

MINUTES
February 10, 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; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson; Historian, Ginny Roberts.

BOARD ABSENT: Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Editor of Publications, (vacant); Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Privateer-at-Arms (nominal), Wil Zapalac.

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

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

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: Steve Austin and Cathy Hitchcock; Ed and Betty Conner; Dan Cote; Wayne Cox; Harry and Anne Forester; Bill Haaga; Clifford Johnson; Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic; Sheldon Kindall; Linda and Ondree Kuhn; Walter Modzelewski; George Najarian and Lizette Gaudin; Rob and Carolyn Peterson.

VISITORS: John Harris; Judy Pharo (spelling?); Nelson and Mary Smelker; Terry Wright.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. President Ed Jamison asked for the approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 13, 2009. He acknowledged that since minutes are distributed solely via the yahoo.com Laffite group, some are not receiving them because they have not signed up as members of this group or are experiencing technological difficulty in so doing.

Lynette Haaga made available a sign-up sheet for those who wish to contribute food for future meetings, and said she would call to remind volunteers shortly before their volunteer dates.

Dorothy Karilanovic thanked the group for honoring her at the annual holiday party in December.

Kathy Modzelewski mentioned that although the Laffite Society Archive had been destroyed by Hurricane Ike, a list of Laffite-related works in American Literature had been compiled by member Robert Vogel and published some years back in the *Laffite Society Chronicles*. Kathy also referred members to ABE Books, a quality on-line book-search engine, to find Laffite-related titles for sale.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Jean L. Epperson spoke on maps of Galveston Bay dating from Laffite's time; the text of her paper follows.

1816 MAPS OF GALVESTON BAY

Jean L. Epperson

The Rosenberg Library in Galveston has two unsigned maps, in Spanish, apparently drawn in the year 1816. The first is listed as a photostatic copy of a map in the National Archives in Mexico City. It was donated to the Rosenberg by Regan Brown. The second map is a photostatic copy of a manuscript map copied from an uncited volume in Bogota, Columbia. It was donated to the Rosenberg in 1954 by Carlos Fallon.¹

The first map was the subject of much interest and work in 1995 by three members of the Laffite Society, Tom Oertling, Dorothy Karilanovic and Jeff Modzelewski. The map in the Rosenberg is very dim and hard to read and the first order of inquiry was to translate the Spanish. Dorothy and Jeff worked diligently, with much eye

strain, on the translation. Then Tom crafted an article entitled, *Historical Comments and Observations on the Map “Bahía de Galveston.”* The article and translation was published in the January 1996 edition of the *Laffite Society Chronicles*. Tom’s astute conclusion was that the 1810 date on the map was wrong and that the last digit on the date was actually a “6” and not a zero. The upper part of the six had been obliterated. He also related that General Humbert, whose camp was depicted on Bolivar, did not arrive there until 1815. It is likely that this map was drawn by some one in the company of Colonel Henry Perry and General Jean Joseph Humbert whose group arrived on Bolivar in 1815. The group, meeting with misfortune and being unable to be re-supplied, joined Commodore Louis Aury, who arrived on Galveston Island in July 1816.²

The intriguing thing about this map is the three *casas* (houses) shown where Aury’s fort is depicted on the second map. This location was supposedly the highest point on the east end of the Island and the ultimate location of Jean Laffite’s fort and house.

A surprising find, to the author, was a second clear copy in English of this map in the Rosenberg. The translations were not exactly the same as Jeff and Dorothy published in the *Laffite Society Chronicles* but very similar. Did Jeff and Dorothy donate a revised copy of the translations to the Rosenberg?

The second 1816 map in the Rosenberg is primarily of the entrance to Galveston Bay and is entitled *Entrada de la Bahía de Galveston, 1816*. This map was reproduced in an article entitled *The Three Pirates Lafon*, published in the *Laffite Society Chronicles* in February 2005. Printed on Point Bolivar is the camp of Colonel Perry, and on the east end of Galveston Island (*Isla Serpiente*) is a fort. This map is extremely well done and it is speculated that it was crafted by Bartholome Lafon, a well-known engineer and cartographer of the time. Lafon was known to have sent a map to Governor Antonio Martínez in 1817. The title of the map was not specified but it was more than likely the entrance to Galveston Bay.³

It has been informative and a pleasure to have reviewed these maps and the participation of the members of the Laffite Society in studying and translating the maps.

¹ Henry G. Taliaferro, *Cartographic Sources in the Rosenberg Library* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988), 100 & 101.

² Harris Gaylord Warren, *The Sword Was Their Passport* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1943), 122, 123–130, 131; Harriet Smither, editor, *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1914), VI, 443-444.

³ Virginia H. Taylor, *The Letters of Antonio Martínez 1817-1822* (Austin: Texas State Library, 1957), 34.

Dan Cote volunteered to take over the editorship of the *Laffite Society Chronicles* from former editor Don Marler.

Thanks were extended to Jim Nonus for providing the Society a new site at which to hold meetings, and Jim returned the thanks to those who help stage the meetings, contribute food and drink, do set-up and clean-up, etc.

Jim reminded attendees of the Fat Tuesday Party to be held at that same venue on Tuesday, 02/24/2009, at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by

Jeff Modzelewski
Recording/Correspondent Secretary, Pro Tem
The Laffite Society