Raising La Belle Discovery Questions

1.) What large artifact did divers find under the water that told them they might be at a sunken ship site?

2.) What early French Canadian city did La Salle help to settle?

3.) What kind of boats did La Salle and his men use to voyage down the Mississippi River in?

4.) Which French King did La Salle meet with at the Palace of Versailles to discuss plans for the French colonization of America?

5.) What country was France at war with at the time?

6.) Where did La Salle want to build his French fort/settlement?

7.) What tribe of Indians did La Salle and the French pioneers encounter after first landing in Texas?

8.) Which tribe assisted the French on their march north?
9.) What agency of our Texas state government identify and recover the *Belle* shipwreck?

10.) Name the part of the ship was preserved under the mud?

11.) What were some of the artifacts found on the ship? (Some of these are on display at the Texas State history museum in downtown Austin.)

13.) How did archeologists remove *La Belle* from the bottom of Matagorda Bay?

14.) Where is the ship today? Where will the public be able to see the ship when it is put on public display someday?
Exercise # 1

*Raising ‘La Belle’*

Word Search Puzzle

(Find and encircle in the letter puzzle the words listed below.)

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D B T F I F Y G A Q A E S Q Q Y
X T O N Z R L T C O X Z T V A R
M S E F G E A T H P V F R B O S
E A L S Q M S P E L I E A B T R
D O L W M J H D O G R D E S E R
K C E G K U I U P O R R I J X B
C S B S U T I U L O T G X E C S
E A F R I S I P G C O J A L A C
R X S O X S X A A L P Z C O V A
W E N I U E T V O I Q U N U A O
P T V G V A E E R H F E J I T H
I E Q U M L H A H L R O C S I Q
H I G U I C T C A M E Q G I O E
S L L E R E K F T T N G C A N P
I T R A S W Y G T L C V O N W L
L L Y D N V O M J E H Y Y A K E
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archeologists  Louisiana
Belle  Louis XIV
excavation  Matagorda Bay
expedition  pirates
explorer  Robert Cavelier
French  shipwreck
gift  Texas coast
Exercise  # 2

Draw a picture of what you think La Salle’s ship *La Belle* might have looked like when she was brand new, after she was constructed in France in 1684. She was 55 feet long and had three masts.

Author-illustrator Mark Mitchell hopes to see your drawing when he does a *Raising La Belle* presentation at your school!
Exercise # 3

You are about to leave on a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to begin life as a young pioneer in the New World. You don’t know when you will see your home (in a small rural town in France) again. There is only room for one chest per passenger aboard the ship. What will you pack in your sea chest? What possessions will you bring to serve you in the four week voyage across the sea and in your new life in the new village that you will help to build in the American wilderness? Fold this sheet and inside the fold, list everything you will bring with you in your chest for your new life.
Resources for Teachers and Librarians

Here are the most on-point resources presently available for your library or classroom about the “La Salle in Texas” story and La Salle’s shipwreck.


*The Admiral’s Blog*  Mark Mitchell’s blog about the shipwreck, La Salle, archeology and children’s literature. [http://thelasalleshipwreck.com/wordpress](http://thelasalleshipwreck.com/wordpress)

*La Salle in Texas: A Teacher’s Guide for the Age of Discovery and Exploration* by Pam Wheat-Stranahan. Highly recommended lesson plans created by Pam Wheat, M.A. Wheat is executive director of the Texas Archeology Society. She served as the Education Coordinator for the Texas Historical Commission on the “La Salle Shipwreck” Project.

This exciting teacher’s guide, produced by Texas A&M University Press in 2007, includes a DVD with two 40 minute documentaries about the *Belle* and La Salle’s *Fort Saint Louis* by Allan Govenar, who directed the NOVA episode “Voyage of Doom the Public Broadcasting System. Read Mark’s review of *La Salle in Texas* in The Admiral’s Blog (November 7, 2007)  [http://thelasalleshipwreck.com/wordpress/?m=200711](http://thelasalleshipwreck.com/wordpress/?m=200711)

*From a Watery Grave: The Discovery and Excavation of La Salle’s Shipwreck “La Belle”* by James E. Bruseth, Ph. D. and Toni S. Turner. (Dr. Bruseth is director of the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission. He was also the director of both the *Belle* and *Fort Saint Louis* excavations.

It’s the definitive book about the excavation of the country’s oldest and largest earlier colonial shipwreck, beautifully written by the man who led the recovery effort (and his writer-wife.) Handsomely produced by Texas A&M University Press, *From a Water Grave* presents absorbing details of the excavation and a condensed history that places the ship in its historical context, with wonderful photographs and graphics.

Winner of the 2009 *James Deetz Book Award* and the 2006 *Society for American Archaeology Book Award.*

*Voyage of Doom* by Allan Govenar, episode in the PBS series NOVA, WGBH Boston, Public Broadcasting System, 1998

*Indian Life in Texas* by Charles Shaw (author and illustrator), State House Press, 1987

*Ship* by David Macaulay (author and illustrator), Houghton Mifflin, 1997

*Grandmother’s Tales: Discovering Archeology* by Gigi Starnes (illustrated by Mark Mitchell), Eakin Press, 1995
Texas Historical Commission, the La Salle Shipwreck Project
http://www.thc.state.tx.us/la/salle/la/default.html

Texas A&M University Nautical Archeology Program
http://nautarch.tamu.edu/napcrl.htm#belle

Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum
http://www.thestoryoftexas.com/education/Labelle/labelle.html

Texas Beyond History – The Virtual Museum of Texas’ Cultural Heritage
http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/

Great Lakes Exploration, Ltd. – A shipwreck salvage operation’s website on the possible discovery of La Salle’s “other shipwreck” Le Griffon, which sank in 1679 before La Salle made his voyage down the Mississippi River
http://www.lasalle-griffon.org/
Wonderful resource web page by the Museum of the Coastal Bend on the La Salle Odyssey Project and exhibits and sites to visit
http://www.museumofthecoastalbend.org/laquelle.html

The page includes these links related to the earliest human life along the coast and early Texas settlement here.
http://www.ccmuseum.com/museum/index.cfm

Texana Museum, Edna
http://www.ykc.com/jccc/museum.htm

Matagorda County Museum, Bay City
http://www.matagordacountymuseum.org/

Calhoun County Museum, Port Lavaca
http://www.calhouncountymuseum.org/

Texas Maritime Museum, Rockport
http://www.texasmaritimemuseum.org/

Museum of the Coastal Bend
http://www.museumofthecoastalbend.org/

Texas Heritage Trails Program, Texas Historical Commission
http://www.texasindependencetrail.com/home/index.asp

Texas Settlement Region, Victoria
http://www.texas-settlement.org/
La Salle’s Odyssey in the Texas Coastal region
About Mark G. Mitchell

Mark is an author and illustrator whose books for upper elementary and middle grades have been about Texas nonfiction subjects.

His latest, ‘Raising ‘La Belle’ tells of the recovery of the ship that belonged to the explorer Robert Cavelier, the Sieur de La Salle.

Crafted from a shipyard’s scrap oak timbers in 1684, La Belle was a personal gift from the “Sun King” of France, Louis XIV to the visionary, unusual La Salle who had just claimed the Mississippi River for France.

Raising ‘La Belle’ follows the unlikely pioneers who sailed with La Salle on his prize, La Belle and three other ships from France to build a village in the New World in 1685. The book also gives readers a ‘front row seat’ at the archeological excavation (1996-97) that made headlines around the world.

Raising ‘La Belle” won the 2003 Western Writers of America Spur Award for “best juvenile western nonfiction book” and the 2003 United States Maritime Literature Award. (The publicity from these recognitions resulted in Mark’s commission as an Admiral in the Texas Navy by the governor!)

Mark’s other books for young people are Seeing Stars: The McDonald Observatory, Its Science and Astronomers, and The Mustang Professor: The Story of J. Frank Dobie. The Mustang Professor is about the controversial writer and University of Texas professor who traversed the wilds of Texas and northern Mexico, collecting the folklore of the Southwest.

In addition to illustrating his own and other authors’ books, Mark has illustrated for the Carus Publishing children’s magazines Appleseeds, Calliope, Cobblestone, Cricket, Faces, Footsteps and Odyssey

A native of Syracuse, New York, Mark lived in New York, California, Alaska and the Midwest growing up. He graduated from the University of Texas College of Communication and worked for many years as a newspaper reporter.

He hosts the blogs http://thelasalleshipwreck.com/wordpress and http://HowToBeAChildrensBookIllustrator.wordpress.com

And for the past two years he’s been delighting young audiences with his school presentations based on Raising La Belle. His website is: www.markgmitchell.com
Texas' "Lost Colony"

In 1995 archeologists discovered a shipwreck in Matagorda Bay between Galveston and Corpus Christi. It turned out to be no ordinary sunken ship, but a 17th century French ship with decorated bronze cannons, barrels of goods and weapons, and a human skeleton curled in the bow!

It was the Belle, the barque of famed North American explorer Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle.

Would your students be interested in seeing a presentation about the Belle and how its story still affects us as Texans?

Mark G. Mitchell’s presentation includes slides of the actual excavation and his drawings and paintings to help make the shipwreck story come alive. The program is suitable for all grades. Expect lots of Q&A (kids of all ages are fascinated with the shipwreck) and a "chalk talk" -- a bit of live drawing for the students that stays on the topic of La Salle and his French settlers -- and the Indians and animals that played into their lives on Texas shores in 1685.

Mark's illustrations have appeared in several books for children and the children's history magazines Cobblestone and Appleseeds. His book Raising 'La Belle' won the United States Maritime Literature Award and the prestigious Spur Award from the Western Writers of America for the best western juvenile nonfiction book of 2003.

He has been a featured author and speaker at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, the Museum of the Gulf Coast, the Western Heritage Museum of Hobbs, New Mexico, the Texas Book Festival and the Writers' League of Texas televised series Writing Across Texas.

Read an interview of Mark by children and teen author Cynthia Leitich Smith in her blog Cynsations at http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2005/10/author-interview-mark-g-mitchell-on.html

See Mark's website at: http://www.markgmitchell.com