

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
The Nonus Collection, 2214 Postoffice Street, Galveston, Texas 77550

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 10, 2009

BOARD PRESENT: President Ed Jamison; 1st Vice President Jim Nonus; 2nd Vice President Kathy Modzelewski; 3rd Vice President Lynette Haaga; Treasurer Nancy Beaman; Secretary *pro tem* and Archivist Jeff Modzelewski; Editor of Publications *pro tem* Dan Cote; Parliamentarian Diane Olson; Historian Ginny Roberts; Press Director Dave Roberts; Privateer-at-Arms (nominal) Wil Zapalac.

BOARD ABSENT: Coordinator of Research Gary Fretz; Coordinator of Research Pam Keyes.

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Ed Jamison welcomed attendees and noted that invitations to the Christmas Party, to be held on Saturday evening, December 12th, 2009, were in the mail.

PROGRAM: Physicist and avocational archaeologist Sheldon Kindall gave an oral and video presentation about archaeology in Texas. His presentation was a condensed version of one he had previously given to the Texas Archaeology Society entitled "Texas Archaeology: An Invitation to Participate."

Sheldon mentioned various digs in Texas in which he had participated, including: two at the purported site of Laffite's Maison Rouge in Galveston's East End; Bernardo's Plantation in Hempstead; and multiple and on-going searches for the French settlement Champ D'Asile near Liberty, the lifespan of which settlement was just five months.

Sheldon noted that various Native American tribes had inhabited Texas, including the Caddo, Comanche, Karankawa and Orcoquisac, the last two of which had lived on the western and eastern portions, respectively, of Galveston Island. It is known that all of these tribes descended from peoples from Asia because of dental characteristics.

Sheldon told the group that archaeology is a science that attempts to learn: *when* living beings occupied an area; *what* they did while there; and *why* they chose that location. Archaeology divides time into prehistoric and historic periods. The historic era in Texas began in 1528 with the arrival of the Spanish explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. The forms of spear and arrow points help identify various periods of occupation.

Sheldon spoke of the Clovis occupation, which lasted just 200 years some 13,000 years ago before mysteriously vanishing. The Clovis occupation predated the Roman Empire by 11,000 years, ancient Egyptian civilization by 7,000 years, and Indo-European settlement and language by 5,000 years. Unlike the Native American tribes mentioned above who originated in Asia, the Clovis people may have originated in Europe.

Some of the talk touched on linguistics. For example, Sheldon noted that approximately twenty years ago the Caddo requested assistance with keeping their language alive, as few could then understand it and even fewer speak it. Sheldon noted that the priority there was to first document the language so that a written record of it would exist.

In closing, Sheldon noted that membership in the Texas Archaeological Society and participation in its digs is open, not just to archaeologists, but to all.

Following Sheldon's presentation, Tom Linton, who has written a series of columns about Texas state parks for the *Galveston County Daily News*, spoke about the History Trail at the Galveston Island State Park, with which he encouraged involvement. Tom mentioned that a monument related to Laffite and located on the western end of the Island had been moved there from elsewhere and might prove more beneficially located as part of the History Trail.

Lastly, members Rob and Carolyn Peterson were acknowledged for their great efforts in scanning all of the *Laffite Society Chronicles* and all of the publications of the Society's predecessor, the Laffite Study Group, into .pdf files on CD-ROMs. The importance of such a preservation effort was forever underscored for members by the loss of the group's archives to Hurricane Ike in mid-September, 2008. It was suggested that a future archival effort place images from the various Laffite Society's field trips onto CD-ROMs as well.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by

Jeff Modzelewski
Secretary *pro tem*
The Laffite Society