

The Laffite Study Group Newsletter

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Q: What do the following people have in common?

Jack D. L. Holmes (historian), John L. Howells (accountant), Sylvie Robin (graduate student), Gerard Sellers (filmmaker, folklorist), Jane Lucas DeGrummond (history professor emeritus), Samuel Hughes (medical doctor), Pam Keyes (journalist), Albert Tate, Jr. (judge), Powell Casey (military historian) and more than 100 others.

A: They are all members of the Laffite Study Group.

The Laffite Study Group was formed in 1975 to unite persons with an interest in Jean Laffite's role in history, folklore, and literature. It is a non-profit, educational organization and publishes this **Newsletter** in addition to a series of occasional papers entitled **The Life and Times of Jean Laffite**. Membership in the LSG is open to all. Annual dues are \$10 for individuals and institutions; \$15 outside of the U.S. Queries concerning membership should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, LSG, 2570 Kevin Lane, Houston, Texas 77043.

THE LAFFITE NETWORK

Editorial work on sketches for the forthcoming **Dictionary of Louisiana Biography** will begin this spring, reports editor Dr. Glenn R. Conrad of the University of Southwestern Louisiana. The dictionary is a project of the Louisiana Historical Association.

Mark your calendars to include the dates of the annual meeting of the Louisiana Historical Association, 13-15 March 1986, in Shreveport.

The Texas State Historical Association will hold its annual meeting in Austin on 6-8 March 1986.

Jack Holmes offers the following note about Renato Beluche, culled from Raymond J. Martinez, **Rousseau--The Last Days of Spanish New Orleans** (New Orleans, 1975): When six sailors from the Spanish schooner Voltaire mutined at Islas Sabinas (Cedar Keys, Florida) in 1801, they planned to sail their craft to the Bahamas, "but the pilot Renato B[e]luche pointed out that his navigation chart only reached Tampa Bay and that he was not able to sail the ship any farther" (p. 110).

JLNHP REPORTS

The following studies have been completed in relation to the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park in Louisiana --

Mississippi Delta Ethnographic Overview, by Nicholas Spitzer, et al. (1979)

Spirit World (Afro-American religious beliefs), by Michael Smith (1980)

Vieux Carre Ethnographic Overview, by Tom Ireland (1980)

Plantation Survey (4 vols.), by Monroe Labouisse (1980)

Masters of the Marsh (St. Bernard Parish), by Joseph Guilotte (1981)

Prophecy, Healing and Power: The Afro-American Spiritual Churches of New Orleans, by Andrew Kaslow (1981)

An Essay on Lower Louisiana, by Stephen Duplantier (1981)

An Ethnohistory of 19th Century Indians, by E. and T. Drechsel (1982)

The Defense of New Orleans, 1718-1900, by Jerome Greene (1982)

A Survey of Louisiana French Vernacular Architecture (2 vols.), by Joy Edwards (1985)

A History of the Islenos in Southern Louisiana to 1945, by Gilbert Din (1985)

Works in progress include studies of migration patterns, ethnohistory of the Filipinos, War of 1812 fortifications, and the Barataria Bay region. In addition to the above, the NPS has funded archaeological studies at various sites, as well as a number of historic outlines and natural history reports. For more information, contact: James Isenogle, Superintendent, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 423 Canal Street - Room 206, New Orleans LA 70130.

REVIEW

Historic Resource Study: Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. By Jerome A. Greene. Denver: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. September 1985. xi, 467 pp., notes, bib., maps, illus.

This study is essentially a literature review conducted by an NPS historian for the purpose of developing an historic context for historic sites in the Chalmette Unit of the JLNHP.

Serious students of the British invasion of Louisiana in 1814-1815 will probably be disappointed with Greene's synthesis. The bibliographic control for this study is unimpressive and the author has made little use of the extant primary sources available, such as foreign archives or the records of the New Orleans naval station. There is little evidence of any critical evaluation of the historical literature on the New Orleans campaign.

The Baratarians are hardly mentioned. We find the contributions of the Laffites, Beluche, You, et al., lumped together with all of the other "unconventional" forces in a single paragraph spanning pages 22-23. There is no mention of the filibusters and Latin American revolutionaries who enlisted in the American cause. The single footnote on Laffite cites Latour, DeGrummond, James, Brown's **Amphibious Campaign**, and Arthur -- there is not even the usual obligatory reference to Lyle Saxon's **Lafitte the Pirate** or the articles of Stanley Faye -- and LSG member John Sugden, author of "Jean Lafitte and the British Offer of 1814," is listed as "John Snyder". Thankfully, Greene has chosen to ignore **The Journal of Jean Laffite**.

A redeeming feature of the study is the "Recommendations for Further Study" on pages 309-311.

R.C.V.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Encyclopedia of Forts, Posts, Named Camps and Other Military Installations in Louisiana, 1700-1981 (Baton Rouge: Claiborne Publishing Division, [1985]), by Powell Casey, is an impressive catalog of data and information useful for military historians.

Dan L. Flores, editor and author of the splendid introduction and epilogue to **Jefferson & Southwestern Exploration: The Freeman & Custis Accounts of the Red River Expedition of 1806** (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), is an environmental historian with a keen interest in Borderlands geo-politics.

The Texas Connection with the American Revolution, by Robert H. Thornhoff (Brunette TX: The Eakin Press, 1981), offers the rather suspect thesis that the Texas-Louisiana cattle trade made a decisive contribution to the success of the Continentals in the American Revolution.

The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History: Volume I, 1812, edited by William S. Dudley, with a foreword by Rear Admiral John D. Kane (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1985), is the first of three planned volumes of rare, inaccessible, and/or deteriorating manuscripts on the origins of sea power. The present volume summarizes naval affairs from 1783 to 1805, then covers the opening phase of the war with Great Britain. Chapter Four covers the Gulf Coast theatre of operations and the New Orleans naval station.

James L. Haley's **Texas: An Album of History** (Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1985), is an attractive coffee table book that wears well as a short montage of Texana. "Brimming with rare photographs," according to the jacket blurb, the book does reproduce some impressive images, although most are merely portraits of historic characters. Jean Laffite, identified as a French pirate, is mentioned in passing.
