

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

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

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

Advisory Board Present: Jean Epperson, Jeff Modzelewski

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

President Ed Jamison called the meeting to order at 6:40PM. Ed began by telling about his meeting Carole Hamaday at the Jane long Festival the past weekend. Carol is the proprietor of the Out By the Sea Bed & Breakfast in Crystal Beach and she has written a book titled *Surviving the Terror...Ike*. She brought along an old, rusted sword that washed up one night and is trying to find information regarding it. She is a new member as of this evening.

Jean Epperson had a follow-up announcement that the Laffite Journal will be returning to Liberty Library after deciding what the best method of conservation will be for the Journal.

Ed said that TAMUG has accepted the agreement to house the archives based on our wording of the contract. Ed called the A&M librarian to ask about the best way to index the archives.

Mardi Gras sometimes falls on our meeting night, but not next year. We can have a regular meeting and then meet again for Fat Tuesday—something to ponder.

The Winter Banquet committee met last week and decided on a menu. It will be held at the Trolley Station on December 11.. The program is still a secret. And there will be **Sazeracs!!**

Program Speaker – Cindy Vallar

Topic – Dominique You

Jack Watson introduced Cindy Vallar by saying that she is an editor, writer, poet who specializes in historical novels. She has written for the Laffite Chronicles and previously given presentations for the Society. She and her husband were raised in Pennsylvania, then moved to Maryland and Kansas before finally settling in Texas.

Cindy said she first heard of Jean Laffite in the 1970's while watching a "Wonderful World of Disney" presentation on him. The actor playing Jean was a good looking guy (a young Frank Langella) and she fell in love. The mystery of Laffite really attracted her. She began her first novel on Laffite, but put it away when she returned to college. Cindy wrote her second novel, *The Scottish Thistle*, and then eventually returned to the Laffite novel for reworking. While on this project she came to Galveston to get some old issues of the Chronicles and met with Jeff and Kathy Modzelewski. After talking with them she decided to change the focus of her book (usually a secondary character). She had planned to use a sister of Jean and Pierre, but turned her attention to Dominique You (or Youx). Not much information was known about You in the 1970's when she was doing her research on Laffite, but is now surprised so much is available on the internet. Cindy posed the question of what Dominique You may have looked like. Author Jane De Grummond tells us that he was short, not quite 5' 4" tall, with shoulders twice as wide as the average man. He was swarthy with flashing black eyes and a hawk like nose with powder burns on the left side of his face. He went to sea at age seven



becoming a cabin boy. Since he wouldn't reveal his name to the captain, the crew, knowing he came from San Dominique, called him Dominique Vous—translating to Dominique You. In signed documents he used the first name of Frederic, always spelled in lower case letters.

Cindy gave many instances where Dominique You is mentioned in historical records. Here are just a few. It is believed that he was born in Puerto Prince, Haiti between 1771- 1775. He was a master gunner, but no one knows where he acquired his skills, maybe in Napoleon's army. He first shows up in French admiralty records 1798 showing that he was in Baracoa, Cuba—the original Cuban capital. Cindy cited several references where Captain You is mentioned after capturing ships and claiming the prizes. In 1806 the London Gazette gave an account of the capture of the ship, *Le Superb* with ninety-four crew after many hours of fierce battle. The captain's name was given as Dominique Hou—could this be our Dominique You? Later naval histories identified the captain as Dominique Durrant, a name that is unfamiliar to Cindy, but the description regarding his fighting skill and the ships of prey sound like this is Dominique You. The Great Louisiana Hurricane of 1812 happened shortly after the War of 1812 was declared. There are two versions of where he rode out the storm. The first version said that he was at the home of Charles Jacob in Plaquemine and the second was that he was on his ship "*Le Pandoure*" where he was injured during the storm. In 1814 Commodore Daniel Patterson received permission to go after the Baratarians pirates using the USS *Carolina*. In September 1814 the British approached Laffite about joining their cause, but he said that he needed to consult with his crew. Laffite sent a message to the governor detailing the British offer, but told Claiborne that he wanted to support him instead. Of course, Patterson objected and went to Barataria anyway. Seeing that it was an American force, the pirates surrendered, but they started to burn their ships. Patterson, not wanting to lose his prize immediately attacked. Dominique tried to escape, but was captured along with about eighty others and taken to New Orleans where they were charged with piracy. Jackson offered a pardon in return for defending New Orleans against the British and the Baratarians distinguished themselves in battle as Battery 3. In 1820 You joined Aury in fighting against Spain and went back to privateering—but there was no one to privateer against. He retired to New Orleans, but during the final two years he was pretty much a hermit, having no money. He died on November, 14, 1830. A grateful city paid his funeral expenses and his service with military honors was held in St. Louis Cathedral. He is buried at St. Louis Cemetery #2.



Questions:

Where did you take French Lessons? She was a French major in college.

Do you feel that Dominique was a brother of the Laffites? No, maybe related by blood like distant cousins.

Is the current novel you are writing a continuation of one you began about Laffite many years ago? Yes, it is a grownup version, though, and is hoped to be finished next year.

When Laffite was on Galveston, did Dominique spend more time in New Orleans? Yes, he was getting up in age at that time.

Cindy's website: <http://www.cindyvallar.com/pirates>

Miscellaneous

Ed thanked Ginny Roberts for the wonderful dinner, Dersheimers for the salad, Carolyn, Judy, and Todd for the desserts. Ed Connor was thanked for bartending this evening.

Wil Zapalac brought up the sword and Ed said that Jim Nonus thought it might be quite old. John Trojanowsky might know about it. He also suggested the Stork Club as an optional meeting place.

Jim Nonus said that the Strand Theater might do a showing of the *Buccaneer*, preferably the 1938 version.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52PM.

Submitted by Carolyn Peterson
Corresponding/Recording Secretary