

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 08, 2011

Board Members Present: President Ed Jamison, FVP Jack Watson, SVP Kathy Modzelewski, Secretary Carolyn Peterson, Treasurer Nancy Beaman, Editor Dan Cote, Technology Director Rob Peterson, Archivist Larry Porter, Parliamentarian Diane Olson

Board Members Absent: TVP Ginny Roberts, Coordinator of Research Pam Keyes, Publicity Director Dave Roberts

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

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

President Ed Jamison called the meeting to order at 6:42PM. He thanked Ondree Kuhn for the reminder about the Houston Museum of Natural Science exhibit, The Forgotten Gateway, saying that it had been extended through March 18. He welcomed guests Carolyn and Walt Pruitt, Betsy and Les Horner, Jane and Sandy Rushing, Frank and Connie Dryden (members), Jim and Brenda Atchley (new members). Ed reminded the group that it is membership renewal time.

Editor Dan Cote said that the Chronicles are coming out the following week and gave brief description of the contents. He applauded Jack Watson for a job well done in arranging the past and future presentations for the Society meetings.

Jeff Modzelewski gave instructions on joining the Yahoo group so members can receive Society mailings and information.

Ed thanked Ed Connor for bartending and Marge and George Dersheimer for providing a delicious meal. Lynette Haaga, Todd and Sherl Schott, and Carolyn Peterson provided desserts.

A question came up the Society plans for next month's meeting since it would be on Fat Tuesday. Ed said members would be notified by email of any special plans for the meeting.

Program Speaker – Helen Mooty

Topic – Jane Long

Jack Watson introduced Helen giving a little background information on her. Helen is a Galveston County architectural historian, a writing consultant, and interpreter of historical sites. She has a Bachelor's in mathematics and a Masters in humanities.

For her presentation she dressed as Jane Long and concentrated on the time period between 1838-1858. Jane Long was born in 1798 and married James Long in 1819 when they came to Texas. They moved to Bolivar where James wanted to establish a Customs House to do business with the privateers operating on Campeche. Jane reported that she had attended a function hosted by Jean Laffite and found him to be handsome and refined. She attempted to befriend him to find out his intentions, but did not get much information from him although she did get some lumber and gunpowder when he quit Galveston.



In 1821 James Long left for La Bahia and not long after everyone left Bolivar. She was left with a five year old daughter (Anne) and a ten year old slave (Ken) to survive a horrible winter. They fired the cannon and raised her red petticoat as a flag to give the Indians the impression that the fort was fully manned. Jane was pregnant when James left and on December 21, 1821 she gave birth to another daughter, Mary James. In 1822 she received a letter telling her that James had been killed and she was a widow at 24 years. Many people were coming to Texas through Bolivar so she was able to support her family by washing and cooking. Trespalacios promised her a pension for her husband's death. She moved to San Antonio de Behar to collect her pension in Oct, 1822 and Juan Sequin housed her and her family at that time. In 1823 Trespalacios was deposed before giving her the promised pension, so the family then went to Mississippi where Mary James died. She returned to Texas and Stephen F. Austin gave her land at San Felipe de Austin, an honor usually given to the male head of household. She was one of the first Anglo woman in Texas and exhibited tenaciousness to survive overwhelming odds. Mirabeau Lamar was a prolific historian who entrusted his papers with her during the war. The papers along with some soldiers' possessions were with her on the trip to Louisiana, but she only made it only as far as Bolivar before the war ended. Jane was made an honorary member of the Texas Veterans Association of the Republic of Texas. She never remarried and was proud to be known as the "Mother of Texas".

Questions:

Do you know the precise location of the fort? She does not, but believes that it is not Fort Travis.

What did she do after the war? She lived in San Felipe, but she set up a boarding house in Velasco when the revolution broke out. Stephen F. Austin held his first rally at her boarding house. Jane then moved to Richmond and got her land. She and Lamar were very close, having adjoining property. She had another boarding house that catered to entertainers like Lily Langtry.

Was she on Bolivar during winter of 1821-1822? Helen said no, but that she has Lou Fincher looking into the weather of that time.

Is there anything still in Richmond to memorialize her? Jane's house, known as the McFarland house, is in City Park and her daughter's house is still there.

What Indian tribe attacked the fort? The Karankawas was her answer.

Do you know of any research in the geographical location of the Indian burial grounds on Bolivar? Helen said that she was not aware of any mention of the mounds in her Jane Long research.

Where is the historical marker noting the Jane Long Exhibition on Bolivar? It was destroyed by Ike, but a new one may be put by the ferry landing. Its replacement has been approved and she hopes it will be unveiled in the fall during the Jane Long Days festival.

Helen lives in Clear Lake and has a special interest in Victorian houses.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36PM.

Submitted by Carolyn Peterson
Corresponding/Recording Secretary