



# Les Nouvelles de la Famille Doucet

NEWSLETTER OF LES DOUCET DU MONDE

OCTOBER 2002

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## Message from the INTERNATIONAL president

By Carol Doucet

At our LDDM board meeting in August, we approved an item that should help us to increase membership – gift memberships. We're also discussing the possibility of having T-shirts with our brand new LDDM logo on them.

George Doucette, our Acadian/Canadian Chapter President, has been staying in touch with the group in Nova Scotia that is organizing the Doucet/Doucette reunion during Coongrès Mondial Acadien in August 2004. Be sure to read his article for the latest information.

Hurricane Lili's recent visit caused quite extensive property damage here in south Louisiana. We hope that the damage to the homes and property of our fellow south Louisiana members was not too great.

### New! Gift Memberships!

During this year we have designed our own LDDM logo and a membership certificate.

The latest addition to the benefits that we are providing to you, our members, is the opportunity to give an LDDM membership as a gift.

Anyone joining, or renewing, as a full-paying member (\$15.00 US) can give gift memberships (at \$10.00 each US) and is allowed to give gift memberships to non-members or to former members each year. This has to be done at the time that the person sends in his/her own dues as a full-paying member. As many can be given as desired. A gift membership is given for one year only. Memberships for subsequent years would be at the regular membership rate.

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Deadlines for submitting material are: January 31 for February issue, May 31 for June issue and September 30 for October issue.



## WEB SITE

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## ACADIE/ACADIA

Submitted by George Doucette

(Excerpts from *The Halifax Herald Limited*, "Bon Village!," By Brian Medel, August 17, 2002)

Tintamarre!

A traditional celebration of life, coinciding with the annual feast day of (the) Acadians – Aug. 15 – when the Assumption is remembered with a special Mass. The Virgin Mary is the patron saint of Acadians.

But in the evening, beginning in the far-flung corners of the large Acadian municipality of Clare, folks gathered with their cars and trucks and motorcycles.



Ingrid Bulmer / Herald Photo  
The Acadian flag waves proudly in front of many homes and businesses in Meteghan.

At 6 p.m. residents began to make their way through the various villages by auto with horns blaring and Acadian flags snapping from open car windows or the backs of pickup trucks. Their destination was the Meteghan fire hall in the heart of Clare and a soirée of grand proportion.

They were destined for an evening of traditional Acadian music, singing and dancing favourites like the reel-à-huit, a type of square dance.

There was lots of traditional Acadian food like rappie pie and fricot. There were hotdogs, too, and tea and coffee.

"We have a good Acadian soirée with music and singing," Father Albenie says of the annual events.

He says it's important that people continue to celebrate the day each year.

"More and more so, people are enjoying their roots and enjoying that fact that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August . . . we get together and have fun (with) all these different costumes and all the flags."

Meteghan is in the ringe of Clare. More than 40 villages are in this district, set aside some 235 years ago for Acadians returning from exile.

...Meteghan was settled in 1785 by Prudent Robicheau. (Other families) settled in Meteghan at the same time. Some of them include Olivier Doucet, Etienne Thibodeau, Jean Trahan, Charles Doucet, Joseph Trahan and Charles Theriault. Forty-two young men were allotted grants of land. This concession of grants,...included the villages of Saulnierville, Comeauville, Meteghan and Saint Alphonse.son, Armand...other Acadians.

## ACADIANA

By Carol Doucet

On August 15, a procession with approximately 30 Acadian family name banners departed from City Hall in St. Martinville, LA. and made its way to St. Martin de Tours Catholic Church, the mother church of the Acadians of Louisiana. This was accompanied by a "tintamarre". Our "tintamarre" does not compare favorably with the one in Acadia, but we're relatively young at this.

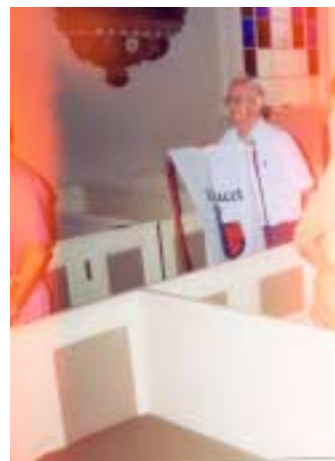
The procession of banners continued into the church. A Mass was celebrated in French by the Rev. Austin Leger. The Congrès Mondial Acadien Choir, which was formed in 1999, with members from several surrounding towns, sang beautifully "en français".

Other activities in St. Martinville included a Cajun Art Fest in a two-block area near the Evangeline Oak and a video titled "The Acadian Memorial: A Documentary", which tells who the Acadians were, how they came to Louisiana, and why a monument was created in their honor. The Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site showed the films "Evangeline" and "Against the Tide" throughout the day. ("Calling All Cajuns", Vol. 10, No. 4, of July 2002)

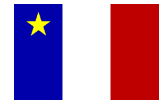
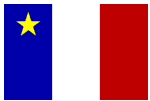
In Lafayette, at Vermilionville, a living history museum and village which brings to life the early days of the Acadian and Creole settlers from the mid-1700's to the late 1800's, a breakfast of "pain perdu" and an old-fashioned lunch were served. Supper was a Cajun meal of chicken fricasse, potato salad, and syrup cake.

Then followed a tribute to the late Cajun artist Floyd Sonnier which included the presentation of the "Lifetime Cultural Preservation Award" to Sonnier's family on his behalf. In return, the Sonnier family presented Vermilionville three of Sonnier's prints and one of his

quill pens, which will be on display as a standing exhibit in the Visitors' Center. A first look at Sonnier's book was available and the celebration culminated with dance and readings to commemorate the Acadians' history. (The "Times of Acadiana", August 14, 2002.



Carol Doucet enters the church carrying the Doucet name banner.



## VISIT WITH LESLEY DOUCET

By George Doucette,

I would like to give you a brief account of the visit that Michele Doucette and I had with Lesley on July 9<sup>th</sup>. I was unsure what to expect but we were made to feel quite at ease by her mother Susan and Norman, Susan's husband. We chatted for a few minutes and then Susan escorted Lesley into the room and my first impression was, "What a sweet and beautiful young lady". She has the biggest and brightest dark brown eyes, that when you first look into them you are awe struck at their beauty. Lesley sat on a big rocking chair and gave us both the once over and then that smile, oh let me tell you to see her smile is like looking at heaven smiling at us. Michele was very quick to make contact with Lesley and without a doubt we discovered we were friends for life; her little tap on our shoulders meant we were friends and that it was ok to spend time with her. We chatted with Lesley for a bit and Susan and Norman were telling us some of the complications that had arisen within the last month or two and how they deal with it all. Soon it was time for Lesley to eat, Norman had prepared her meal and medicine, which consisted of at least seven vials of anti-seizure medicine, and other drugs that help Lesley to cope with her disease. A large container with two cans of formula was also on the menu. Since Lesley can no longer eat her food, it is given to her through a



*Michele Doucette, International Board Member, and George Doucette, Acadian Chapter President, present Honorary Membership certificate to Lesley Anne Doucet.*

Tube and a "button" in her stomach. We watched as she was being fed and we asked her if she was getting full and once again that big smile came and a "thumbs up" was a sign that yes she understood and agreed with what was said. Her memory is very good. Her Mom related some stories to us and, being the little devil she is, she smiled and laughed when a story of Lesley getting lost at the mall was told to us. She thought it was pretty funny but at the time Susan and Norman didn't think so.

To make matters even more complicated, about three weeks earlier, Lesley had developed bronchitis; medication is helping a little but not very much. Susan told us that since her fall about a month or two earlier Lesley has really started to go down hill, her walking alone is almost to an end, her sleep is more laboured and she has encountered other problems.

On behalf of LDDM, I presented Lesley with the honorary certificate, and I also bought a frame for it so it would look better and she could put it up right away. She was happy to get this as well as her CD from one of Farmer's Daughters, and an angel pin which I bought for her. She smiled and gave us both another hug with her little pat on the back.

Susan thanked all who sent cards and letters and told us she was shocked to see complete strangers do this; I told her we were not strangers but we were family.

## EARTH ANGELS ARE MIGHTY SPIRITS

By Michele Doucette

May I set the stage as to this particular follow-up regarding my earlier article on Lesley Anne Doucet.

My niece, Jessica Lynn, was born on November 6, 1982 (34/35 weeks gestation) and lived for a mere 14 hours. She was born with Trisomy 13 (also referred to as Patau's Syndrome), a rare genetic condition.

I was attending Mount Saint Vincent University when she was born. The year before, I had enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program and was majoring in history (my all-time favorite subject, not surprisingly). I had since transferred my credits over to the Bachelor of Child Study program, but was unaware as to which area I would specialize in during my final year of study.

The family thought that the pregnancy was faring well. We were soon to find out otherwise.

Jessica had the most beautiful and full head of dark hair that I had ever encountered on a newborn. She had one nostril and there were extra digits re fingers and toes. As soon as I placed my small forefinger in her tiny palm, her fingers curled around mine. Tears filled my eyes then as they continue to do so now. For a brief, but incredible moment in time, we shared a special and loving relationship.

Spending time with her at the Grace Maternity Hospital situated in Halifax, was my first experience with an actual Earth Angel. Spending time with Jessica was an incredibly moving experience for me, for she was sent to me at a time when I needed her most. I knew that my calling would be to branch off onto the area of Special Education.

To date, I have spent 17 years in this field of study, working primarily with mentally challenged, physically challenged, visually challenged and speech/language challenged persons. I have also spent time working with students in the ademically challenged (slower learners, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity



Disorder, Learning Disabled) and behaviorally challenged realm.

These years have been fruitful ones for me. I have learned much from my students. As Roy Mills writes in The Soul's Remembrance: Earth is Not Our Home ..... "Because we are all connected, God can use an event in one person's life to bring about change in many lives. It is impossible for us to know just how many lives are eventually affected by a single experience" (page 119). It is clear that Jessica's birth was a key and most noteworthy event in my life.

My teaching experiences to date serve as a most important reminder about relationships that are shared and intertwined on a daily basis.

July 9, 2002 was another special and important date for me to behold, for 'twas the day that I met Lesley Anne Doucet. It was an honor to meet this most courageous young soul.

Susan and Norm possess such an incredible sense of humor, love and acceptance. I felt as if I had known the family forever. Given that my genealogical roots also hail from the same area of the province simply makes the connection that I feel that much stronger. I was at complete ease from the very moment that I crossed the threshold and entered into their home. Susan enveloped me in a warm and welcoming hug. After shared telephone calls and email messages, it felt so good to be able to hug her in return.

Lesley Anne is an incredible beauty! Those deep "rootbeer" brown eyes and dark, lustrous, sleek, thick black hair. The twinkle and intelligence in her eyes, evident for all to see when she laughed right along with us at something that was said and then gave us the thumbs-up sign.

Clearly this was my second experience with an Earth Angel. In the brief but monumental time that we shared, she was able to remind me of a most important lesson; namely, all is possible with acceptance and love.

I love you, dearest heart of my heart. You shall always remain a mighty spirit.

## DOUCET REUNION 2004

By George Doucette



I would like to give you a bit of what is going on here in Nova Scotia with regards to the Doucet/Doucette reunion in 2004. I met recently with the secretary of

the Nova Scotia Reunion committee and we discussed a few items which hopefully will be of interest.

- The Doucet/Doucette reunion will be held on August 2, 2004 (Civic holiday in Canada) in the District of Clare, with activities taking place at the College of Saint Anne's in Church Point.
- To date they have over 350 members. Only 10% are from outside of Nova Scotia

- Membership is \$10.00 for individuals or \$15.00 for a family (living under same roof) in Canadian funds.
- Members will receive 2 or 3 newsletters each year until August 2, 2004

### TENTATIVE PROGRAM

- Mass at St. Marie Church in Church Point (Tallest wooden church in North America) with opening ceremonies.
- Craft display
- Genealogy Corner
- Meet and Greet Sessions- Any and everyone is invited to come meet our cousins from near and far.
- Food Workshops on how to make Rapure or Rappie Pie, Fricot (soup), Beignet à la rapure or ringe-fragne (potato pancakes)
- Information Sessions
  - How to remove(shuck) scallops from shell
  - How lobsters are caught
- Jam Session with local artist
- Concert with local musical and dance artist
- Official closing ceremonies- followed by bonfires on the beach at dusk.

Food for the day will not be part of the reunion's responsibility. With new regulations in place, they would need special licenses and training in food preparation and handling, so food outlets will be the order of the day. There is a chance that something may be set up at the college.

Accommodations are not final yet but word has it that the college may be setting up rooms for visitors to the different reunions, and as soon as this is confirmed notice will be sent out.

This is just a basic overview of what will be happening on August 2, 2004. Many more activities can and will be added to the list.

I am planning on having an information session in Halifax, Nova Scotia soon, not only to help recruit people to join us in 2004, but to increase Les Doucet du Monde's membership as well. I have been given the name of a Doucet cousin who wants to meet with me and help organize this meeting. Please help to support this effort as we are in fact all cousins and I for one wish to try to make this a very successful reunion, one we all can be proud of. The Doucet 2004 reunion group is looking for your support; send them your membership dues now so they can use this money to help make the reunion a success. I'm sure that by showing support we can also come away with many new members for LDDM.

So start making plans now for 2004 and come visit Nova Scotia and see what we have to offer. Our people here are friendly and very willing to open their arms to welcome you here to help celebrate with other French families, a part of our culture that we need to keep alive.

If any of you have any more questions please don't hesitate to ask and I will do my best to give you the answers. I also have a membership form for the reunion if you need a copy I will e-mail one to you.



## GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

By Carol Doucet

On Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Louisiana Chapter had a genealogy workshop at the Opelousas Public Library in Opelousas, LA. Several of us dug into the books and were able to find quite a bit of information on the ancestors of one member that had evaded her in the past. Another member submitted information on her family to be posted on our genealogy website.

### Covered Dish Social

The Covered Dish Social is being planned for November or early December.  
Be watching for a postcard in the mail.

## LOUISIANA PURCHASE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

By Carol Doucet

The year 2003 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. This historical land acquisition more than doubled the territory of the United States taking in most of the area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains.

The anniversary will be observed in Louisiana with activities throughout year in various parts of the state.

- ❖ There will be a re-enactment of the signing of the Louisiana Purchase in December at the Cabildo in New Orleans. The presidents of the United States and France and the King of Spain will be invited to participate on behalf of their nations.
- ❖ Exhibits telling the story of the Louisiana Purchase in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport.
- ❖ Concerts, art exhibits from France, displays of historical artifacts, festivals and other cultural activities throughout the year.
- ❖ AS PART OF THE CELEBRATION CAFA (CONFEDERATION D'ASSOCIATIONS DE FAMILLE ACADIENNES) WILL HOST FAMILY REUNIONS ON JUNE 13-15 IN RAYNE, LOUISIANA. This is in the early planning stages so details are sparse, but we will pass them along as they become available.

## INTERESTING FACTS

Date: April 30, 1803. The U.S. formally took possession on December 20, 1803.

Price: 60 million French francs or about \$15 million.

Area: Nearly 900,000 square miles from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border.

States created: Thirteen states were created from the Louisiana Territory – Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Colorado and Montana. The area also included parts of Texas and New Mexico.

Source: *The Daily Advertiser*

## GRAND-PRÉ DEPORTATION CROSS PROJECT

Submitted by Carol Doucet

(Excerpts from "Calling All Cajuns!", Vol. 10, No. 4, July 2002 published by Acadian Memorial Foundation, St. Martinville, LA)

The Acadian Memorial has been chosen as one of the sites for a replica of the Grand-Pré Deportation Cross. Donna Doucet and Claude DeGrace, representing the Grand-Pré Historic Site of Canada, recently visited the Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville. They announced that as part of the Acadian Odyssey International Commemorative Project, a series of commemorative monuments will be designed and



unveiled in Atlantic Canada, the United States, France, England, the Caribbean and Quebec. Some unveilings will be in 2004 to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Acadie, and others in 2005, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grand Dérangement or exile from Acadie. St. Martinville has been chosen as the site in Louisiana to

install a replica of the Deportation Cross because the city already features: the Acadian Memorial, which honors the Acadian pioneers of Louisiana; a statue of Evangeline; and the famous Evangeline Oak Tree.

THERE ARE ONLY **21 MONTHS** LEFT UNTIL THE  
DOUCET/DOUCETTE REUNION ON AUGUST 7, 2004

# THE HISTORY OF ACADIA

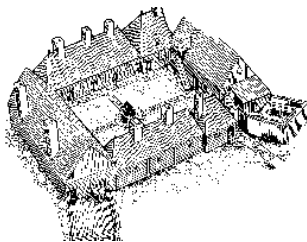
Submitted by Jackie Auclair

The name Acadia originally applied to the colonies of New France, to an area that included southeastern Quebec, eastern Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Some say the name came from the Greek "Arcadia" meaning "rural contentment." It was thought to be named by Verazanno who sailed near the maritimes in 1524. The name "Acadian" was the name given to the early French settlers who migrated from France to Acadia. Note that the name "Acadian" was transformed into "Cajun" in Louisiana. The English pronunciation of "Acadien" explains its spelling (Acadien -> Acadjunn -> Cajun).

These early settlers came to Acadia because in 1604 there was a war going on in Europe between France and Great Britain. Many were tired of fighting the war and anxious to see the new world. So Sieur de Monts & Samuel de Champlain both set sail in April and arrived in the new world in August. They landed on St.Croix Island in the Bay of Fundy. There they cut down all the trees to build houses. They only had the food that they had brought with them on the trip. They suffered from scurvy and malnutrition, half the men died!

June of 1605 a ship came to the Island and the survivors were loaded aboard and brought to the site of Port Royal. Poutrincourt had chosen the site, built the Habitation and they had been greeted by the Native Indians who had become friends. The Natives taught them to survive using the land; they also shared their food, helped with the work, and spent time together learning and teaching in turn!

The colonization of Acadia starts with the founding of Port Royal in 1605. Many new French settlers arrived there, they worked hard, tilling the soil and erecting dikes which prevented high tides from soaking and ruining the main land. The dikes also led run-off from the fields back to the ocean. This special system was refined over long periods of time and called "Aboiteaux". They built houses, planted gardens, and upgraded the conditions of the Habitation. Marc Lescarbot wrote a play called "Le Theatre de Neptune"(Neptune Theatre) which established a theatre and began the Ordre de Bon Temps, which became the first social club in North America in 1606. Within a matter of years, the population there grew significantly. With patience and devoted time, Port Royal became a prosperous agricultural district.



Throughout the 1600s Acadia grew in communities and population, it passed back and forth between England and France several times. During one of its English periods in the 1620s, James I, a Scottish King, granted the land to a poet and fellow Scot, William Alexander, who named it New Scotland or Nova Scotia.

The women played a great part in the lives of the new Acadian settlers. They could spin and weave wool, cook, sew and do light work in the fields. In those days wealth was measured by workload, so most people had large families knowing that all the children would do their own share of the work. There were no orphanages in those days either; a member of the child's family took them in to raise as one of their own. They would often gather at someone's house and enjoyed singing, dancing and exchanging jokes while they worked, and were always ready to lend each other a helping hand. They were very pious and they, along with their husbands, believed in peace, tranquillity...and equality. Children were taught their schooling at home, or the oldest person in the village would teach them. A brave, strong woman was usually picked to become a midwife/doctor or in French they were know as a "Sage Femme".

Except for some short periods of British occupation, Acadia remained French up to 1713. Up to 1713, Acadia was made up of the present Atlantic provinces of Canada (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island then known as Ile St-Jean and some parts of Newfoundland. Poor Acadia - Britain and France constantly arguing over it and Acadia with no interest in either of them. In 1713 the Treaty of Paris is signed, a part of Acadia is definitely ceded to Britain, that is Nova Scotia with the exception of Cape Breton where was situated the fortress of Louisbourg. What corresponds to New Brunswick is claimed by both France and England, but remained under French control until 1755.

The Acadians who refused to move to Cape Breton were given one year to decide whether to go or to stay and to swear fealty to Britain. They refused both but promised to stay neutral. In 1754 the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia was sure that the Acadians would side with Louisbourg so they were forced to Halifax to swear fealty to Britain where once again the Acadians refused.

In 1755 the Expulsion or the Grand Derangement began, the aftermath made immortal by Longfellow's poem "Evangeline". British soldiers separated families and put them on ships. Approximately 6,000 people in all were deported to areas such as : New England, Louisiana, France and England, to name a few. Some drowned at sea in shipwrecks.

In 1762 there was peace in Nova Scotia; some Acadians walked across Maine and New Brunswick to Grand Pre where they were given land in St. Mary's Bay at Majors Point (in what's now known as Clare) Most were farmers but the land wasn't farming land so as resourceful as they were they turned to the sea and became fishermen. Many Acadians came back to Acadia and many are still here even now!

(Source: Web site of Nicole LeBlanc, [www.http://nicki.virtualave.net/acadia/acadia.htm](http://nicki.virtualave.net/acadia/acadia.htm))

# SOME CUSTOMS OF THE FRENCH CANADIAN SETTLERS IN MORRISON COUNTY MINNESOTA- MID TO LATE 1800'S AND INTO THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

By Jim Gaboury ©2002

In my previous article I had mentioned I would shortly write about a few of the customs of the French-Canadians of Morrison County Minnesota for this newsletter, and this is my attempt to do so. The customs I will cover include births, marriages, deaths, and a few of the holiday customs. Some of these will be brief descriptions and others will be lengthier.

Regarding the birth of a child, it was expected that the pregnant daughter's mother would stay at the new mother's house for about a week once the new baby was born. During the 1870's and beyond when doctors were available, family members often went into town to pick up the doctor. If there were no doctors nearby, they would bring in a midwife; many times she would be part "Indian", to bring the new baby into the world. In this case the grandmother would assist the midwife. After the child was born, the siblings of this new-born would ask their parents where the new baby came from, and many times the reply would be, "The Indians had left it." As I write this, I now remember that several years ago, my late father's only living sibling, my Aunt Addy, telling me she remembered being told, when her baby brother Dewey was born, that "the Indians had left him." That would have been in 1912.

As far as weddings are concerned, before the 1900's many brides would wear a ribbon or something similar in their hair. I have a copy of the wedding picture of my Doucette great grandmother with such a ribbon in her hair. It was a wide ribbon, maybe two inches in width, and was placed probably half way down the back of her head. She didn't wear a veil; those also weren't used until maybe 1900 or so, at least in the Little Falls area. Being a black and white photo, I am not sure what color her dress was, but it definitely wasn't white, except that is, for the wide collar on it. Her dress was a hoop dress, with what I will call a rivet design. It had rivet sized dots running vertically down and horizontally across the dress and I surmise, all the way around it.

*Today most people picture a bride dressed in a long white gown and veil. But that wasn't always the case, many dresses were of different colors, such as black, burgundy, ecru, yellow, etc. most wedding photos of the 1800's show the bride in dark colors. Everyday clothing styles and time periods also affected the length and style of dress, such as short suit dresses worn during the war years, flapper dresses during the Roaring 20's and so on.*<sup>(2)</sup>

The wedding ceremony was usually a very private affair, where very few people were present at the church when the wedding took place. In the larger weddings there were never more than two best men and two bridesmaids taking part in the ceremony.

The wedding dinner most of the time started at noon and was held at the home of the parents of the bride and the supper was held at the home of the parents of the

groom. When evening came, the party would begin. There would be music for dancing, perhaps on a parlor organ, possibly joined by a fiddle and/ or other musical instruments. Of course, people there would not be too surprised, if later in the evening, with enough spirits having been consumed, to see a few of the men in attendance that have worked up the courage to do some singing or maybe even dance the jig.

Then we come to those times in life where sad things take place. The death of a family member, is of course, one of those sad times. At the end of life, the funeral services were usually held at the home of the deceased. Until the 1930's the custom was to place the departed one in a coffin in the nicest room of the house.

*Without embalming fluid or face wax, physical aspects of death were more apparent.*<sup>(1)</sup>

Black, as usual for the time, was the color of the clothing that the women wore along with heavy black veils. The men's hats would have black crepe bows on them and on their coat sleeves would be worn a black crepe Band. For family members there would be no dancing for a suitable period of time. The ladies of the family would wear black until a year after the death of the family member.<sup>(1)</sup> Referring to the death of Amedie Doucette (1923), the following was written:

*As was the custom in those days, a wake service was held in the home on the farm. Amedie's body in the casket was in the parlor. The wake service lasted all night and day. Many relatives and friends came to offer their condolences, view the body, and pray. The rosary and other prayers were said during the wake. Many stayed all night so the family wouldn't be alone with their grief and Amedie's body. It was very sad and very hard on the family; there was a lot of expense and work as all these people had to be fed. Usually a neighbor helped with the chores outside, and a neighbor's wife would help in the home preparing meals. Others would bring food and help in other ways.*<sup>(3)</sup>

From the sad time of funerals now I will write about a few of the holiday customs. One of my Gaboury, soon to be 90 years young, cousins told me that Christmas in her family was strictly a holy day and they would always go to church for Midnight Mass. There were no big meals or giving of gifts.

On New Years eve, "l'avant d'année" there were usually men who would overindulge in spirits. Not too unlike today, there were those who didn't feel so good on New Years morning. On those New Years Eve occasions, some men would go from house to house or if they lived in the country, from farmhouse to farmhouse. They would have a drink with the man of each house they visited. After having the drink, they were on their way to the next house, then the next house, and so on. Thus the reason for those hangovers

becomes quite obvious. The farmers were expected to be considerate to these men, even if they had been wakened up late at night by these nocturnal visitors, and would share a drink with them.

New Year's day was when my Gaboury cousin's family would have *toutiere* (meat pie) which she describes as being very delicious. Having had some on several occasions, I completely agree with her. Other French families in the area are said to have family reunions on that day. I would assume my cousin's family, to some extent, did so also, although she couldn't recall that happening. The parents in those families would greet each of their children, and their families, at the front door and give them each a big hug and the usual kiss on each cheek.

*Much planning and preparation had been done during the last days of December. The fat hogs had been butchered, lard rendered and traditional toutiere, Boudin, tete-a-fromage, boulette, and ragout prepared. Men were treated to a beverage, usually whiskey. Women were not expected to drink. It was a gay, happy time.*<sup>(1)</sup>

I came across the following while browsing the Internet:

*Till recently it was customary for the whole family to reunite at the parents home for New Years Day. With the whole family present, it was up to the eldest son to ask his father to bless him, and all those absent for any reason. This included the son and daughters in-law, grandchildren and often great-grandchildren. This benediction was a single day event. It could not be given on the 2nd or 3rd of January. The local RC Church encouraged the tradition. The parish priest reminded the members of the congregation of this tradition. Now they do not mention it, and it has been dropped as religion took less room in the family and individual lives. It may return, as people return to church and pay more attention to religion.*

*I remember my grandfathers blessing their families and every time they had tears in their eyes and how they tried to hide their emotions.*

*My father was the eldest of his family, and it was always a solemn moment for him. Although we lived in Lachine and his parents lived in the east end of Montréal, 2 to 3 hours by tramway, this was a must for him. We always went to my grandparents' home, regardless how cold it was.*

*This scene was often depicted on Christmas cards.*<sup>(4)</sup>

I know the above quote wasn't from a Morrison County resident, or a descendant of same, but I felt it probably wasn't too far off from the New Years customs practiced there, so I decided to include it in this article.

In closing I would like to make brief mention of some of the customs of a few other holidays. In my previous article I had mentioned about the different way they celebrated Mardi Gras as compared to Louisiana. Another custom was what was called "Demi Careme (mid-lent)" which was a young peoples means of getting together at homes of friends to pull taffy and have a good time.

At Easter, very early in the morning, some of the residents would go to the nearest river or creek and fill a bottle of water from there, to bring home. This water was considered to be just below "holy water" in importance and had many uses.<sup>(1)</sup> What those uses were I don't know. Unfortunately, this source doesn't go into any detail about it.

I hope what I have written will help you have some insight into some of the customs of the area where my Gaboury and Doucette great grandparents settled; about one hundred twenty years (Gaboury) to a little over one hundred forty years ago (Doucette).

#### Footnotes:

1. The First Cross, Belle Prairie, Diocese of St. Cloud, MN, by Stella LeBlanc © 1970
2. "Weddings Remembered", Morrison County Historical Society Newsletter, Summer, 1996 — Vol. 9 No. 3, Page 3
3. "The Amedie Doucette Family" by Henriette Doucette, Self-published. ©September 1992, Page 24
4. Robert Jacques of Brossard, Québec at the following web site  
[www.100megsfree2.com/jjscherr/jacques/OldQuebecTraditions.htm](http://www.100megsfree2.com/jjscherr/jacques/OldQuebecTraditions.htm)

## ACADIAN RECIPE CORNER – TRADITIONS REMEMBERED

Submitted By Michele Doucette

I have many positive memories with regards to my Grandmother Feeley (née Breau) and her farmhouse, complete with woodstove.

Rappie Pie

Susan Surette

Down here in Yarmouth County, we make Rappie Pie, which is not hard to make. Once you finish, you only have one pan to clean.

1 large chicken or rabbit	salt and pepper
1 pound of stew meat	3 large onions, diced
potatoes	2 large onions, diced

Cook meat until tender with salt, pepper and 3 large diced onions. Remove meat from cooking liquid and save. Grate about 10 pounds potatoes. Squeeze the water from the potatoes. Using the cooking liquid, put one cup at a time over the grated potatoes. Stir quickly as this is what cooks the potatoes. Put 2 large diced onions (uncooked) with the potatoes and stir. Add meat. Stir together, adding salt and pepper to taste.

Place in a big buttered roast pan to 2 inches from top. Put a few slices of bacon or salt pork on top to give it that nice crust. Put in oven at 350° F for about 3 hours. Increase the oven temperature to 400° F for an additional hour to get the nice crust.

There is an old saying in these parts: the English put butter on their Rappie Pie and the French put molasses on top when cooked, and that was to distinguished the difference between the two.