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Grave House Legends Haunts Soirée du Cinema

New book takes a new look at an ancient burial custom.

Why were the Cajun grave houses built? If you watched the documentary *Little Houses—A short film about death*, you'd know the obscure burial houses remain a mystery.

Almost exactly one year after the film's premier, executive producer Jeremy Broussard partners with local photographer Gwen Aucoin to release *Grave House Legends*, a picture-travel book exploration of the unique legends surrounding these grave structures. The two will present the book for the first time before a screening of *Little Houses* for Soirée du Cinema on April 21 at the Acadiana Center for Film and Media.

"Little Houses sought to unravel the mystery of why this burial custom began several hundred years ago and ended in the 1930's," said Broussard, who adds that most people, including experts, didn't know these structures existed. "After the premier last May, several people approached me with stories, rumors and legends about the houses. The movie stirred up stories that just had to be told."

Local photographer Gwen Aucoin's vivid shots capture the graves' aged appearance, Acadian style architecture and mystic charm. Broussard's tales begin with a description of the film, stories behind the legends and a depiction of the last three remaining grave houses. The book's last section features travel information, links to nearby accommodations and a map to Istre Cemetery, where the last grave houses remain.

The book's hybrid format — part picture book, part travel book — perfectly fits its purpose. "We wouldn't be doing these structures justice with a typical travel book," said Broussard. "Gwen's photos are amazing and, in this format, it's as if the houses themselves tell the story. We hope it inspires readers to see the landmarks in person."

Complete details of the event are as follows:

Grave House Legends Release Event

April 21, 2010

Acadiana Center for Film & Media

Book Event—5:00 p.m. • Documentary Screening—6:00 p.m.

Limited book copies on hand; Complimentary wine and snacks

Little Houses is one of three documentaries being screened on April 21. Visit FestivalInternational.com/site163.php for a complete film festival lineup. Visit GraveHouseLegends.com for more information on the book, including how to order advanced copies online.

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