

LOS ISLENOS HERITAGE AND CULTURAL SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE

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Historic colonial St. Bernard Catholic Cemetery site documented

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Archaeologist Dean Barnes, Elos Environmental, LLC., will address the congregation of St. Bernard Catholic Church, the membership of Los Islenos Heritage and Cultural Society and the public about the archaeological study he completed recently, conclusively documenting the site of the colonial St. Bernard Catholic Cemetery. The power point presentation will occur Sunday afternoon, November 5th, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in Iverson Hall, St. Bernard Catholic Church, 2805 Bayou Road, St. Bernard, Louisiana. St. Bernard Cemetery, established in 1787, is the fourth oldest Catholic cemetery in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Canary Islanders began to be settled along Bayou Terre-aux-Boeufs in 1779 and founded what would become St. Bernard Parish in 1780. In 1785, the Canary Islander or Isleno settlement stretched several miles along the bayou and St. Bernard Catholic Church was established in the geographic center of the community. St. Bernard Church became the first church parish established downriver from New Orleans and is the mother church for St. Bernard and Plaquemines civil parishes. The original cemetery, located in the present yard of St. Bernard Church, reached maximum capacity and an extension was opened on the opposite side of Bayou Terre-aux-Boeufs at the beginning of the 19th century.

Anthony A. Fernandez, Jr., retired chief deputy of the St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Office, attorney and historian, descends from the Isleno founders of St. Bernard Parish. He is a parishioner of St. Bernard Catholic Church and has long been fascinated by the history of the

church and civil parish, conducting primary resource research in local and national archives. In 2000, Mr. Fernandez solicited the services of Bob Melia, an expert in geo-thermal imaging and archaeologist Jill K. Yacubik, Ph.D., and the archaeological cemetery site was first located. However, both Mr. Melia and Dr. Yacubik's records were lost in Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Determined not to lose this highly important site to the history of St. Bernard, Louisiana, Spain and the Canary Islands, Mr. Fernandez coordinated the initiation and completion of the 2017 study.

Dean Barnes has a wide range of experience in the field of archaeology. He is an alumnus of Southeastern Louisiana University and Northwestern State University where he received undergraduate and graduate degrees in cultural resources management and heritage resources. Mr. Barnes has conducted numerous archaeological field studies, historical and cultural resource preservation investigations.

Los Islenos Heritage and Cultural Society was organized in 1976 to preserve, interpret and disseminate the history and cultural traditions of the Canary Islanders or Islenos who founded St. Bernard Parish. The Society was incorporated by Mr. Fernandez and has eagerly supported his efforts to document the history of St. Bernard Catholic Church and Cemetery, a sacred site of unparalleled significance to the history of the Islenos and civil parish. **The presentation is free and open to the public.**

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