

## THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

Meridian Retirement Center, 2228 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, TX 77550

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 10, 2010

Board Members Present: President Ed Jamison, FVP Jack Watson, Acting TVP Jim Nonus, Secretary Carolyn Peterson, Treasurer Nancy Beaman, Editor Dan Cote, Publicity Director Dave Roberts, Technology Director Rob Peterson, Archivist Larry Porter, Parliamentarian Diane Olson

Board Members Absent: SVP Kathy Modzelewski, Coordinator of Research Pam Keyes

Advisory Board Present: R. Dale Olson, Jean Epperson

Advisory Board Absent: Pam Keyes, Jeff Modzelewski, Kathy Modzelewski, Robert Vogel, Dr. Reginald Wilson

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President Ed Jamison called the meeting to order at 6:33PM. He acknowledged guests in the audience. They were Claudette Freeman Pfennig-High accompanied by member Ondree Kuhn. Margaret Blackburn was also a visitor.

Rob Peterson reported that the website has been updated and that it's registration and hosts sites have been paid for the next three years.

The Harris County Historical Society has contacted Ed requesting that a speaker from the Society give a presentation on Laffite to their group on March 1, 2011.

The date and location of the Winter Banquet was announced. It will be held at the Trolley Station Ballroom on Sunday, December 12 and will feature a presentation given by Dale Olson and Jim Nonus.

A possible group trip to the yearly commemoration of the Battle of New Orleans was discussed. It will be held by the new Orleans Historical Society on January 8, 2011.

Volunteers are being requested for the Revival Race (September 11) and the October Loft Tour (October 2 &3). Interested parties should contact Ed for more information.

Ed Jamison would like to see Buccaneer Days revived in Galveston, but rename it "Laffite Days",

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### **Program Speaker - Jack Watson**

### **Topic - James and Mary Campbell**

Jack began by giving a recap of his earlier presentation on his visit to the Campbell cemetery on Virginia Point. He went through the chronology of their lives and then began to delve into each as individuals.

James Campbell emigrated from Ireland at the age of four years old and lived with his family in the Baltimore area. As a young man he joined up with Mina and Aury. Later after joining with Laffite he became one Laffite's top producing captains. It was James Campbell who convinced Laffite that he should build slave barracks on the lower Sabine River, north of present-day Orange, Texas, in order to market directly to the Louisiana sugar planters. At one point Laffite sent him to New Orleans to buy more vessels and to possibly spy on John Marotte, a rebellious captain. Jack talked about a duel mentioned in the Lamar papers between Marotte and Laffite

that turned out to be a non-event. Campbell eventually killed Marotte after Marotte attempted to assassinate both Laffite and Campbell. James Campbell died in 1856 at the age of 70.

From Jack's talk one gives the impression that Mary was the more colorful character of the two. Jean Epperson shared with Jack her correspondence with W. T. Block regarding Mary and her possible dual personality (sweet woman or fiery troublemaker). Mary went by several surnames such as Sabinal, Chabineaux, and Crow. She met James in 1814 at age 14 and married him two years later at 16. In 1817 She and James joined Laffite on Galveston where she was left alone for extended periods during James' excursions out to sea. When Laffite quit Galveston in 1820 James was still at sea so Mary moved to Fort Las Cassas on Bolivar under the protection of Dr. James Long. Her unpleasantness made her many enemies and she and her friend, Modello, were banned from the Fort for cursing one of the wives. When Dr. Long returned and tried to remove Modello from Mary's home, Modello challenged Long to a duel. Modello was killed which alienated Long to Trespalacios, Modello's uncle. Long met his end in Mexico City. Possibly Trespalacios extracted his revenge for the death of his nephew. Mary passed away in 1884 at the age of 84.

After their privateering days were done they lived in several locations around the area, but settled down for good at their home on Virginia Point until their deaths.

After reading Lamar's papers, W. T. Block proposed to Jean Epperson a titillating thought: could there have been a more interesting relationship between Dr. Long and Mary since she was left under his protection for so long when Captain Campbell was away? Jack thinks this is unlikely since the time line doesn't agree nor do the personalities involved lend themselves to mutual attachment.

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Miscellaneous

Treasurer Nancy Beaman reported that there is approximately \$1899 in the Society's account.

Rob Peterson talked about the extra print copies of some of the Laffite Study Group publications that are available to interested members.

Mike Riley mentioned several odd advertisements in the Bolivar Peninsula local monthly paper, "The Beach Triton". These ads said "Was James Long a Filibuster? Come to the fort in October and find out." No other information was provided. Mike promised to look into this further.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

Submitted by Carolyn Peterson  
Corresponding/Recording Secretary