In March business woman and Atakapa-Ishak descendant Ms. Rachel Mouton of Carencro, LA spoke at the Kiwanis club of nearby Lafayette, LA. She traced Atakapan history including telling the source, the meaning and the imposition of the slur name ‘Atakapas’ on the tribe’s lingering influence on SW LA’s culture. Her positive words may have been the first an influential audience in SW LA has ever heard of the long dismissed Atakapas-Ishak. Ms. Mouton let her listeners in on SW LA’s/SE TX’s oldest and dirtiest secret: the Atakapas-Ishak are not an extinct people as the area’s majority population has carelessly, unthinkingly believed throughout most of the last century. The opportunity for Ms. Mouton’s talk was created by a long time resident of the Lafayette area, himself a well-wisher towards its obscured Indians.

SE TX Group to Find, Study, Preserve Atakapas-Ishak’s Ancient Sites, Relics

A group of enthusiasts in SE TX has formed to locate, map, study, and preserve old Atakapas-Ishak habitation sites in that area, along the Neches and Sabine Rivers, all around Sabine Lake, and throughout the Port Arthur, Beaumont, Orange triangle. Members already have found artifacts remarkably well executed. Bruce Lockett is the group’s director. His address: PO Box 905, Vidor, TX 77662; phone or fax 409-769-3069; email TASASEARCH@aol.com

Tribe’s Admirer at West Lake, LA

Brian Hudson may not personally know a descendant of the Atakapas-Ishak. But he admires the tribe anyway, thanks to what he has learned about them. Now at his own expense, by prior arrangement, he visits school classrooms in the West Lake-Sulphur area to tell about the area’s aboriginal people.

Constituent Again Asks LA Senator, “Please Back the Atakapas’ Request”

Last year Senator James David Cain of Dry Creek, LA turned a deaf ear to Mrs. Velma L. Smith’s plea that he backs a petition to the Louisiana Legislature for State recognition of the Atakapas-Ishak. Mrs. Smith has repeated her petition to him this year. He represents her senatorial district. To her petition she has attached a number of weighty reasons for State recognition: morality of the matter, justice of it, State’s economic benefit (entice tribe’s emigrant retirees (with their pension checks) back to their home State, matter of correct State history, matter of correct records in State Office of Indian Affairs, etc. This newsletter urges tribal members to stop merely watching what is happening!!!! We who live in Louisiana are urged to learn names/addresses of our Senators and Representatives, then write to them! Those who live elsewhere, do the same! It’s for us!!

Indian Mound ID’d Named in SW LA

An ancient Atakapan mound has been identified and preserved at Merryville, LA alongside U.S. 190 there. Mrs. Velma Smith, long time tribal friend, acquired the surrounding 2 acres, created a roadside park there, and erected a wooden carving of a screaming eagle. Then she named the mound ‘Hımám Katkósok Yok’, Atakapa for “The Screaming Eagle Mound’. That name is very appropriate, for ‘Katkoš Yok’ is the origin of the name Calcasieu. The SW LA parish and river by that Atakapa-sourced name are nearby.

There is at least one other Indian mound in the vicinity of Merryville-DeRidder in SW LA. It is the long known but unnamed mound near Grant, LA, mentioned in the self-guided Tour of Atakapan Sites in S.W. LA; www.beau.org/~velmet/atakapa.com

BUILD YOUR ATAKAPA VOCABULARY: wët (pronounced weet), hilét, kishét, and ishkishét, all = sister! BUT, the precise use of each word shows a remarkable degree of respectful deference to one’s sister! Wët is used only by a younger sister for any older sister. Hilét is used only by a sister for a sister of same age or younger. Kishét and ishkishét are used only by a male for any of his sisters. Ishkishét literally means “our sister.”
Atakapas-Ishak Given Internet Website

Thanks again to a dear friend’s generosity our tribe now has an Internet website. Set up about midyear 2003, its address is as follows: www.beau.org/~velmer/atakapa Do a Google search, type the search words Atakapa-Ishak, then click. Be patient. Atakapan information shares the site with other, non-Atakapan information. Be aware that much of the information about our people is old misinformation. To keep apart the correct from incorrect, fortunately, two works are useful: A Dictionary of the Atakapa Language (The Smithsonian’s 1931 book of its 1885 research of our people’s language, history, culture) and The Indians Who Gave Us Zydeco (H.D. Singleton’s 1995 research into our people’s language, history, culture, and our past and present social condition.) New postings on the Atakapas-Ishak’s website:

The Atakapas/Coushatta Trace, a stretch of U.S. Hiway 190 in S.W. Louisiana named in honor of the two tribes. The Atakapas-Ishak Historical Marker placed at the junction of U.S. Hiway 190 and LA Hiway 111 at Merryville, LA commemorates the tribe’s prehistorical and historical system of foot trails across S.W.LA/S.E.TX Sections of the old Atakapan trails became the route of modern era highways. The Atakapan Collection (artifacts, photos, literature) at Mrs. Velmer Smith’s WWII Museum, Hiway 190 East in DeRidder, LA. Admission is free. Open by prior appointment. Call Mrs. Velmer Smith at 337-463-7025.

New Author an Atakapa Woman

Ms. Rachel Mouton of Carencro, LA, near Lafayette, authored a praiseworthy, inspiring new book, Life As An Oxymoron. She calmly reviews many contradictions (to what is expected) embedded all along her life’s way at school, at work, in public places, even at church, and elsewhere. Though many of the contradictions defied sense and justice, she tried to stay focused on values learned deep within her beloved family, a racially mixed family that includes Atakapa ancestry. In passages her writing borders on the spiritual! For her 183 pp. book, $14.75 check or M.O. includes postage and handling. Send to: Rachel Mouton, P.O. Box 91021, Lafayette, LA 70509.

TRIBE’S PRESIDENT WEDS

August 1, 2003 the Atakapas-Ishak’s president, Miss Shirley Barnaba, was wedded to Mr. Kent Landry, originally of Lake Arthur, LA. The wedding was at St. Jules Roman Catholic Church in Prairie Laurent, LA, the bride’s hometown. Father Michael Arnaud witnessed the couple’s vows. Prairie Laurent will be their home. For wide convenience the bride retains her maiden name. With her marriage to Kent, Shirley is the step mom to his sons, Caleb, 14, and Devin, 13. Tribal members congratulate the family!

BUILD YOUR ATAKAPA VOCABULARY: nila = grandmother; nil = grandchild; shaknil = grandchildren; ntsét (pronounced entsét) = brother; tanúk = one; tsik (pronounced chike = two; lát = three; himatol = four; nít = five; lát tsik = six; pash = seven; himatol tsik = eight; wosh ishól ha = nine (literal meaning, ‘fists less a finger’); wosh pe = ten (lit. meaning, ‘fists entire’. The —over a vowel = long vowel, as in English.
Atakapa for ‘What’s new?’ (lit. ‘Tell me something!’)

*A nonsensical report from mid-1700’s says that the Atakapas claimed to be “from out the sea”, i.e. of an origin or genesis out of the sea. One eager Louisiana writer embellished that with “riding on a giant seashell.” The report traces back to a Spanish trading post keeper who mistook the Atakapa "tulike hetsike" to mean ‘out from the sea’, when really the contextual meaning was ‘away from the sea’. The Indians most probably were but trying to tell the post keeper that they had a long history of retreating away from the Gulf’s ever rising water, due, we now know, to the Upper Gulf floor’s long, slow, continual sinking. --HDS

We need to trace our family genealogy at least to our great or great great grandparents (when all our people were known as Les Sauvages and/or as the Catholic Indians and/or as Atakapas Indians and/or as the Opelousas Indians back in the early 1800’s to about the first quarter of the 1900’s. We will need family genealogies if and when State recognition comes. All descendants of Theodore (Theodule) Alex (Ellick) and Felicia (Felicie) Rochon Alex (Ellick) can find their genealogy already traced back to early 1800’s in the reunion booklet mentioned above.

*Cush’ is the name of a delicious, heart-healthy cornmeal cereal long familiar to the Atakapas-lshak. Its popcorn aroma at breakfast yet is beloved by many of their descendants.

Couscous (pronounced chotes) lilish wak ush =’corneal parched well’. Wa kush would be sounded wa kush. That apparently devolved into simply kush (cush), also kush kush (cush kush), for Atakapa often doubled its short adverbs. Our editor doubts that kush and/or cush kush sources from the term cous cous heard in the former French colonies in North Africa. Though the two words share a superficiality of sound, they are not the same cereal substance. If any sourcing is involved, due to its apparent etymology ‘cush kush’ appears to be the source word. --HDS

*Remember our TribaI Treasury needs your help. See Treasurer’s address in the staff box on this page.

Send S.A.S.E. to Newsletter for a list of 9 books by Atakapas authors.

Send us your email address. Email reduces our postage expense! If you have no email address, send $1 for each year’s subscription (2003 and 2004) if you haven’t yet. «
MORE NEWS..IN BITS...AND PIECES

*Near mid-November Wayne Joseph, with SW Louisiana roots, was stunned on national TV to learn by DNA testing that he is a Native American! All his life he had considered himself an African American. That is an error made by and about many in and from S.W.LA/S.E.TX, homeland of Atakapas-Ishák Indians. The error comes directly from more than two centuries of that area's majority people carelessly calling (and recording) minorities of two distinct races by the one, same name, 'colored', even while forcing them together in apartheid. It is a mistake to assume automatically that all people once called 'colored' in that area and elsewhere in America are Blacks. Those with Native American physical and cultural features, along with more indicators unique to them, are Native Americans! To learn those indicators read the editor's book, The Indians Who Gave Us Zydeco.

*The life story of Atakapa aviator, Alex A. Boudreaux, of Lake Charles, LA has been published by Hubert Daniel Singleton.

*At least one other Atakapa descendant has begun writing her memories of her Atakapas forebears. Born in LA, she now lives in CA.

*In Morgan City, LA, just east of the Atakapa-Ishák homeland, stands a historic marker honoring The Atakapa Militia(sic), military unit during Bernardo De Galvez's campaign against the British in America's Independence War. A Barras from St. Martinville, LA is listed. There are Barras from St. Martinville today who are descendants of Atakapas-Ishák.

*Most Rev. Bishop Pelotte, Native American and head of the Assoc. for Native American Catholics, has listed today's Atakapas Catholic descendants in that Association. Catholicism has been a mark of our people for 300 years! It is now an indicator of our identity!

*Artifacts and relics found by an enthusiast in 15 years of probing old Atakapan village sites around the western edge of Vermilion Bay (south of Abbeville, LA) include a human skull and Atakapan canoe's combination paddle-and-pole.

*The Chitimacha Tribe on their reservation at Charenton, LA continue a historic, close friendship with the Atakapas-Ishák. Atakapas were invited to a summer event at Charenton. President Shirley Barnaba attended. At the event, the Chitimachas voiced their hope for State recognition of us Atakapas-Ishák «

APPEAL FOR TRIBE’S TREASURY
(With approval of tribe's president, Shirley Barnaba) We need to have a tribal treasury if council members ever hope to stage a gathering of our people, or do anything else! Give what you can, by check or M.O (no cash!) to Atakapas’ Treasury. Mail to the treasurer, Mrs. Delores Alex Carter, 1527 Pace Blvd., N.O., LA 70114-3025. Do not write “treasurer” on envelope (for security), but do put your name and address. Put a note “For Atakapas’ Treasury” in the envelope. Newsletter will publ. Treas. Reports.

Money to Newsletter Since 7/03

Alex, Miss Denise $1 subscription; Cole, Robert L $50 donation; Darbone, Mrs. Laurence Lyons $1 sub & $4 donat.; Dugar, Mrs. Velma Dartez $1 sub & $2 donat.; Lewis, Mrs. Agnes Griffith $10 donat.; MacDonald, Mrs. Donna Marie Singleton $2 sub & donat. (req’d don’t be publ).

Total since 7/03 = $71 plus

Total since 2/03 = $156

Expenses since 2/03 = $190

Shortage for 2003 = about $30

Please send your $1 sub for year 2003 (if you did not yet send it, and with it send $1 sub for year 2004 (if you have not already sent it).«

Editorial

Sincerely I believe: A person ought never be ashamed of his racial ancestry. No person ought take lightly his racial ancestry and identity. No person ought give up(!) his racial identity to please others. Why do I believe that? I believe that because I see a person's racial identity as sacrosanct. Others see it that way too! In our country and in our homeland do I see other races meekly forgetting their racial identity to please others? No-way! So, why should Native Americans, specif. we descendants, full or partial, of S.W.LA/S.E. TX Atakapas-Ishák, forget ours? With absolutely no mean, racist, divisive motive I believe a person has natural and legal rights to cherish, stress or not stress any and all of his racial ancestry as he wishes while respecting the same rights of others. HDS«

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41102 Happywoods Rd., Hammond, LA 70403 985-386-8865 Subscription $1 a year; two editions a year. No multiyear subscription possible yet! No reply to info request unless S.A.S.E. is received. Hubert D. Singleton Editor pro tem.