

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Board Members Present: President Ed Jamison, FVP Jack Watson, SVP Kathy Modzelewski, TVP Ginny Roberts, Secretary Carolyn Peterson, Editor Dan Cote, Publicity Director Dave Roberts, Technology Director Rob Peterson, Archivist Larry Porter, Parliamentarian Diane Olson

Board Members Absent: Coordinator of Research Pam Keyes, Treasurer Nancy Beaman

Advisory Board Present: R. Dale Olson, Jean Epperson, Jeff Modzelewski, Kathy Modzelewski

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

President Ed Jamison called the meeting to order at 6:29PM. Ed provided copies of the January 9 edition of the Galveston County Daily News which carried an article covering the Winter Banquet. The coverage was arranged by our Publicity Director Dave Roberts. He also provided copies of the obituary of Aleksandar 'Alex' Karilanovic who passed away on Friday, January 7. He was the husband of the Society's past secretary and longtime member, Dorothy Karilanovic.

On a happier note, Ed said that he had spoken with Ginny Roberts about taking over the Third Vice President position in charge of providing food for each meeting. Diane Olson made the motion to nominate Ginny for the position, it was seconded by Rob Peterson, and carried. Jeff Modzelewski briefly reported on the Battle of New Orleans Banquet held at the New Orleans Country Club. Eleven from the Laffite Society attended and Dale Olson was the featured speaker. It sounds like a good time was had by all.

Break

Program Speaker – Jean Epperson

Topic- Book Signing and Question Session

Jack Watson introduced Jean who was born and raised in Harris County, Texas. In college she studied pre-med, then switched to Psychology. She obtained her Master degree in Education and taught in the Goose Creek School district. This evening she was here to discuss her third book, "Filibusters, Pirates, Privateers of the Early Texas Coast" which is a collection of articles she did for the Society.

Jean in her introduction says that she considers herself a researcher, not a writer. She gave a brief description of her other two books. The first is "Historical Vignettes of Galveston Bay" which was written several years ago and is a collection of articles she had written for the Society's Chronicles. The second is "Lost Spanish Towns" about old Atascosito and Trinidad de Salcedo.

Panelists' Questions:

Dale Olson:

Who was John A. Laffite mentioned in Chapter 7? Jean says that this is a complex issue. John A. Laffite was the author of the Journal of Jean Laffite that first appeared in 1958. This journal was thought to be legitimate and was bought by Governor Price Daniel and placed in the Sam Houston Regional Library in Liberty, Texas. The journal has now been shown to be an elaborate hoax by this man who tried in 1942 to pass himself off as Laffite's great grandson. In 2004 Jean obtained his railroad pay records that showed his real name as John Matejka and no relation to Laffite.

What about the origins of the documents and other information included in the journal? Some of it may have been inspired by a 1826 pamphlet called "Memoirs of Laffite, the Privateer's Own Study". The journal is very fuzzy.

Rob Peterson:

What was the connection between the Paul Bouet family and the Laffites? Bouet had two sons, Jean and Pierre, who were thought to be the Laffites. They probably knew the Laffites, but were not the pirates.

You say little about Laffite after he left Galveston. Jack Davis said quite a bit more, Why?
She basically said she gave as much wordage as she thought the subject warranted. Jean said that there are some good sources available to track his movements and demise.

What was left on Galveston when they left? Not much was left. Only about four of his men stayed and Campbell was the only one that stayed on the island. The others including Andrew Roach, Burrell Frank, and John McHenry who moved around the area.

Mike Riley:

Did Jeff Modzelewski and Dorothy Karilanovic donate two different translations for the 1816 map in Chapter 1? Jeff was asked to answer this question and he said that as far as he knew, they had not.

What was the nature of the relationship the Indians had with the Europeans on Galveston? It seemed like they oscillated between cycles of conflict and peace.

Where the Karankawa cannibalistic? This practice was only used for ceremonial rites.

Question from the audience: *What is the difference between pirate and privateer?* The privateer sails with letters of marque issued by warring countries—legal pirates. During the time of Laffite, the United States issued letters of marque to privateers to supplement its navy. Congress still retains the power to grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water according to the Constitution..

Dale ended the session by saying that Don Marler had called Jean the most significant researcher on Laffite over the past 50 years.

Miscellaneous

Ed welcomed guests Jim Atchley, Barbara and Jeff Rabek.

January is the time to send in membership dues to Kathy Modzelewski. Please go the Society website for the address.

Jack Watson gave a short introduction of the presentations for the coming months:

February - Helen Mooty will speak about Jane Long

March - Larry Porter will present on the history of Privateers

April - Bill Kroger will talk about his study of the condition of the State of Texas court archives and how best to preserve these records

May - Don Marler will give a presentation on Aaron Burr

Ed thanked Jack for his handling of the past and future programs. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45PM.

Submitted by Carolyn Peterson
Corresponding/Recording Secretary