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Former Katy ISD teacher and "Story-teller" Lester Reineker dons his coonskin cap to tell the tales of yesteryear to visitors and members of the Katy Heritage Society at their May 19 meeting. The group is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Photo by Claudia Richter

Volunteers bring Texas past to life

By Claudia Richter
Editor

The Cane Island Volunteers brought the past back to life as they regaled members and guests of The Katy Heritage Society with stories and historical reenactments of early frontier days in Texas at its monthly membership meeting May 19 at the society's historical park on George Bush Drive.

The group, formed in 1985 to help the community celebrate the 1986 Texas Sesquicentennial, presents programs at folk festivals, state park events and school presentations throughout Texas using early Texas camp settings to demonstrate skills needed in Texas in the early 1820's and 1830's.

By showing early fire building techniques, bullet making, cooking, wood-

working, leather tooling and how to load and fire the primitive weapons of the era people get a better sense of how it was during that time say members of the group.

"We make history come alive," said Lester Reineker, the "story-teller" for the group and former history teacher and coach for the Katy school district.

"I wanted to teach history in a living sense," Reineker said. "In a book the pages can all look alike, the study of history is real people who did real things and by showing instead of reading about it, it made it a lot for exciting to teach and for students to learn."

The military camp life of Texas volunteer soldiers and the colorful life of Davy Crockett are depicted as well with authentic equipment

and period clothing.

The Volunteers have developed a following across the state, appearing at a number of historic events and folk festivals celebrating Texas' heritage. They have been invited to appear at the Texas Independence celebration at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Sam Houston Folklife Festival in Hunstville and the Davy Crockett Pioneer Festival in Crockett, among others.

The Heritage Society had a brief business meeting following the presentation and discussed plans to further enhance the park.

Volunteers and members are still needed. For more information on The Katy Historical Society, call 281-391-2550.