

Corrected 2/13/97

January 14, 1997

GENERAL MEETING

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
The Eiband Gallery  
22nd and Postoffice Streets  
Galveston, Texas 77550

MEMBERS

Board Present: First Vice-President (FVP), Jean L. Epperson;  
SVP Kathy Modzelewski; TVP Jim Nonus;  
Recording/Corresponding Secty., Dorothy McD.  
Karilanovic; Editor/Publications, Jeff  
Modzelewski; Coor./Res., Bill Foley;  
Historian, Bernadette Foley; Archivist,  
Richard Rasche; Press Dir., Dave Roberts

Board Absent: Pres., Dale Olson; Treasurer, Jim Earthman;  
Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Members-at-Large: Vittoria Abercrombie (new); Andy and  
Becki Hall; John E. Hunger (new); Charles  
Kelly; George and Mary Frances Najarian;  
Donald Peak; Reginald and Betty Wilson;  
Wil Zapalac

Guests: "Winter Texans" Mary Frances and Lloyd  
Johnson from Fairfax, West Virginia

CALL TO ORDER

FVP Jean Epperson called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

PROGRAM FOR THE EVENING

Ed./Publications Jeff Modzelewski presented a review of Jean Laffite, Prince of Pirates, by Jack C. Ramsay, Jr., published by Eakin Press, Austin, Texas, 1996. The author has a Ph.D. in Historical Research and is a Presbyterian minister.

Jeff gave a synopsis of each chapter from a document he had prepared, portions of which may subsequently be published in The Laffite Chronicles.

Ramsay's book contains an extensive bibliography and a listing of about 25 men, battery mates of Dominique Youx, in the Battle of New Orleans, 1812. Copies of Jeff's synopsis were distributed to members.

**MINUTES**

Because there were three sets of Minutes from two previous Board meetings and one General Meeting, the Secretary asked Board members to take their copies home to read and requested that they advise her of substantive corrections at the next meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

In the Treasurer's absence, SVP Kathy Modzelewski gave the report: a balance of \$1,144 in the LS treasury.

**MEMBERSHIP**

SVP Kathy distributed written reminders to members to renew their dues. The names of three new members were announced: Author, Jack C. Ramsay (Jean Laffite, Prince of Pirates), John E. Hunger, and Vittoria Abercrombie.

**AMENDED BY-LAWS**

SVP Kathy gave out copies of a letter to members on official LS stationery, under her signature as Second Vice-President of Membership, dated November 25, containing recommended amendments to By-Laws. A motion to pass the amendments was made by Kathy, seconded by Coordinator of Research, Bill Foley; motion carried.

**LAFFITE MEDALLIONS**

Charles Kelly displayed examples of the Laffite Medallion he had created. The medals, containing 1 oz. each of sterling silver, will be sold at \$35.00 each through STAR STRUCK JEWELRY and THE EIBAND GALLERY. The sum of \$3.00 from each sale will be donated to the LS.

Charles asked that members consider having the medallion become the official commemorative medal for The Laffite Society. The medal, which can have a jeweler's bail affixed, can be worn around the neck, perhaps, as member John Hunger suggested, on a white satin ribbon, or can be displayed in a special holder as a keepsake.

## EAST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

FVP Jean Epperson mentioned that on February 21 at The Tremont House in Galveston, historian Margaret Henson will give a book review and present a talk on the Galveston City Company, a 19th century organization consisting of early founders of the city.

Jean will also speak at this same event on "Jean Laffite and Galveston," at 4:15 p.m., Feb. 21.

## LA SALLE SHIP EXCAVATION

Andy Hall stated that due to a contribution from Mobil Oil, the Texas Historical Commission will now be able to complete excavation and removal of the French ship wrecked in Matagorda Bay in 1686. Field work should be finished by the end of March.

## HISTORICAL 19th CENTURY BRITISH CORRESPONDENCE

SVP Kathy Modzelewski presented xeroxed copies to members from the Williams Research Center, Historical New Orleans Collection, of the following letters from officers of the British Navy. These were contributed to the LS by member Robert Looper of Golden Meadow, LA.

- 1) MSS 196, Folder 2  
No. 4. An address from Lieut. Colonel Edward Nicolls, Commanding His Britannic Majesty's Forces in Florida, dated August 1814, calling upon all Americans for allegiance to the British Empire.
- 2) MSS 196, Folder 3  
No. 1. Letter of Instruction from Capt. William Henry Percy of His Majesty's Ship HERMES, and Senior officer in the Gulf of Mexico, to Capt. Lockyer, August 30, 1814, directing him to sail on Barataria to insist that the inhabitants "throw themselves under the protection of Great Britain" and cease hostilities against Spain.
- 3) MSS 196, Folder 4  
No. 2, Capt. Percy to Monsieur Lafite [sic], September 1, 1814, informing him of Capt. Lockyer's intended visit to Barataria, summoning Laffite and the inhabitants of Barataria to pledge their allegiance to Great Britain and to cease hostilities against British and Spanish vessels.
- 4) MSS 196, 1814, Aug. 13  
No. 3. Col. Edward Nicholls to Monsieur Lafite [sic] [as the "Commandant" at Barataria], calling upon him to "enter into the service of Great Britain" in which he would have the "rank of Captain."

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

- 1) TVP Jim Nonus announced he would have an up-date on the May trip planned for Louisiana at the next meeting.
- 2) Sally K. Reeves, Notarial Archivist of New Orleans, will be in Galveston the last week of May to give a talk to the LS.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Recording/Corresponding Secretary  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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MINUTES

February 11, 1997

GENERAL MEETING  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
The Eiband Gallery  
22nd and Postoffice Streets  
Galveston, Texas 77550

**MEMBERS**

Board Present: President, R. Dale Olson; FBP, Jean L. Epperson, SVP, Kathy Modzelewski; Rec./Corres. Secretary, Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic; Editor of Publications, Jeff Modzelewski; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Coor./Research, Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Archivist, Richard Rasche; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Board Absent: TVP Jim Nonus; Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III

Members-at-Large: Andy and Becki Hall, George Najarian, Judge Susan Olsen (new), Don Peak, Wil Zapalac

Guests: Lloyd and Mary Francis Johnson (West Virginia)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The President called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**\* \* SPECIAL PRESENTATION \* \***

Editor of Publications, Jeff Modzelewski and Second Vice-President Kathy Modzelewski gave a presentation entitled, "In Which Year Did Laffite Abandon Galveston: 1820 or 1821?: A Selected Reference Base for Further Research, With Some Opinion on the Issue."

In this research 13 sources were identified mentioning a departure date: 4 for 1820 and 9 for 1821. Some plausible opinions on these discrepancies were offered by Jeff and Kathy with comments from members.

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the January 14 meeting were read before members by the Secretary, corrected and approved.

**FVP's REPORT - MEETING PROGRAMS**

None planned to date.

**SVP's REPORT - MEMBERSHIP**

Kathy distributed to members an up-dated membership list. The number of members now stands at 60.

**TVP's REPORT - SPECIAL EVENTS**

In Jim's absence, SVP Kathy gave out copies obtained from member Joel Kirkpatrick of a radio news release of the upcoming program of the Texas Historical Marker Dedication by the Texas Historical Commission, to be held at the gravesite of Charles A. Cronea, High Island Community Cemetery on 5th Street, west of Gulfway Drive, Highland, TX, Saturday, March 1, 1997.

This event will be sponsored by "descendants of Charles Cronea," and is "approved by the Texas State Historical Commission and the Galveston County Historical Commission. Authors and historians W.T. Block, a LS member, and Melanie Wiggins will be featured speakers.

Jean Epperson brought for members' interest a file of photos on Charles Cronea, and some belonging to Mary Faye Barnes, former Director of the Galveston County Historical Commission.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

1) The Secretary asked the membership to consider allowing the '97-'98 subscription to the Bulletin of Genealogy and History of the Caribbean (BGHC) to be paid from the Society's treasury. The annual subscription, paid for by the Secretary from '95-'97, had been \$34.00, plus \$5.00 for a cashier's check and the cost of first-class overseas postage. The new rate will be \$42.00 per year, plus the cost of postage. Motion to pay was passed with the following stipulations: a) payment by the Society would be for one year, subject to reconsideration in Feb. of '98 as to the bulletin's value to the LS b) copies of all issues of the bulletin are to be placed in the Archives, along with copies of any French translations made of articles.

Resolved: Because of the fact that the Secretary is at present the principal user of the GHC bulletin, having submitted to the Archives a number of translations from the bulletin since '94, the bulletin will continue to be sent to her home address.

2) The Secretary reported that at the request of TVP, Jim Nonus, she had viewed a video, The Mock Trial of Jean Laffite, which member, Robert Looper of Golden Meadow, LA, had sent to the LS. A brief description of the film was given to members, along with a typescript of notes. The video can be borrowed by members through the Secretary or from Special Events Director, Jim Nonus.

3) The Secretary said that historical researcher and genealogist Michel Rateau of the BGHC in France had written to offer his academic services consisting of a free exchange of xeroxed copies of historical articles. Mr. Rateau also requests that those who would like copies send an International Postal Coupon to cover the cost of return postage. Rare book collectors should send him their fax number in order to have quick access to purchases on historical titles of interest to the Society.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Kathy, standing in for Treasurer, Jim Earthman, handed out copies of an itemized expense sheet ("Register Report" for the period 9-19-95 through 2-10-97), prepared by Mr. Earthman's secretary, indicating a tentative balance of \$912.54.

#### EDITOR OF PUBLICATIONS - REPORT

Copies of The Laffite Chronicles covering the period January, '96 through June, '96, were issued to members. Copies will be mailed to members not present.

Discussion followed on cost of printing and choice of more efficient software to make easier and faster the typing and layout of future issues. All supplies used in the preparation of the publication are to be reimbursed from the Society's treasury on submission of appropriate receipts.

Jeff reported that the former Chairperson of The Galveston County Historical Commission, Mary Faye Barnes, had donated 15 copies to Society archives of the following document:

A History of the Leadership of Galveston County: Biographical Sketches of the County Judges, County Clerks, and County Commissioners: 1838-1996, compiled by The Galveston County Historical Commission, Galveston, Texas. Mary Faye Barnes, Chairperson; Lara J. Duhon, Researcher; Merrick C. Gearing, Researcher.

#### PRESS DIRECTORS' REPORT

Standing in for Press Director, Dave Roberts, who had to leave the meeting before adjournment, the President reported the following: Dave has written and sent out "Letters to Editors" to various newspapers from a list of those published in Texas and

Louisiana. Dave suggests that other members draft and send similar letters describing the purpose and interests of the LS in order to encourage subscription.

#### PHOTO SESSION IN LOUISIANA

The President suggested that members participating in the upcoming Special Event trip to Grand Isle and Grande Terre, LA the weekend of May 10, may want to take photos of the still extant and relatively undisturbed historical sites and items of interest in these areas in order to preserve them as an historical record. The photos will be assembled by the Society in an album format and possibly published at some time in the future.

#### LAFFITE MEDALLION

A suggestion at the January 14 meeting to consider the recently crafted Laffite Medallion as an official commemorative object of the LS has been deferred for action.

#### HISTORICAL SHIP LIST

Coordinator of Research, Bill Foley, is in the process of preparing a list for reference of the names of ships associated with 19th century privateering activities.

#### "LAFFITE PRIMER"

To initiate an important reference source, the purpose of which will be to familiarize both old and new members with the central historical figures associated with the Laffite brothers and their times, the President revealed an extensive alphabetized print-out he had prepared. It is intended that this record will be up-dated by members at intervals as new information is acquired.

#### SPECIAL EVENT FOR MARCH 11 MEETING

A showing of the video, The Mock Trial of Jean Lafitte, is scheduled for the March 11 meeting of the LS.

#### MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the General Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Secretary, THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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**MINUTES**

March 11, 1997  
GENERAL MEETING  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
The Eiband Gallery  
2201 Postoffice Street  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

**MEMBERS**

Board Present: FVP Jean L. Epperson; SVP Kathy Modzelewski;  
Recording Secty., Dorothy McD. Karilanovic;  
Editor-of-Publications, Jeff Modzelewski;  
Press Director, Dave Roberts; Coor./Res., Bill  
Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Archivist,  
Richard Rasche

Board Absent: President, Dale Olson; TVP Jim Nonus;  
Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III;  
Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Members-at-Large: Andy & Becki Hall, John Hunger, George  
Najarian, Susan Olsen, Don Peak, Ginny  
Roberts, Reginald & Betty Wilson

Guests: Joe Kuca, Ed and Meriworth Mabry

**CALL TO ORDER**

FVP Jean Epperson called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

A video dramatization of The Mock Trial of Jean Lafitte,  
performed by legal professionals under the auspices of the New  
Orleans Bar Association, was viewed by members. A typescript of a  
synopsis of the film, prepared by the Secretary, was read to  
members by Jeff Modzelewski prior to the viewing.

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the February 11 meeting were read, corrected, and  
approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Jeff Modzelewski, standing in for Treasurer, Jim Earthman,  
reported he had entered into a computer file all income and  
expenses on record since inception of the LS in 1994. A complete  
financial report will be available at the Board Meeting in April.

## MEMBERSHIP

SVP Kathy requested that members make a small contribution (\$2.00 suggested) at each meeting to cover the cost of refreshments.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

SVP Kathy, standing in for TVP Jim Nonus, stated that the next LS meeting will be held at the home of Jim and Margaret Earthman, 1502 Broadway.

Kathy passed out information on hotel rates for the Louisiana trip to Grand Isle scheduled for May 9-11. A revised flyer noting dates of the event will be sent to all members.

## PRESS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dave Roberts said he had received 4 or 5 responses to his Letters-to-the-Editors to newspapers in various states, as well as some phone calls, requesting information on the LS. Dave will give a full report at a subsequent meeting.

## ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE

Becki & Andy Hall, of the LS Archeological Committee, have begun an analysis of the artifacts collected during excavation at the Maison Rouge site, 1417 Harborside, contained in 122 boxes. They have prepared a computerized access data base ("Artifact List"), with subjects listed according to description, category, and manner in which given items are housed (e.g., box, sack, bag). Xeroxed copies of the records of items examined to date were shown to members. Monthly updates of archeological finds will be entered into the data. Becki & Andy said they hope to be able to bring in periodic listings of interesting items found as they progress.

Becki reported she had made contact through the Internet with an archeological group regarding the significance of the presence of charcoal found near a well site on the Maison Rouge property. Becki said that charcoal was a substance used to filter water, dating back to the 1820s.

Andy & Becki, who has a degree in terrestrial archeology and one in anthropology, together with Sarita and Tom Oertling, who is a nautical archeologist, will work together as time permits classifying the items found at the Maison Rouge location.

## WEBB PAGE FOR THE LS

The Society's Editor, Jeff, reported he plans to create a WEBB page with an E-mail address to make available information on the LS through the Internet.

FVP Jean Epperson recently set up a WEBB Page for her professional activities as an author, historian, and genealogist.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Recording Secretary  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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**SPECIAL EVENT**

**APRIL 8, 1997**

**BUFFET SUPPER**

**Laffite Society Members and Friends**

**were guests at the home of**

**Margaret and Jim Earthman**

**1502 Broadway**

**Galveston, Texas**

4-11

MINUTES

May 13, 1997

GENERAL MEETING

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
The Eiband Gallery  
2201 Postoffice Street  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

MEMBERS

Board Present: President, R. Dale Olson; SVP, Kathy Modzelewski; TVP, Jim Nonus; Recording Secty., Dorothy McD. Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Jeff Modzelewski; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Coor./Res., Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Archivist, Richard Rasche; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Board Absent: FVP Jean L. Epperson, Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III

Members-at-Large: John Hunger, George Najarian, A.M. & Marcia Wilcox, Wil Zapalac

Guests: Glenn and Charlotte Stilgenbauers (Dick Rasche's cousins from New Philadelphia, Ohio)

CALL TO ORDER

President, Dale Olson, called the General Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The Secretary read the Minutes of March 11. (There were no Minutes from April due to the occurrence of a special event on the meeting date.) Minutes of March 11 were corrected and approved.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS FOR REFRESHMENTS

The President reminded members that a small contribution of \$2.00 at each meeting would be helpful to cover the cost of light refreshments.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Diane Olson reported that in the planning stage is a boat trip probably in mid-July to Virginia Point to visit the supposed grave site of James Campbell and others. Diane's brother and sister-in-law, Joe & Judy Dolfi, are providing the boat and transportation to Virginia Point. The group will have hot dogs and other light refreshments at a location on Tiki Island.

#### PHOTOS OF CANNONS

Dale and Diane showed photos to members of cannons commissioned by Doug Zweiner, originally intended for placement atop the concrete foundation at the Maison Rouge site at 1417 Ave. A. The cannons are now at a location in Independence, Texas.

#### YUCATAN TRIP

Dale and Diane Olson consulted Susan Antonelli of Travel Counselors, Galveston, to obtain an estimate of individual costs for a trip (4 nights/5 days) consisting of a party of 15-20 persons, departing Bush Intercontinental sometime in January for Cancun, Mexico. The proposed purpose of the trip is to visit the alleged burial sites of Pierre and Jean Laffite at Dzinzantun and Dzilam de Bravo, respectively. Details described as follows:

Leave Houston on Sun.; arrive that night at Cancun.  
15-20 persons; round trip fare, \$400/per person;  
\$50.00/night for room at double occupancy; \$30-40/day for food, etc.; an additional \$50.00 for ground transportation.

A proposed itinerary might be as follows:

Fly to Cancun - then to Isla de Mujeres; ferry back to Cancun; then take a bus to Mérida; take ground transportation, perhaps by van, to the sites of

#### Dzinzantun and Dzilam de Bravo.

Dale asked that those members planning to go on the Yucatan trip let TVP, Special Events Director, Jim Nonus know, and also submit their suggestions for dates preferred.

The President also stated that prior to the Yucatan trip, members would be provided with study material to familiarize them with the historical objectives of the trip. He further stated that at some point those wishing to travel would be asked to make a financial commitment to the trip so that Travel Counselors could proceed with working out the final details.

#### EVENING'S PROGRAM

In lieu of a formal program, members who participated in the May 10-12 trip to Grand Isle and Grande Terre, LA, discussed their impressions, showed photos and various artifacts found on location at the tip of Grande Terre, some of which consisted of glass and pottery shards, pipe stems, nails, and flints.

#### LAFFITE SHIPS

The President stated that on the recent trip to Grand Isle, member Robert Looper of Golden Meadow, LA gave him a copy of a Laffite ship list of which he will pass along a copy to Coordinator of Research Bill Foley.

#### OFFICERS' NOTEBOOKS

Officers were reminded to keep their LS notebooks up to date, describing their duties to create a record that might be helpful to those who succeed them in office.

#### CHARGES FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

The President asked members to consider designating a charge for attendance at special events in order to alleviate a dependence on the LS treasury to cover the costs of expenses for such events.

An additional suggestion for thought was to set specific

categories of charges for the various types of special events.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Press Director Dave Roberts announced that at a future meeting he hopes to present a summary of the information he has obtained as a result of his Letters to the Editors of various locales.

#### MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the General Meeting was adjourned at about 8:30 a.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Recording Secretary,  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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## MINUTES

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

### GENERAL MEETING THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

The Eiband Gallery  
22<sup>nd</sup> and Postoffice Streets  
Galveston, Texas 77550

#### MEMBERS

Board Present: First Vice President, Jean L. Epperson; Second Vice President, Kathy Modzelewski; Third Vice President, Jim Nonus; Editor of Publications, Jeff Modzelewski; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Ex-Officio Advisor - Historical Preservation, Randy Pace.

Board Absent: President, R. Dale Olson; Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III; Recording/Corresponding Secretary, Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic; Coordinator of Research, Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Archivist, Richard Rasche; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Members-at-Large: Don Marler; George and Mary Frances Najarian; Tom and Sarita Oertling; Don Peak; Ginny Roberts; Art and Marcia Wilcox; Dr. Reginald and Betty Wilson; Wil Zapalac

Guests: None

#### CALL TO ORDER

The Second Vice President called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

#### SPECIAL PRESENTATION

First Vice President Jean Epperson read the text (to be published in future issues of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*) of three articles she had written.

The first article dealt again with the issue discussed as the February, 1997, special presentation, of whether Laffite abandoned Galveston Island in 1820 or 1821.

The second article raised the question of whether: a) the supposed red color of the Maison Rouge; b) the belief that Laffite lived primarily not in the Maison Rouge, but rather on the grounded ship *Pride*; and c) the legend that it was because the "Yellow Rose of Texas" was entertaining Santa Anna that the Mexicans lost the Battle of San Jacinto, were in fact only myths originated and perpetuated by the writer William Bollaert.

The third article dealt with another legend of Laffite buried treasure, this one courtesy of the tale of an old Indian in the vicinity of Armand Bayou in the Clear Lake area.

After the readings, attendees engaged in some interesting and lively discussion of the articles, particularly as concerns the question of the Maison Rouge's structure and appearance.

#### MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting of Tuesday, May 13, 1997, were not available for reading due to the absence of Recording/Corresponding Secretary Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic.

## FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - MEETING PROGRAMS

No report was presented.

## SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - MEMBERSHIP

No report was presented.

## THIRD VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - SPECIAL EVENTS

No report was presented, but see below regarding the informal discussion held later in the meeting to discuss the very tentative beginnings of a plan for a trip to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula sometime in 1998.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

No report was presented, as Recording/Corresponding Secretary Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic was absent.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Jim Earthman was absent, and no formal report was presented. However, Editor of Publications Jeff Modzelewski, a CPA by occupation, reported that he had entered all of the financial data for The Laffite Society, since its inception in August, 1994, into the accounting software package *QuickBooks Pro 4.0 for Windows*, and balanced all bank statements for the life of the Society. Jeff stated that he has also produced a number of reports with this software which present easily understandable data to help in deciding the economic feasibility of future actions of the Society: for example, whether to charge a participation fee for Special Events, whether to continue with the *Laffite Society Chronicles* semiannually or instead publish a brief newsletter for three quarters of the year and a larger *Chronicles* only at year-end, etc. Jeff suggested that at the next Board meeting, the finances of The Society be formally discussed, as this has never before been done but is now possible.

Jeff also noted that at the end of May, 1997, The Society had a bank statement account balance of about \$935.

## EDITOR OF PUBLICATIONS REPORT

Editor of Publications Jeff Modzelewski reported that the fifth issue of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, covering the semiannual period July 1996 through December 1996, had been completed and would be sent to a printer within the next few days. This issue represents a milestone of sorts, since for the first time in about two years the *Chronicles* is not in arrears.

Jeff also touched again on a topic discussed in past meetings, noting that the cost of producing each issue of the *Chronicles* is high enough that The Society may need to consider changing to a quarterly newsletter for the first three quarters of each calendar year, and issuing only one formal *Chronicles* at year-end.

## PRESS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report was presented.

## YUCATAN TRIP

During the special event trip to Grand Isle/Grande Terre in May, the tentative idea for a trip in 1998 to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula had come up for consideration, and met with substantial interest. President R. Dale Olson obtained one preliminary per-person travel package estimate from a Galveston travel agent, using as a trip date the month of January, 1998; the cost seemed to many Society members rather high.

Third Vice President Jim Nonus stated that he would obtain other quotes for a package, and members present agreed that The Society should look at taking the trip later in the year, since January is high season in the Yucatan, and going later in the year, although the weather would be more hot and humid, might substantially reduce the cost.

## INTERNET AND LAFFITE WORLD WIDE WEB PAGE; MEMBERS' E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Editor of Publications Jeff Modzelewski discussed member Andy Hall's creation of a Laffite Web page on the Internet, currently under development, and told members with Internet access that he would e-mail them the web site address within the next few days, so that they could preview it for themselves.

As members with Internet access also agreed that they would like a listing of each others' e-mail addresses, Jeff agreed to e-mail the list to them.

## SPEAKERS' BUREAU AND LAFFITE PRIMER

Press Director Dave Roberts spoke again about the idea of a "Speakers' Bureau," a group of Society members who would be interested in presenting a Laffite lecture of perhaps an hour's duration to local community not-for-profit groups, such as libraries, schools, chambers of commerce, garden clubs, etc. The outline for such a presentation would also go hand in hand with another issue discussed in the past, the development of a "Laffite Primer," a basic outline of fact and plausible legend about the privateer, which could be used to bring new and potential members "up to speed" with Laffite basics. Jeff Modzelewski and Jim Nonus noted that they would be interested in assisting with both projects; President Dale Olson, although not present at this meeting, has also indicated interest in aiding the two ventures.

## RADIO VIGNETTES

Press Director Dave Roberts mentioned an idea to bring The Society publicity locally, and hopefully new members: the presentation of weekly three-minute radio vignettes about Laffite on local radio station KGBC, with the potential for selling the spots to other Texas Gulf Coast stations. Dave will do the taping and promotion to the stations. In order to begin, however, KGBC would need to have a completed set of the shorts - perhaps up to a year's worth - so some substantial work would have to be done to script this number of vignettes before the actual taping could get under way.

## BOARD MEETING AND SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

Members scheduled a Board of Directors meeting for 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 1997, immediately prior to the regular monthly meeting.

Additionally, Third Vice President Jim Nonus suggested that The Society institute the idea of Saturday morning, informal "coffee-klatch" workshops to attempt to make progress on some of the items The Society wishes to address, since meeting just once a month during the week after the normal monthly meeting does not seem to be generating much progress toward its goals.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business, the General Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jeff Modzelewski  
Editor of Publications, THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
(As Substitute for the Recording/Corresponding Secretary)

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Corrected 10/30/97

MINUTES  
July 8, 1997  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
General Meeting  
THE EIBAND GALLERY  
2201 Post Office Street  
Galveston, Texas, 77550

MEMBERS

Board Present: First Vice-President, Jean L. Epperson; SVP, Kathy Modzelewski; TVP Jim Nonus; Secretary, Dorothy McD. Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Jeff Modzelewski; Press Dir., Dave Roberts; Archivist, Richard Rasche

Board Absent: President, Dale Olson; Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III; Coor./Research, Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

Members-at-Large: Charles Kelly; Becki Hall; John Hunger; Tom & Sarita Oertling; Susan Olsen; Don Peak; Ginny Roberts; Marcia Wilcox; Reginald and Betty Wilson (& granddaughter); Wil Zapalac

Guests: Aaron Martin, Louise Martin

CALL TO ORDER

FVP Jean Epperson called the General Meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

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## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

### "Reports on Letters-to-the Editors" by DAVE ROBERTS

Laffite Society Press Director, Dave Roberts, gave a presentation on some of the more interesting responses to his Letter-to-the Editors which he has been sending over the past several months to various newspapers and other small periodicals in towns located along the Gulf Coast, not including Louisiana. Dave gave out copies of some articles he had received from interested correspondents, as follows:

- 1) From Frances LaRoche Pechacek, P.O. Box 923, Port Isabel, TX 78578 (Port Isabel-South Padre Press, April, 1978: "Port Isabel Past Included Explorers, Pirates, Indians," by Dr. James A. Hockaday.

The article refers to an "old LaFitte Well, at Laguna Vista, where he [Laffite] filled his casks with fresh water." According to Frances LaRoche Pechacek, the well is still there, although the water from it is undrinkable.

- 2) From correspondent, Mr. Lloyd W. Meyer, 876 Park Road, Port Lavaca, TX 77979; Tel.: 512)552-2676. Article from Port Lavaca Wave, September 19, 1978, p. 5, entitled "Looking Back: Lafitte's Sunken Treasure Lost Forever?" by Paul Freier.

This article mentions accounts of searches for Laffite's sunken ship, THE PRIDE, the masts of which were reported to have been seen in the Lavaca River, as well as of treasure said to have been buried near by "in the salt flats in sight of the sunken ship, and the site marked by a "Jacob's staff of brass."

Dave mentioned that Mr. Meyer had extended an invitation to Laffite Society members to visit the Port Lavaca area.

- 3) Article from The Historian of Hancock County, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, April, 1994, on a house in the area said to have been owned by Laffite. The article mentions that this story is told by J. Frank Dobie in his book Coronado's Children, published in 1930 (a xeroxed copy, courtesy of Charles Sanders of Houston, is now in the LS archives).

According to the story in The Historian, a land title Dec. 6, 1825 stated that "Sieur Jean Lafitte" purchased property in Hancock County and "spent his last days in the 'Pirate House' on the beach of Bay St. Louis-Waveland, a house built expressly for him." The article goes on to say that, "according to more deeds made out to him," Lafitte lived "in quiet retirement for about 25 years at Bay St. Louis, and was reported to have died about 1850."

## GENERAL MEETING

### VISITORS RECOGNIZED

FVP Jean Epperson welcomed guests and prospective members Louise Martin and her son, Aaron, of Galveston.

### MINUTES

Due to the absence of the Secretary at the June 10th meeting, Minutes of that meeting were taken and prepared by Editor-of-Publications Jeff Modzelewski who read them at the General Meeting. Minutes were approved as read. Minutes of the May 13th meeting were not read or approved.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

In the absence of Laffite Society Treasurer, Jeff reported on the balance in the treasury as being about \$400.00.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

SVP Kathy Modzelewski stated that an up-dated membership list would be mailed out in the near future.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

TVP Jim Nonus reported that he has information on hotels for a 3-4 night stay in the Yucatan. Discussion followed on which months to travel, possibly April or May, when off-season fares and rates would be in effect, and on other arrangements such as whether or not to rent a van for travel along the coast. Jim said he would obtain information on direct flights to Mérida.

Jim also stated that he is attempting to set up an impromptu talk for the August meeting by William Simpson on the provenance of the collection of papers published as The Journal of Jean Laffite. . . now housed at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty, Texas. The talk is to be held at the Simpson auction and antique gallery in Houston

## THE CHRONICLES

Editor-of-Publications, Jeff Modzelewski, announced that Vol. III, No. 1, January, 1997, has been issued in its new spiral-bound format. Jeff said that Speedy's Kwik-Kopy of Galveston, who handled the printing, had been very accommodating regarding requests for preparation, and that this company has been designated as the official copy center for Laffite Society printing needs regarding publication of THE LAFFITE SOCIETY CHRONICLES.

Jeff also mentioned that in the interest of saving expenses the Society consider the possibility of publishing a quarterly newsletter and only one large issue of The Chronicles per year. This suggestion seemed to meet with general agreement among members present.

## ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT

Becki Hall, of the Laffite Society Archeology Committee, reported that she currently has in her home four boxes of excavated items for cleaning and



classification, dating from the 1984 dig, and that, upon inspection, it was her professional opinion as an archeologist that many of the objects in these boxes probably could be discarded. She suggested that members might assist in this project by offering to take a box or two in order to help speed up the process of cleaning and classification.

Becki further stated that Sheldon Kendal, who directed the '96 dig at the Maison Rouge site in June-July, has culled out the objects of no value in the material collected at that excavation. Becki said she had requested from Sheldon a report on the findings. To be noted, according to Becki and Sheldon, is that none of the excavated objects found at "Level 5" from the '84 dig, thought to be the stratum representative of the Laffite era, are accessible at present to the Laffite Society, the supposition being that these objects may still be housed in the Department of Archeology at The University of Houston, at which time the project was under the direction of Dolph Widmer.

A suggestion was made again that a future meeting be devoted to a cleaning and classification session of the '84 and '96 objects.

#### PHOTOS OF A BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS MEDAL

Reginald Wilson showed members colored photos made by Pam Keyes of a medal commemorating the Battle of New Orleans which she had recently purchased. Reginald said that Pam recognized the medal from a description she had seen of it in Medals of the War of 1812.

#### MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the General Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Secretary, THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

file

AUGUST, 1997  
(no meeting held)

SPECIAL EVENT

TIKI ISLAND BARBECUE

Barbecue supper at the Tiki Island home of Joe and Judy Dolfi, with a visit to the environs of cemetery on Virginia Point where the pirate James Campbell is buried.

SEPTEMBER, 1997  
(no meeting held)

SPECIAL EVENT

BOAT TRIP ON THE "SEAGULL"

Members and guests of The Laffite Society were treated to a moonlight boat ride on Galveston Bay, September 16, 1997, on the tour boat, "The Seagull," Harborside Tours, with "Commodore" Victor Lang as commentator.

File

MINUTES  
October 14, 1997  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
General Meeting  
The Eiband Gallery  
2201 Post Office  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

CALL TO ORDER

MEMBERS

**Board Present:** First Vice-President Jean L. Epperson; SVP  
Kathy Modzelewski; TVP Jim Nonus;  
Rec./Corresp. Secretary, Dorothy McD.  
Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Jeff  
Modzelewski; Press Director, Dave Roberts;  
Archivist, Richard Rasche; Coordinator of  
Research, Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley

**Board Absent:** President, Dale Olson; Treasurer, Jim Earthman;  
Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

**Members-at-Large:** John Hunger, Charles Kelly, Pam & Bill  
Keyes, Bill Leopold, Robert Looper, Aaron  
Martin, Louise Martin, Don Marler, Tom &  
Sarita Oertling, Susan Baker Olsen, Jack  
and Karin Ramsay, Ginny Roberts, Robert  
Vogel, Kathleen Taylor Vogel, Marcia and  
Art Wilcox, Reginald & Betty Wilson, Wil  
Zapalac

**Guests/Visitors:** Dee Collins, Doris Sutton, Beth & Ron Austin,

Sam & Clara Zaborowski, Veronica Veerkamp &  
Richard Coberly, Susan Delgado, Kenneth Deaton,  
Brenda & Jim Atchley, Kurt Voss, Jo Sloan, Jim  
Hughs, Linda Christman-Pitts

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

## SPECIAL LECTURE

Following a book signing hour, prior to the meeting, TVP Jim Nonus gave a short introduction for the speaker of the evening, Professor Jack C. Ramsay, who was assisted in his presentation by his wife, Karin Ramsay. Prof. Ramsay spoke about his thought and purpose behind the twelve years of research in writing his new book, Jean Laffite, Prince of Pirates,<sup>1</sup> an exceptionally well researched work, with index, extensive Bibliography and Note sections. It was his intention, he stated, to sort out what seemed to be "truth or plausible information" from what he had read in Lyle Saxon's book, published in 1930, and to present this as a "responsible portrayal of history."

One approach in his study was to seek out the man, Laffite, behind the legend, in an effort to sense his psyche and grasp some particle of truth. Ramsay's conclusion, after all, was that although he felt he had some idea of how Laffite thought, he was unable to get to the "heart and soul" of Jean Laffite.

Members were asked to write down their questions regarding Laffite on index cards, which Prof. Ramsay then proceeded to answer to the best of his ability.

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<sup>1</sup>Jean Laffite, Prince of Pirates by Jack C. Ramsay, Jr., Eakin Press, Austin Texas, 1996 (available for purchase in Jeff and Kathy Modzelewski's "historic books" space in The Eiband Gallery)

## GENERAL MEETING

FVP Jean L. Epperson extended a welcome to members from afar, Robert Vogel and Kathleen Taylor Vogel from Minnesota, Bob Looper, who had driven over from Grand Isle, LA, and to Pam and Bill Keyes from Miami.

### MINUTES

The Secretary read the Minutes from the July, '97 meeting, which, with one correction, were approved as read.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Jeff Modzelewski, in Jim Earthman's absence, gave a report of \$750.00 less \$330.00 for printing expenses for the latest issue of The Laffite Society Chronicles, for a balance of \$420.00.

### THE CHRONICLES

Editor-of-Publications Jeff Modzelewski, distributed to members the latest issue of The Laffite Society Chronicles, Vol. III., No. 2, July, 1997, bringing up to date all issues of the Society's publication since its inception in August of 1994. Jeff suggested that the Society might want to make extra copies of "The Chronicles" available to guests and visitors at a nominal suggested price of \$5.00 a copy.

Jeff also called for assistance from members in providing a one-page write-up of the Society's special events for inclusion in "The Chronicles," such as the April 8th buffet supper at the historical Galveston home of Jim and Margaret Earthman; the August Tiki Island barbecue at the home of Joe and Judy Dolfi, with a visit near the cemetery site of James Campbell, right-hand man of Jean Laffite; and the September 16 moonlight boat ride in Galveston Bay on the "Seagull," with "Commodore" Victor Lang of

Harborside Tours as commentator.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1) Jeff extended his thanks on behalf of the LS to publisher Don Marler for his help in acquiring sufficient copies for the Ramsay book signing session prior to the meeting.

2) TVP Jim Nonus expressed his thanks on behalf of members to Editor-of-Publications Jeff Modzelewski for his excellence and dedication in being solely responsible over the past year for editing the articles submitted for publication, preparing typescripts, and arranging for the printing of four issues of The Laffite Society Chronicles, and to SVP Kathy Modzelewski for her assistance in this effort. Jim also thanked Kathy for arranging for the refreshments served during the book signing session prior to this date's meeting.

## RADIO VIGNETTES

Press Director, Dave Roberts, reported that he is working on preparing the way for the presentation of historical vignettes relating to Laffite via local radio. Dave asked for suggestions for background music for his format. Tom Oertling mentioned that he had recordings of sea chanteys which Dave might want to consider using.

## UPCOMING TRAVELS

Members Bob and Kathleen Vogel invited the LS for a weekend visit to Lake Charles, LA. in March, '98 and a possible field trip down the Bayou Contraband. The Vogels also plan to return to Mexico January 10-31, '98, for visits to northern Yucatan - Isla de Mujeres, Dzilam de Bravo, and Campeche.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

**There being no further business, the General Meeting was adjourned  
at 8:00 p.m.**

**Submitted by,**

**Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Recording/Corresponding Secretary  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY**

**\dmk**



J. L.

**Robert C. Vogel & Kathleen F. Taylor**  
**216 Cleveland Avenue Southwest**  
**New Brighton, Minnesota 55112-3508**  
**telephone 612.633.6549**  
**internet vogel014@tc.umn.edu**

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October 31 1997

TO: Laffite Society  
FR: Robert Vogel & Kathy Taylor  
RE: Spring Laffite Field Trip to Lake Charles

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It is our pleasure to announce that we will be hosting a gathering of Laffitians this spring in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Our friends in Louisiana are extremely excited about the Laffite Society and a local planning committee has been assembled.

The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

*Friday, March 13:*

- 4:00-6:00 p.m. Early bird reception at the Inn on the Bayou (on the banks of the Bayou Contraband)
- 7:00-? Dinner at the Jean Lafitte Inne restaurant in Lake Charles, followed by a report of our January 1998 expedition to the Yucatan

*Saturday, March 14:*

- 10:00-11:00 a.m. Talk by Dr. Tom Watson (retired McNeese State history prof.) on Charles Sallier and Calcasieu Parish Laffite lore
- 11:00 a.m.-noon Tour of the Imperial Calcasieu Museum and Sallier Oak
- 12:00-4:00 p.m. Lunch and boat tour of the Bayou Contraband (famous for Laffite treasure) and Lac de Charles
- 4:00-6:00 p.m. Reception with Jean Laffite's pirates from Contraband Days
- 7:00-10:00 p.m. Dinner outdoors at the Inn on the Bayou (or at our place, "the barn," in Lake Charles)

*Sunday, March 15:*

- 1:00-3:00 p.m. Laffite Society meeting

Accommodations: Lake Charles and neighboring Sulphur have an abundance of hotels and motels in all price ranges. The Inn on the Bayou, 1101 W. Prien Lake Road, has very nice guest rooms (we are going to reserve a block of rooms to guarantee a rate in the \$60s); we plan on reserving a courtesy suite for a hospitality room and the hotel boat dock provides access to Bayou Contraband; the hotel also has a good place for an outdoor party.

If you have questions or suggestions, don't hesitate to call us.

*archive*

MINUTES  
November 11, 1997  
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
General Meeting  
The Eiband Gallery  
2201 Post Office  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

CALL TO ORDER

MEMBERS

Board Present: R. Dale Olson, President; First Vice-President, Jean L. Epperson; Second Vice-President, Kathy Modzelewski; Record./Corresp. Secretary, Dorothy McD. Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Jeff Modzelewski; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Archivist, Richard Rasche; Coordinator-of-Research, Bill Foley; Historian, Bernadette Foley; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson.

Board Absent: Third Vice-President, Jim Nonus; Treasurer, James B. Earthman, III

Members-at-Large: Andy and Becki Hall; Charles Kelly; William Leopold; Louise Martin; Tom and Sarita Oertling; Ginny Roberts; Marcia and Art Wilcox; Reginald and Betty Wilson, Wil Zapalac

## CALL TO ORDER

The President called the General Meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

## MINUTES

The Secretary read the Minutes of Oct. 14 which were approved as read.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Kathy Modzelewski, standing in for Jim Earthman, Treasurer, reported a balance of \$698.00 in the Society's treasury.

## ANNUAL MEETING, LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dale reminded members that he and Diane would attend the formal dinner and 100th anniversary meeting of the Louisiana Historical Society in New Orleans January 8. In his role as President of the Society, Dale will speak to members of the LHS regarding the upcoming Lafitte exhibit to be held in New Orleans in the near future. Dale stated that all members of The Laffite Society are invited to attend this meeting. He and Diane will obtain more information as to cost of the formal dinner and hotel arrangements.

## ARTICLES FOR CHRONICLES

Editor-of-Publications Jeff Modzelewski reminded members that it would be helpful to have write-ups on the various special events which The Laffite Society has had over the past year to include in a future issue of The Chronicles.

## PENCIL SKETCH OF LOUIS AURY

Jean Epperson showed members a photocopy of a pencil sketch she had obtained from the University of Texas Archives (Collections), the Center for American History, at Austin. Jean said she will submit the sketch as an item in the New Orleans Laffite exhibit.

## SPECIAL EVENT

Kathy handed out copies of an itinerary of the Lake Charles event, prepared by Robert Vogel and scheduled for Friday, March 13 through Sunday, March 15.

## LAFFITE HANDWRITING

Reginald Wilson mentioned that he had submitted copies of examples of Laffite's handwriting to a Mr. Farrell, a former FBI handwriting expert, who stated that in order to make a more thorough analysis he would require original documents. In this same context, Charles Kelly mentioned a professional graphologist he knew whom he would contact regarding the project.

## HANDWRITING IN THE JOURNAL OF JEAN LAFFITE (A RESPONSE FROM PATRICK LAFFITE)

Secretary, Dorothy, commented on a letter from French member Patrick Lafitte regarding his impressions of the handwriting alleged to be that of Jean Laffite in The Journal of Jean Laffite: the Privateer-Patriot's Own Story, a copy in French of which Patrick obtained and is in the process of analyzing. Patrick stated that it is his opinion that the handwriting in the original document is not that of Jean Laffite, but is a transcript in hand made by someone whose native language was neither French, Spanish, nor Basque. Patrick says he is preparing to write a book on his findings.

## WEST YORKSHIRE CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary also commented on correspondence she has been having since mid-August with Richard B. Smith who is the representative for a group of English researchers in West Yorkshire, England, calling themselves **THE COMPANY**. The group claims to have decoded the Thomas Beale codex purported to date from the 1820s and to contain information on the life of Jean Laffite and his family, as well as clues to the

whereabouts of a vast amount of treasure. The original letter, postmarked August 8, from The Company was a solicitation for participants in an expedition to recover the alleged treasure. Mr. Smith stated by phone to the Secretary on Oct. 27 that his group intends to share some information with the Society as it is revealed to them through their studies, and that the recovery of hidden treasure is not the main objective of their efforts, their chief purpose being to give Jean Laffite the recognition they believe he deserves as a political idealist and a supporter of French Republican goals in the struggle to resettle exiled French in America.

## BRAINSTORMING FOR THE LAFFITE SOCIETY EXHIBIT

Prior to soliciting members' ideas for exhibit items in the New Orleans Laffite exhibit, Dale gave a short description of the steps in the technique of "brainstorming." Jean Epperson recorded the suggestions of members as they responded to questions posed by Dale.

## HOLIDAY PARTY, 1997

A date for The Laffite Society holiday social was set for Tuesday, December 9. Suggestions for refreshments were discussed with no decision being made at this date.

## MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the General Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic  
Secretary, THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

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THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

HOLIDAY SOCIAL

The Eiband Gallery

DECEMBER 4, 1997

(IN LIEU OF THE MEETING)