

MINUTES
Tuesday, April 14, 2009
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
Nonus Gallery, 2411 Strand, Galveston, Texas 77550

BOARD PRESENT: President, Ed Jamison; 1st Vice President, Jim Nonus; 2nd Vice President, Kathy Modzelewski; 3rd Vice President, Lynette Haaga; Secretary Pro Tem and Archivist, Jeff Modzelewski; Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Editor of Publications Pro Tem, Dan Cote; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson.

BOARD ABSENT: Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Historian, Ginny Roberts; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Privateer-at-Arms (nominal), Wil Zapalac.

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

President Ed Jamison recognized visitors Dixie Posert and Nancy Beaman's sister Sara; he acknowledged the presence of Dr. Reginald and Betty Wilson, long-time members now unable to attend meetings as frequently as in the past; and he thanked Lynette Haaga, Cathy Hitchcock, and Mary Smelker for providing the refreshments for the evening.

Jim Nonus asked that some attendees bring folding chairs to the next meeting if able to do so, to facilitate seating in the gallery.

PROGRAM: Jeff Modzelewski discussed his translation of several years past of Mexican author Jorge Ignacio Rubio Mañé's book *The Pirates Laffite* and the significance of that work. Rubio Mañé discovered documentary evidence in the mid-1930's that Pierre Laffite had died in a maritime gun battle with civil authorities off the coast of the Yucatán in November, 1821. This data refuted the erroneous belief, perpetuated over many years, that it was Jean Laffite who had died under these circumstances and at this place and date.

The evidence lay in the testimony of a young Canadian, George Schumph, who was on the vessel with Pierre Laffite when the latter was mortally wounded. Schumph was interrogated as to possible complicity in piratical activities. He disclaimed such involvement and was eventually released, but in the course of his testimony he revealed that Pierre Laffite, older brother of the more famous Jean Laffite, was wounded in the skirmish, was brought ashore, and died and received a proper Christian burial in the Yucatecan town of Dzilam on November 10, 1821.

This vignette piqued the interest of Rubio Mane, who proceeded to craft an entire book on its germ of fact. Dale Olson, who owned the book, suggested to Modzelewski that a translation of extracts from the work might be interesting as a monthly meeting program and/or a submission to *The Laffite Society Chronicles*. Modzelewski saw that although the book contained many chapters, most were brief, and he decided to translate the entire book. He worked on the translation off and on for two and a half years and published it in late 2006. Modzelewski was asked to speak at the 2006 Laffite Society holiday party with the translation as his topic, and attendees received a copy courtesy of the Society.

Modzelewski discussed some other items of interest regarding the book, and a subsequent question-and-answer period proved of interest, as Jean Epperson, Reginald Wilson, Dale Olson, and others provided input on threads of the Laffite saga raised by *The Pirates Laffite*.

Modzelewski offered to contribute a write-up of his talk this evening for publication in the *Chronicles*. He also offered for sale copies of the translation at a price of \$10.00 each, just above cost, and had about six “takers.”

After the program, plans for speakers/topics for future meetings were discussed, which include:

- Mike Bailey of the Brazoria County Historical Museum
- Marine archaeologist Tom Oertling
- Jean Epperson, to re-visit her research into John Laughlin
- Volunteers to research and discuss various figures in Laffite lore, such as Louis Aury (Jim volunteered), Vincent Nolte, Lawrence Kearney (Ed may tackle), and Javier Mina (Dale will try to do this one before year-end).

Possibilities for field trips were also discussed, including Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico; Grand Isle and Grande Terre, Louisiana; and even Cuba.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by

Jeff Modzelewski
Recording/Correspondent Secretary Pro Tem
The Laffite Society