

"Avoyelles Surnames to be Recognized in Movement to Honor Creoles,"  
*Marksville Weekly News*, July 12, 2012, p. 2.

From *The Marksville Weekly News*, Thursday, July 12, 2012, p. 2.

The old French Creole names of Avoyelles will be among those recognized in a cultural ceremony tied to the French historic Bastille Day this weekend in Ville Platte.

Organizers of the event hope to correct a misconception that the French in Avoyelles are Cajuns. They are actually pure French Creoles, one of the many branches of the Creole culture of Louisiana. John LaFleur, III, who is a blend of both French Creole and Cajun ancestry, is the spearhead of the movement which includes a request to the legislature to recognize Creoles on the historic French Bastille Day.

In recent years, the French families here have been identified more as Cajun than Creole, and the Creole has taken on a new meaning.

Avoyelles Parish was not settled by Cajuns but by French Creole families whose families migrated directly from France or Quebec to Louisiana in the early 1700s. Cajuns later migrated from Nova Scotia, Acadia, to Louisiana parishes to the south of Avoyelles.

Up until the mid 1900s, newspaper accounts refer to the Avoyelles people as Creoles. But the popularity of the Cajun culture gradually was mistaken for the Avoyelles population, and perpetrated in the 1970s when the Louisiana legislature created the Acadiana triangle and included Avoyelles as the northernmost parish because of the French speaking population.

On Saturday, July 14 at 12 noon at the Ville Platte Civic Center Grand Pavillion, the historic first families of a tri-parish area will come together for 45 minutes of celebration, invocation and holy benediction led by Fr. Richard Vidrine of St. Peter Catholic Church of Grand Prairie, and Reverend Darwan Lazard of Ville Platte's Ninth Baptist Church.

A keynote address explaining the origins of the tri-parish French-speaking families, and their historic culture will be presented by LaFleur, who is a Louisiana French Creole language and cultural educator, and will be accompanied by Dr. Ina of New Orleans, who will also carry, and read a letter of tribute from the from the French Consul-General of New Orleans, M. Brunet.

Another letter of tribute, from world-famous, Louisiana-born Dr Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall will also be read in praise of the unity and goodwill of our French Creole families, and of our very old shared Creole culture.

Citizen honorees, many of whom are local professionals from three parishes will be present, and saluted in honor of common history, and culture. Louisiana cultural historians from Avoyelles, Pointe Coupée and Orleans parishes will also attend in hope of witnessing this historic event which will send a signed resolution to Senator Eric LaFleur for presentation before the 2013 Louisiana State Legislature adopting July 14, historic Bastille Day, as an official Day of Commemoration for all Louisiana "native-born" or "Creole" families of all varieties.

According to LaFleur, "Indian, French, African, Spanish, Germanic, Irish and Italian Creole representative family heads will be present for recognition!"

"We share an international, inter-racial culture, which gave Louisiana her 500 year old culture, delicious food, and our old "Louisiana French," said John LaFleur, II, the event's chairman. "No single ethnicity created Louisiana's food, language and culture; but, every ethnicity contributed to it, and shares it today."

According to LaFleur: "What we call, 'Cajun' food is a direct outgrowth, and adaptation of Louisiana's original historic Creole culture, which the Acadians totally assimilated, according to Dr. Carl A. Brasseaux, in his book: *From Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People*.

So, in fact, whatever our people choose to call themselves, we all share the same culture. We prefer to hold on to our historic Creole identity because it more accurately designates our true ethnic and historic origins, and it has always represented all of Louisiana's 'native-born' or 'Creole' people in all of our varieties. Creole is a culture, not a race!"

LaFleur cites Acadian/Cajun historian, Dr. Carl Brasseaux, and many other highly respected authorities in testimony of these facts, in his upcoming new book, *My People, The Alabama French: Colonial, Foreign French & Afro-Creoles- Views of a Prairie Creole Son*, for which he's already considering a foreign market contract.

Local Creole families to be honored by their descendants include: historians Randy DeCuir, Carlos Mayeux and Rev. Chad Partain of Avoyelles Parish; historians Brian Costello, Julie Lee and preservationist Dr./Mrs. Jack Holden of Pointe Coupée Parish; Mr. & Mrs. Gene Buller, Dr. & Mrs. J. S. Fontenot, Dr. Charles Fontenot, Dr. Thomas Fontenot, Judge Wendell and Fran Fuselier, Mayor Jennifer Vidrine, Ms. Grace Vidrine-Sibley, Mr. Blake Deshotel, Mr. & Mrs. Gurvis LaFleur, of Ville Platte; Mr. & Mrs. Nick Fontenot of Grand Prairie; Rev. DarwanLazard, Fr. Richard Vidrine, the LaBas family, Messieurs David Ortego and Michael Bordelon of the Ville Platte Gazette: Mr. Martel Ardoin, Mr. Jim Soileau,

---

Ms. Cheryl Fuselier-Debillon, Becky LaFleur, Mr. & Mrs. Harold & Athalie Dupre of Opelousas; Elvin Reed, Paul “T-Boy” Berzas and the Fontenots of Deshotels Drugs of Mamou.

“We are celebrating, and blessing the most wonderful people we know-the first families, the survivors whose ancestors paved the paths for our happiness today; the Louisiana French Creoles!” concluded LaFleur.

---

## **The Avoyelles Creoles**

*Pure French Creoles:* Some of the families who were founded by sons and grandsons of direct pure French immigrants with Creole surnames which are somewhat unique to Avoyelles include: Aymond, Barbin, Bordelon, Carmouche, Chatelain, DeCuir, Ducote, Dufour, Dupuy, Gauthier, Goudeau, Gremillion, Guillot, Mayeux, Lacour, Lemoine, Plauché, Rabalais, and Tassin. These families settled in Pointe Coupée Parish, New Orleans, Natchez, and Mobile before making their way to Avoyelles. Some descendants mixed with other races.

*Canadian Creoles:* Families from Québec Province to Avoyelles include: Armand, Brouillette, Couvillon, Dauzat, Gaspard, Joffrion, Juneau, Lachney, Marcotte, Moreau, Normand, Roy, Saucier and St. Romain.

*Direct French:* A third set of French families who later migrated directly from France to Avoyelles include: Baudin, Beridon, Bizé, Bonnet, Bringol, Brou Cailleateau, Cayer, Coco, Daigrepoint, DeNux, Descant, Didier, Drouin, Durand, Fuqua, Gagnard, Escudé Laborde, Lafargue, Moncla, Neck, Porterie, Rebouché: Regard and Voinche.