



Lee Manuel

Joseph Lee Manuel was born December 24, 1930 (Christmas Eve) to sharecroppers, Mr. & Mrs. Leon Manuel, who lived in the area between Mamou and Duralde, Louisiana. Lee Manuel died on April 29, 1991.

In 1947 he married Burna Mae Fuselier. To this union, five children were born, three girls and two boys.

Lee started playing Cajun music on guitar in 1948. In the early 70's he learned to play the fiddle which he mostly played.

Some of the bands Lee played in are: Roy Fuselier's band, Clinus Israrel's band, Maurice Berzas and the Mamou Playboys (for over 30 years until Mr. Maurice's death in 1985), also Davis Lee's band, Nonc Allie and the Basile Cajun Band, Balfa brothers on special tours, the Cajun Tradition band from 1985-90 and Blackie Forester's Cajun Aces in 1990.

Lee traveled around the country quite a bit with Dewey Balfa. Some of the places they traveled were France, Canada, Chicago, Washington state and Rhode Island Folk Festival. In 1988, he was part of a Cajun group that played on a cruise ship on the North Sea.

Another example of his enthusiasm and love of Cajun music and culture was helping to organize the first Cajun Music Festival in Eunice to benefit the Eunice Museum. This was in August, 1984. From this group of people the idea of the Cajun French Music Association (CFMA) was born. He did a lot of volunteer work in fostering Cajun music, including fiddle lesson workshops sponsored by CFMA. While Lee was president of

CFMA he finalized plans to establish CFMA chapters in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lake Charles.

His first recording was a 45 RPM record with Nonc Allis's band, produced by CFMA. He wrote both songs, and the Two-step, "*Cajun de las Louisiane*" was voted as the first official CFMA song. He also played with a variety of bands on the first CFMA album. His writing of three songs and his great traditional fiddle style was probably a major factor in the receiving of a Grammy nomination in 1989 for Cajun Tradition's album, "*A le Vielle Facon.*"