

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
The Nonus Collection, 2214 Postoffice Street, Galveston, Texas 77550

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 13, 2009

BOARD PRESENT: 1st Vice President Jim Nonus; 2nd Vice President Kathy Modzelewski; Treasurer Nancy Beaman; Secretary *pro tem* and Archivist Jeff Modzelewski; Editor of Publications *pro tem* Dan Cote; Parliamentarian Diane Olson; Privateer-at-Arms (nominal) Wil Zapalac.

BOARD ABSENT: President Ed Jamison; 3rd Vice President Lynette Haaga; Historian Ginny Roberts; Press Director Dave Roberts; Coordinator of Research Gary Fretz; Coordinator of Research Pam Keyes.

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: Jean Epperson; Jeff Modzelewski; Kathy Modzelewski; R. Dale Olson.

ADVISORY BOARD ABSENT: Pam Keyes; Don Marler; Gene Marshall; Robert Vogel; Dr. Reginald Wilson.

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m.

1st First Vice President Jim Nonus welcomed this month's meeting attendees in the absence of President Ed Jamison.

Member Jan Porter, an administrator locally with the Salvation Army, asked for volunteers to take part in the organization's 2009 Red Kettle Campaign, which will take place from November 27 through December 24.

PROGRAM: Jeff Modzelewski presented the evening's program on the late-19th-century American author Kate Chopin and her novel *The Awakening*, published in 1899.

Chopin (1850-1904) was born in St. Louis and raised there, but she moved to Louisiana upon her marriage to Oscar Chopin in 1870. The couple lived in New Orleans for a number of years and vacationed in Grand Isle in the summers. Kate published a number of stories in major periodicals of the day. When Oscar's cotton brokerage in New Orleans failed, they moved to Natchitoches Parish to manage a plantation. His unexpected death about 1882 left Kate a young widow with significant debts, and she began to write in earnest.

She published her best-known work, the short novel *The Awakening*, in 1899. It received a mixed reception because it was ahead of its time in depicting women's issues without condescension and because it was viewed by some as scandalous. The married protagonist, Edna Pontellier, rebels against the proscribed role of women in American society in the late 19th century. She falls in love with a single man, and he with her, but the relationship is doomed, and she commits suicide by swimming out into the Gulf of Mexico and drowning herself.

Kate Chopin is now viewed as a forerunner of the feminist genre of American literature, and perhaps the second most important American female author of the nineteenth century after Harriet Beecher Stowe.

At the end of his talk about Chopin, Modzelewski spoke about various locales in Louisiana with

connections to Laffite, Chopin and *The Awakening*, including Melrose Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, Grande Terre, Cheniere Caminada, and Last Island/Isle Derniere.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Submitted by

Jeff Modzelewski
Secretary *pro tem*
The Laffite Society