



RAMBLERS' RAMBLINGS

Volume XXVII Number FOUR WINTER 2017



+++++++

MY "HONOR FLIGHT HOUSTON" FOR KOREAN VETS TO WASHINGTON D.C.

BOB MIDDLETON

Bob received the Silver Star medal for combat valor in Korea.

I was recently invited by *Honor Flight Houston* to join a group to fly to Washington, D.C. to visit the various monuments and museums in the Washington area with other Houston area veterans. The experience was so remarkable that I thought I would write it down while it was still fresh on my mind. *Honor Flight* is a completely charitable national organization which was originally organized several years ago to honor WWII veterans by flying them to the newly-opened WWII monument, which they so richly deserved. I might insert at this point that when the first visitor arrived on opening day of the monument, he was so surprised to discover that "Kilroy" had already been there, and etched his logo in two places in the granite of the monument. As the years progress, the WWII veterans are rapidly disappearing through attrition, and the *Honor Flight* organization decided that rather than suspend the operation, they would also open it to Korea and Viet Nam veterans. I emphasize at this point that this is a totally charitable organization funded by donations and in no way financed by governmental agencies. The people are all volunteers, and freely donate their time and efforts to the veterans, at no cost to the veteran.

My flight was scheduled to leave Houston return Saturday, May 6. About two weeks prior, we had an orientation at the original Hobby airport terminal, which has now been made into a museum honoring commercial aviation, and is well worth a visit for those who are living in the area. I was part of a group of 20 WWII and 96. At almost 87 years old, I found myself to be among the youngest of the group. I always seem to be the kid of the crowd. At the orientation, we were given a backpack, a cap representing the war we were in, and an *Honor Flight Houston* polo shirt to wear so we would be readily recognized by people. Our shirt was royal blue, while other *Honor Flights* from other parts of the nation wore different colors. We saw many of them at various



BOB MIDDLETON IN KOREA

Hobby on Friday morning, May 5, 2017 and prior, we had an orientation at the original Hobby airport terminal, which has now been made into a museum honoring commercial aviation, and is well worth a visit for those who are living in the area. I was part of a group of 20 WWII and 96. At almost 87 years old, I found myself to be among the youngest of the group. At the orientation, we were given a backpack, a cap representing the war we were in, and an *Honor Flight Houston* polo shirt to wear so we would be readily recognized by people. Our shirt was royal blue, while other *Honor Flights* from other parts of the nation wore different colors. We saw many of them at various stops on our trip.

We were to pack our gear for the trip in the backpack, as there would be no checked baggage for the trip. It was not a large backpack. We were also told that we would be assigned a wheelchair whether we used it or not. It did not take long before each veteran decided he needed the wheelchair, as it was quite tiring. There were five Aggies in the group from the Classes of '47, '50 and '51.

The only major glitch in the trip, other than the rain, was that two days before departure, the organizers discovered there was no record at the airline of our confirmed reservations for ourselves or our guardians. After many adjustments by the airline and organizers, the group was broken into two flights to Washington D.C. Some stayed on the same flight, and some had to change to a flight that left at 5:30 a.m., landing in St. Louis and continuing to Baltimore, Maryland. I was changed to the earlier flight. When the plane arrived in St. Louis, even though the flight route and schedule had been changed at the last moment, the St. Louis fire department sprayed the arriving plane with a water salute to honor the veterans on the flight, even when we were not even leaving the plane. The offloading and onloading passengers graciously acknowledged our presence.

When we arrived in Baltimore, our plane received another water salute. We were the last to leave the plane and were met at the door with our assigned wheelchairs, and pushed through the terminal to a waiting bus. As we were wheeled through the terminal, everyone there stopped what they were doing and applauded and shook our hands and extended their sincere thanks for our service. I cannot rightfully explain the feeling I had inside me at the time. This is the type of reception we had at every stop we made along the trip. It was spontaneous and sincere.

We were then bussed to Reagan Airport in Washington D.C. to pick up the other part of our group, who had remained on the original flight. After about an hour and a half wait, the others arrived and joined us, along with my personal guardian, Ms. Jennifer Spencer of Washington D.C., who volunteers her efforts and time because her father served in the Vietnam War. I am still amazed that so many people donate so much effort to veterans for various reasons. It is a long, tiresome experience for them. At every stop, they would offload first and meet their veteran at the door of the bus with a wheelchair, and take you anywhere. This little lady pushed this overweight old man up and down hills, across rough and smooth ground with no complaint.

Our first stop was the Navy Museum where we were shown all navy artifacts from past to present. We saw scale models of famous ships, torpedoes, airplanes hanging from the ceiling, and everything imaginable pertaining to U.S. Navy history. It was very interesting, even to an Army man. We spent about two hours there.

The next stop was the Marine Barracks where we took a bus tour of the facilities; they must keep something very important in most of the buildings because there was a marine with an automatic rifle standing in front of the entrance of most buildings, and other armed marines just walking around the area, rather casually, but alert. We then got off the bus and were pushed to the cafeteria-style mess hall. We were given a good hearty meal and shown around the area.

We were given an option of getting on the bus and taken to Falls Church, VA, or staying for a parade, which is apparently a regular Friday night affair, attended by political figures and others who manage to obtain a ticket.

I elected to stay for the parade along with most of the veterans, but some chose to go to the hotel as it had already been a long, tiring day since we had to arrive at the airport in Houston at 3:30 a.m. in order to process through security, etc. for our 5:30 a.m. takeoff. Anyway, the parade started at about 7:30 p.m. (along with the rain) and lasted for two hours. There were three companies of marines, along with two bands, all in full dress uniforms. They put on quite a show in spite of the rain, which was not so bad at first, but got worse as the night progressed.

One of the most impressive parts of the program was when one of the companies performed a full 20- minute precise drill team exhibition with no commands. It was called the "Silent Drill Team," and they gave us a very impressive performance. It was quite similar to our Fish Drill Team, except there were more of them, and they performed with no audible commands. After that, the rain started coming down in sheets and we were told to go to the bus, which we gladly obeyed.

We were then taken to the Falls Church Hotel, totally and completely drenched, and very tired. Upon arriving at the hotel after 10 p.m., there were hundreds of people in the lobby clapping and shaking our hands and expressing

their sincere gratitude for our service. They must have asked everyone staying at the hotel to come down and greet us. Jennifer, my guardian, delivered me to my room, went home, and was there with my wheelchair for breakfast Saturday morning. I had to spread my wet clothes to dry during the short night, and put them on again the next morning since I previously mentioned our backpacks for personal belongings were rather small. We had breakfast the next morning at 6:30 a.m., mounted our wheelchairs, and boarded our bus for our next destinations.

We were driven a short distance from Falls Church to Arlington National Cemetery, and had a bus tour of the cemetery before the **Changing of the Guard at Arlington National Cemetery** took place. It was, as expected, a very impressive ceremony with all the bells and whistles you have heard about over the years. One thing we were told about ahead of time was that when the guard passed by us during the ceremony, he would very discreetly drag the tip of his toe on the concrete as a way of saluting the veterans who were attending the ceremony. Unless you knew about it, you would never notice it.

After the ceremony, we toured some of the graves, one of which was Audie Murphy's. We then boarded the bus again, and headed for the next destination.



We got off at the **WWII MONUMENT** and toured it. It is a circular type structure, half of which is dedicated to the Pacific and half to the Atlantic phases of the war. Each arch is dedicated to one of the 48 states at the time, and all the territories owned by the USA. Again, very impressive, and all along the way we were approached by total strangers as well as a lot of school children visiting the monument. Many of the students asked to have their pictures made with us. Our treatment was very heart-warming and quite difficult to describe. All this time, Jennifer was pushing me over the rocks, up the hills, and across long stretches with no complaints. We did not board the bus here, but she pushed me to the next destination.

THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL was one of the first war memorials dedicated in D.C. It is a black wall with the names of 50,000 plus servicemen killed during the Vietnam War. My guardian had two relatives on the wall along with two friends of her father. He apparently witnessed their fall. She showed me their names, and I could tell she was quite moved at the time. We traversed the entire wall and saw the gifts of pictures, medals, flowers, stuffed animals and other personal items left by friends, families and other loved ones. Anyone not moved by this is dead.

THE KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL- Since this was my war, was the one I was most interested in, and I was not disappointed. It consists of 19 men on patrol in full battle gear, wearing the white poncho-type cover to blend in with the snow. They represented 15 army, three marine and one navy corpsman. It was very moving as it was just as I remembered during the real time. I could pick the one that would have been me in the group.

One thing I noticed right off was that most of the helmet straps were hanging down unsnapped. We old soldiers know that one doesn't wear his helmet unsnapped or it would be rolling on the ground as soon as you got started. I was informed that the unsnapped helmets represented the army and the snapped helmets were the marines. The navy corpsman was wearing no helmet. All I can say is that my soldiers would have snapped their helmets.

By this time, it was raining again and we were wearing ponchos and continued to slosh along. There is a black granite wall on one side of the memorial with pictures etched into it of people who actually served in Korea. I did not find myself or anyone I knew. It was here that I was interviewed by Fox26 News, but do not know if they showed it or not. I hope not because I don't interview very well. Microphones seem to enhance my nasal tone.

Needless to say, I was visibly moved by this memorial since I can relate to what I saw. We then boarded the bus and poor Jennifer got to rest. We were met by a movable caterer and were given boxed lunches.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL-There is a large memorial dedicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt, which we just drove by, but didn't get off the bus because of the rain, and time was running short for returning to the airport for our flight home.

IWO JIMA MEMORIAL -We then went to the Iwo Jima Memorial, which was also very impressive. Since the rain had let up, we got off the bus there. I was surprised by the size of the men. I had been expecting life size, but it was large and overwhelming. A fine tribute to our fighting heroes.

We were then bussed to the airport, processed through security and boarded the plane for our return trip. Again, the people of at the Washington D.C. airport stopped what they were doing and acknowledged us as were wheeled to the gate to board our plane. There I bid my new friend Jennifer goodbye. I will probably never see her again, but she will always be in my mind as a nice young lady who donated her entire weekend to an old man, whom she did not know, to help him enjoy his trip to the utmost. I am sure she went straight home for a long, needed rest.

Our arrival at Houston Hobby was again eventful, beginning with a water salute on the plane from the Houston Fire Department. We left the plane after 10 p.m. and were met by the *Honor Flight Ground Crew*, again with wheelchairs, and wheeled through a full terminal with people standing on both sides with flags, banners, and other signs welcoming us home. We even had a bagpiper from the Houston Fire Department. I was tired, but felt like royalty.

I again want to emphasize that I was picked up at my front door, made this fantastic journey and delivered back to my front door at no expense to me. The only time I took out money was on the return flight when I ordered a \$5.00 vodka drink, but when I handed the money to the flight attendant, she handed it back to me and said, "This one is on me." **GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!**

(Editor's Note: After reading Bob's story when first published in the *Texas Aggie Class of '51 Newsletter*, Jack Millender '52 quickly joined the next group of Korean veterans on the *Honor Flight to Washington D.C.* in October, 2017.)



"FATHER, I CANNOT TELL A LIE"

BY HENRY HANSON

The recent devastating Hurricane Harvey and its destructive flooding, especially in the area between the Brazos and the San Bernard Rivers, reminded me of the Masons Locke Weems Family (Texans for five generations) who, like so many early Texas settlers in South Texas, endured many land flooding hardships for almost two hundred years, but always remained strong, faithful neighbors and Texans. This story is about two early members of the Weems family: Mason Locke Weems, Sr., who never moved to Texas, and his son, Mason Locke Weems II, who did move to Texas in 1837.

Mason Locke Weems was born 1 October 1759 in St. James Parish, Anne Arundel County, Virginia to David Hamilton Weems and Esther Hill. His father David was a Scottish immigrant from Fife, Wemyes Parish, Fifeshire, Scotland.

Mason Weems, Sr. was an American book agent, author and Protestant Episcopal minister (everyone called him "Parson"). He is best known as the source of some of the apocryphal stories about George Washington. The famous tale of the cherry tree ("I cannot tell a lie, I did it with my little hatchet") is included in *The Life of Washington* (1800), Parson Weems' most famous work. This nineteenth-century bestseller depicted Washington's virtues while providing an entertaining and morally instructive tale for the youth of our young nation.

Arguably one of the most famous (or infamous) exaggerated or invented anecdotes in American literature is that of the cherry tree, attributed to Weems:

"The following anecdote is a case in point. It is too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted: 'When George, 'said he', "was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a hatchet, of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond, and was constantly going about chopping everything that came in his way. One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry tree, which he barked so terribly, that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the old gentleman, finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favorite, came into the house, and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. 'George,' said his father, 'Do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?' This was a tough question and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out, 'I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.' 'Run to my arms, you dearest boy,' cried his father in transports, 'run to my arms; glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it over a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.' "



Weems, Sr. died on May 23, 1825 in Beaufort, South Carolina. His younger son, Mason, Jr., the seventh of nine children, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1826 and began his medical practice in Washington, D.C. He married Asenath Otis Slade before he moved to Texas in 1837. They had seven children.

Mason, Jr., his wife and children settled on Bay Prairie in Matagorda County, Texas and then moved within two years to a plantation about six miles below Wharton in Wharton County. During his lifetime in Texas, Mason II not only continued to practice medicine, but also was an incorporator of Matagorda University in 1845 and of the Columbia, Wharton and Austin railroad in 1854. He was appointed probate judge for several terms and on July 2, 1849, qualified for Chief Justice of Wharton County. Sometime prior to his death in February, 1856, the Weems family moved to Columbia, the first capital of Texas.

To date, five more generations of Weems have descended from Mason Locke Weems II in Western Brazoria County; Mason Locke Weems VII was born 5 October 1965 in Brazoria County. Of these five generations still living in South Texas, all have witnessed many times the Brazos River flooding out of its banks, but in August of this year (2017) the current generations of Weems were eye-witnesses to catastrophic, all-time highest flood marks ever recorded on the San Bernard River.



TRIVIA QUESTION.....



"THE MOTHER OF TEXAS.....WHO WAS SHE??

(Answer on a following page)



GENEALOGY AND HISTORY

BY MARY ANN THOMPSON

The genealogist needs to have an active interest in history, since genealogy and history go hand-in-hand. History defines our ancestors, tells us what happenings they faced during their lifetimes and leads us to better understand them. There's a lot of history online.



The American History and Genealogy Project -- <http://www.ahgp.org/>

This is an unincorporated network of independent websites devoted to history and genealogy and covering North American Countries and Territories.

National Archives -- <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>

Everyone knows about the National Archives, but you may not know that it has this "Resources for Genealogists" site. There's much information here for beginners and the advanced researcher.

Not Even Past -- <http://www.notevenpast.org/>

William Faulkner once wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." This quote forms the inspiration for the Not Even Past website, which was founded in 2010 and developed by the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin. The website presents dynamic and accessible short articles on every field of history.

Southwestern Historical Quarterly -- <http://www.tshaonline.org/shqonline>

The Southwestern Historical Quarterly started publication in 1897 and remains one of the preeminent journals about the history of Texas and the Southwest. The Texas State Historical Association has digitized the first 100 volumes of the Quarterly (more than 57,000 pages) and these are now available online. This is a free service now, but may change later. You can search through each of the issues as you wish, or just browse through the table of contents for articles of interest. You can view the table of contents for issues after 1997, but you will not have access to the full text of the articles without a subscription.

Michigan County Histories and Atlases -- <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micounty/>

The Michigan County Histories collection is projected to provide access to 192 histories dating from 1866 to 1926. The collection provides all members of the community with keyword searching and page-by-page access to digitized reproductions of Michigan county atlases and histories as a resource for historical and genealogical research.

Sioux City History -- <http://www.siouxcityhistory.org/>

The Sioux City History website is billed as "your link to the past," and is dedicated to telling Sioux City's rich history over the past 150 years. There are eight primary sections, such as Historic Sites, Notable People and Oral Histories.

New York State Historical Literature Collection -- <http://digital.library.cornell.edu/n/nys/>

The Cornell University Library New York State Historical Literature is a collection of selected monographs, pamphlets

and other materials with expired copyrights chosen from the Cornell Library's extensive collection of New York State Literature. These were materials that were brittle and decaying and in need of rescue. Included in the collection are Cornell University Library Historical Monographs and New York State historical pamphlets and monographs.

Oklahoma Historical Society -- <http://www.okhistory.org/>

The mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people. It maintains numerous museums, historic homes, and military sites located throughout Oklahoma. Intriguing destinations including historic homes, military sites, and museums offer a unique glimpse into Oklahoma's past.

Tennessee State Library and Archives: History and Genealogy -- <https://www.sos.tn.gov/tsla/history>

The Tennessee Virtual Archive (TeVA) is a program of the State Library and Archives to create a digital repository of Tennessee history and culture.

The Alabama Historical Quarterly -- <http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/landingpage/collection/quarterly>

The 119 issues of the Alabama Historical Quarterly published by the Alabama Department of Archives and History in 1930 and between 1940 and 1982 will be found here. This collection represents just the beginning of the Alabama Department of Archives and History's effort to consolidate and reorganize its digital collections.



TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER:

JANE WILKINSON LONG

BY MARY JANE MILLENDER



The Mother of Texas was Jane Wilkinson Long. And it was Jane Long who bestowed that title on herself as she believed she was the first woman to give birth to a child on Texas soil. Census records later proved her wrong, but no matter, Jane Wilkinson Long was probably the most courageous woman, mother, warrior, survivor that lived during the early, turbulent days of Texas history. She lived/survived under the rules of both the Spanish and the Mexicans and finally lived under the flag of Texas. In her eyes and in the minds and hearts of those who knew her, Jane was truly **The Mother of Texas**.

Now the story of Jane W. Long: Jane was born in 1798 in Maryland to a very well-to-do family. She was said to have been an intelligent Southern Belle. After the death of her mother in 1813, she lived with her married, older sister on a plantation near Natchez where she met James Long, who was just returning from the Battle of New Orleans. The couple married in 1814 when Jane was 16 and for the next four years lived in Port Gibson, Mississippi. Long, a physician and soldier, was becoming fixated on finding ways to take Texas from Spanish rule. He moved to Texas in 1819 and settled in Nacogdoches, the best area to build up interest in "Amercanizing" Texas. Jane soon followed. She was finally living in Nacogdoches with her husband and small child. but within two months, Long once again left, this time for Galveston Bay where he believed he could recruit more early Texas pioneers into joining his campaign. In his absence, Jane and other pioneer families were forced to evacuate Nacogdoches as the Spanish

were on their way to East Texas. The refugees rushed toward safety in Sabine; James Long reunited with his family near there as he was heading back to the Nacogdoches fort from Galveston.

About March 1820 Long moved his family to a small fort on Bolivar Peninsular on Galveston Bay; it was here that Jane later had dinner with pirate Jean Lafitte in an effort to gain financial aid for her husband's expeditions. Still restless and looking for more recruits, James Long once again left Jane, their daughter and Kiam, a 12-year-old slave, with other families on Bolivar as he traveled to La Bahia near Copano Bay to enlist any settlers there who might be sympathetic to his dream of winning Texas for the U.S. Jane, pregnant during this time, faithfully promised to wait on Bolivar until James returned within a month, as he *had* promised.

But months went by and James didn't return. The other families living inside the makeshift fort decided to leave along with all the soldiers stationed there as the Karankawa Indians were continuing to be a constant, dangerous threat to early Galveston-area settlers. The departing families begged Jane to leave with them, but she stubbornly refused. She had *promised* Long she'd wait for him there on Galveston Bay...and there she stayed. What she didn't know was that James Long had been captured near San Antonio by the Spanish and taken to Mexico City where he was accidentally killed on December 21, 1821.

The winter of 1821 was brutally cold, the coldest recorded for Galveston up to that year. Bay waters around Bolivar were covered with ice and the Long family's supplies were diminished except for a little corn. Jane and Kiam fished in the icy bay waters and gathered oysters to survive. It was during this brutal winter that Jane gave birth in this abandoned fort to what she believed to be the first white child born in Texas. After her delivery, aided somewhat by a sick Kiam, Jane rose from her bed early the next morning and continued the daily search for food.

Twice during this lonely, difficult time, the Karankawas (their history proved them to be a cannibalistic tribe) tried to attack the lonely Bolivar fort. Jane would hoist her red petticoat to the flagpole and fire off several rounds from the only cannon left by the departing soldiers. Cannon fire and a fluttering red flag convinced the raiding Indians that the fort was still protected by the military.



In 1822 immigrants sailing into Galveston stopped on Bolivar Peninsular on their way to the San Jacinto River and Jane and family finally abandoned their vigil and joined the Smiths at their camp on Cedar Bayou. Later she moved farther up the river where she received word that James Long had been killed. She then moved to San Antonio to ask Governor Jose Trespalacios, a former associate of her husband, for a pension for her husband's service: the request was denied after ten months.

Jane left Texas following news that her pension request was denied. In June, 1824 after the death of her younger daughter, Jane returned to Texas where Stephen F. Austin awarded her a league of land in Fort Bend County plus a labor of land in Waller County. In 1836, now thirty-nine years old, Jane moved to her league, a part of which she sold to the man who developed the town of Richmond, Texas. It was during this time that Jane opened her second boarding house; she had years before owned another boarding house in Brazoria and is said to have known and entertained William Travis, Ben Milam, Sam Houston and Mirabeau B. Lamar in that establishment. She also spied on Mexicans staying with her at the request of the early leaders of the Texas Revolution.

As Jane grew older, she continued to buy and sell land, raise cattle and grow cotton, but by 1877 this independent pioneer was unable to care for herself and sold off most of her land; she lived with a grandson until her death. In 1880, Jane Wilkinson Long, who had, during her lifetime, known so many famous men and women in early Texas history, died in 1880 and is buried in Morton Cemetery in Richmond, Texas.

If Jane W. Long is not ***The Mother of Texas*** then this stubborn, loyal, heroic woman should certainly be called ***An Early Star of Texas***.



A Genealogist's Christmas Wish

Reprinted from *Alabama Pioneers*

By Donna Causey

***Dear Santa: Don't bring me new dishes,
I don't want a new kind of game.
Genealogists have peculiar wishes,
For Christmas I just want a surname.***



UPCOMING RAMBLER PROGRAMS

BY RICH & CAROL BOIVIE

13 JAN 2018 - "Using Findarecord" by Paul Baca

28 FEB 2018 - "World War I Ancestors" by John Blair

28 MAR 2018 - "Traveling to Texas in the 1800s" by Clint Williams



GENEALOGY COMPUTER USERS GROUP

BY JERRY MARKOWICH

17 JAN. 2018 - "Linking Family Tree Maker" by Darrel Davis

21 FEB. 2018 - "Migration to the U.S." by Jane Magill

21 MAR. 2018 - "How to Create a Family Website" by Jerry Markowich



HOW A 1700s SHIPWRECK CHANGED HISTORY AND DOUBLED THE SIZE OF THE U.S. In 1803



EL CAZADOR-1784

In 1762, France ceded her Louisiana Territory to Spain following the last battle in the French and Indian War. This ceded area would later make up all or part of 15 states in the United States.

In 1784, Spain was not only facing war with France again, but also a large financial problem in its colony of Louisiana, especially in New Orleans where Spanish soldiers and governing offices were located. Paper currency had lost its value and hard currency was needed to pay soldiers and government officials in charge of that city.

King Carlos III ordered that 19 tons of newly-minted *reales* (silver coins) minted in Mexico City were to be loaded on the *El Cazador*, a two-mast brig to be captained by the king's most trusted officer, Gabriel de Campos y Pineda. The ship set sail from Vera Cruz to New Orleans on January 11, 1784. The ship was never seen again. The *El Cazador* left Mexico and sailed north into strong, seasonal El Nino winds. An overloaded hull and overpowering weather may have been too much for the small ship. And the loss of 19 tons of silver coins may have been too much for the struggling Spanish colony to overcome.

The loss of *El Cazador* with its irreplaceable cargo of 450,000 silver coins weakened Spain's presence in the New World, so much so that the sinking of this small ship actually changed the course of history.

In order to avoid war with France in 1800, a very sensible King Carlos IV ceded the territory of Louisiana back to France. And three years later on April 30, 1803 Napoleon, who at that time was experiencing his own financial difficulties, sold all Louisiana and its territory to the U.S., a sale that doubled the size of America at that time.

On August 2, 1993, 209 years after the loss of the *El Cazador*, Captain Jerry Murphy, aboard his shrimp boat, hung his nets on what he thought was fused oyster shells about 50 miles south of New Orleans. When he hauled in his nets, Capt. Murphy found that his "catch" was actually hundreds of silver coins minted in Mexico City in the 1780s. Months later, divers recovered over 12,000 coins along with *El Cazador's* bell. That leaves thousands of coins missing, but recovery efforts have continued over the years.



1780s' SPANISH REALES



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Ramblers!

from

All of Us

Mary Jane Millender.....Editor

Henry Hanson.....Asst. Editor

Mary Ann Thompson.....Columnist

Jerry Markowich.....Contributor

Clint WilliamsWebsite

