acadian and French settlers who arrived in Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries. A recent crop of Louisiana-based reality TV shows like *Swamp People*, while giving a less-than-accurate picture of life in south Louisiana, provide a glimpse into the heritage, so different from that found anywhere else in the nation.

Advocates of sustaining French in Louisiana say the unique food, music, heritage and way of life all are tied to the language. Cajun musician Zachary Richard's song "Reveille" has stood as a rallying cry.

"Reveille! Reveille!
Hommes acadiens
Pour sauver l'heritage."
("Awaken! Awaken! Acadian men to save
our heritage.")

But Louisiana French advocates are fighting an uphill battle. There are economics at play, the fact that Louisiana is a poor state that doesn't have a lot of jobs in which speaking French is an asset. There also are politics. Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal used his veto power last month to slash 40 per cent of the budget of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana. That state agency is charged with, among other things, helping to recruit immersion teachers from French-speaking countries.

The agency is left with a budget of \$150,000 and two employees, a situation that director Joseph Dunn suggested in a recent interview might allow it just to "keep the lights on and do the absolute bare minimum."

Language revolution comes slowly in a place such as Butte La Rose, a town of 800 accessible by a narrow pontoon bridge, where locals for generations have harvested crawfish and catfish from the Atchafalaya River and the surrounding swamp. It's a beautiful, muddy world of cypress trees and Spanish moss, of bullfrogs, alligators and snakes.

At Doucet's Grocery, the only retail outlet in town, Jack Doucet sat behind the counter shooting the breeze with his customers as he's done every day while running the place for 47 of his 83 years, closing only for Christmas and New Year's.

Gwen Duplechin stopped in for a leisurely chat, and reflected on the survival of Cajun French. "Our older people are dying off, our people that talk French are dying off," Duplechin said.

Duplechin said her granddaughter took French immersion in school and learned "the good French" (as opposed to the Cajun French dialect) from the teachers imported from Quebec and France. "But she doesn't speak it; you have to keep it up or it doesn't work," Duplechin said.

She's right about the need to give students reasons to speak French outside the classroom, said Dunn, the director of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana. He said the focus for too long had been just on the school immersion programs. It's an artificial approach that won't work without also showing young people that there are jobs in which speaking French could help them make a living.

Dunn said a good start would be tourism jobs. People from French-speaking countries come to Louisiana because it's marketed as a French cultural experience, he said, but they find no services in French when they arrive.

"French is important because the culture is carried in the French language. But we need to move that outside of the classroom setting, make it a social language, make it an economic language," Dunn said.

Efforts to sustain Louisiana French are particularly strong in Lafayette, a regional hub where old-timers and young professionals alike gather at cafes to speak French.

Lafayette is a city of festivals and music. Popular young French-speaking bands such as the Lost Bayou Ramblers and the Pine Leaf Boys can be seen playing around town and around the world. Members of the band Feufollet, who sing only in French, learned the language as part of the first French-language immersion program classes in Lafayette Parish schools, and they now tour the nation.

The popularity of the Lafayette program is growing and there are waiting lists to get in, said Nicole LeBlanc, who leads a parents' group called Les Amis de L'Immersion that provides support for the program.

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BIOGRAPHY OF GERMAIN DOUCET

by Carol Doucet

(available in either French or English)

or the

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The genealogy section of the Les Doucet du Monde web site (www.doucetfamily.org) now has over 50,000 entries, thanks to Dean Doucet who has been handling it since 1999.

Naturally, there are "gaps."

We are asking Doucet/Doucett "cousins" who went to the family reunion in August 2009 to send us your genealogy line if you have not yet done so.

If you did not have the pleasure of attending the reunion, to you, too, we say "Please share your genealogy information."

Whether it's three generations or thirteen, please send your line to:

Dean Doucet

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À LA RECHERCHE DE LA PARENTÉ

Le secteur de généalogie du site web de Les Doucet du Monde (www.doucetfamily.org) comprend plus de cinqante milles données, grâce à Dean Doucet qui s'en occupe depuis 1999.

Il va sans dire, il existe des "manques."

Nous prions les "cousins" Doucet/Doucett/Doucette qui ont assisté à la rencontre en août 2009 de nous faire parvenir votre lignée, si vous ne l'avez pas encore fait.

Et si vous n'avez pas eu le plaisir d'assister à la rencontre familiale, à vous aussi, nous disons "partagez votre généalogie."

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