

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 76

BY REPRESENTATIVES ORTEGO, BARRAS, BERTHELOT, STUART BISHOP, BURRELL, CHAMPAGNE, COX, DANAHAY, GAINES, GAROFALO, GEYMANN, GISCLAIR, GUILLORY, GUINN, HARRISON, HENSGENS, HUVAL, JOHNSON, JONES, NANCY LANDRY, LEBAS, MILLER, MONTOUCET, PIERRE, PRICE, RICHARD, ROBIDEAUX, SCHEXNAYDER, SMITH, ST. GERMAIN, THIBAUT, THIERRY, WHITNEY, AND WILLMOTT

A RESOLUTION

To commemorate the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Acadians in Louisiana and to recognize the unique contributions of the Acadian people to the culture and flavor of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, some four hundred years ago, small bands of men and women left their hometowns in France and sailed to what would become Canada to settle in an area they called Acadia, which is now known as Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS, these early settlers were hardworking, peace-loving people who remained neutral during the many feuds between the French and British forces over Canadian lands; but in 1755, without approval from the British government, men who refused to sign a loyalty oath to England were forced to separate from their families and were arrested, and their farms, barns, churches, shops, crops, and the livestock that made up the Acadian colonies were burned to the ground or confiscated, followed by a mass expulsion of the Acadians; and

WHEREAS, some of the expelled Acadians returned to England and France, only to suffer imprisonment or to live as outcasts; some settled in the colonies of New England and blended with the established communities; in the Carolina colonies, some Acadian parents had their children taken away from them while they were forced to work on plantations; still others were deported to Haiti, Newfoundland, Argentina, and Uruguay; yet after ten years of wandering from place to place and finding no home, a group of twenty-one Acadians journeyed from Georgia to Mobile, Alabama, from where they eventually reached the Mississippi River to travel to New Orleans, finally settling along the West Bank in April of 1764 in what came to be called the Acadian Coast; and

WHEREAS, undaunted by the unfamiliar climate of Louisiana or a lack of monetary resources, these determined early settlers encouraged their kin to make the trek to Louisiana and over the next two decades, more than three thousand Acadians joined the adventurous folk already here; and

WHEREAS, Acadians settled the mosquito-infested areas along Bayou Teche, performed hard labor that other settlers would not attempt, were rejected by the resident Frenchmen in Louisiana because of their strange-sounding Acadian dialect, overcame attempts by established Louisiana residents to force them to speak English, and perpetuated their unique heritage by marrying within their communities; and

WHEREAS, the persistence of those brave Acadian settlers transformed regions of Louisiana into special places that, to outsiders, appeared as worlds unto themselves, and the unmatched spirit of the first Acadians remains alive in their descendants to this day; and

WHEREAS, the progeny of the first Acadians, now called Cajuns, have spread from the original enforced settlements along the West Bank of the Mississippi River to populate regions from Lake Charles to Houma, almost the entire length and breadth of Louisiana, and their number now surpasses seven hundred thousand; and

WHEREAS, anthropologists at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette will undertake an archaeology project in 2014 along Bayou Teche near Loreauville in Iberia Parish in search of some of the earliest settlements of the Acadian exiles, seeking artifacts from Acadian folk hero Joseph "Beausoleil" Broussard and his followers, who arrived in 1765 but most of whom appeared to have died within months of their arrival; and

WHEREAS, "Acadie à La Louisiane" (Acadia To Louisiana) by Bruce Daigrepoint is a masterful example of Cajun music and retells the tragedy of the forced exodus from Acadia to the triumph of the Acadians' settlement in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the Cajun culture has in recent years burst onto the food and arts scene as evidenced by the increasing popularity across the United States of Cajun cuisine, led by chefs such as Paul Prudhomme and John Folse, Cajun music, led by Grammy award winners such as Beausoleil and Courtbouillon, and Cajun visual arts, led by artists such as George Rodrigue; and

WHEREAS, the unparalleled flair and flavor of the Cajun people give Louisiana much sought-after qualities that cannot be found elsewhere in the world, and it is fitting to commemorate the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first Acadians to the bayous in New Acadia: a people and culture that have contributed to the greatness that is Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize and acclaim the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Acadian people to the state; does hereby commend the hearty spirit demonstrated by the early settlers in overcoming innumerable odds to become the genesis of a unique culture; and does hereby express the congratulatory sentiments of all of the residents of the great state of Louisiana on the occasion of the celebration of two hundred fifty years of Acadians in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES