



# The Laffite Society Chronicles

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# REFERENCES IN GRAY'S DIARY: INVESTIGATIVE LEADS FOR LAFFITE

## RESEARCH

RANDY PACE

One of the most fascinating documents archived in the Galveston and Texas History Center at the Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas, is the diary of Colonel William F. Gray. While it is extremely interesting that Gray's diary details the people he met and the places he visited, it is more intriguing that he references surveys, charts, maps and documents of others who preceded him in their visitations to Galveston Island and the surrounding area. If these important resources are still in existence and can be located, they may prove invaluable in pinpointing the site of Laffite's settlement on the island and in revealing other information about him.

Gray, a native of Virginia, was a pious, versatile man who was intensely interested in everything around him. During his several visits to Texas in 1835, 1836 and 1837, and after seeing the liberty-loving Texas soldiers at San Jacinto, the determination of Texas leaders at the signing of the declaration of independence, and the courage of Texas settlers in Houston, Gray was convinced that this latter city was the place for him and his family.

Gray moved to Houston in 1837, where he lived until his death in 1841. He was a publisher, postmaster, Freemason, military man, lawyer, clerk of the Texas House of Representatives, Secretary of the Texas Senate, and clerk of the Texas Supreme Court.

The first mention of Galveston Island in Gray's diary was on January 10, 1836. He was in New Orleans and had a long conversation about Texas with A. J. Yates, who thinks that "Galveston Bay will become the principal commercial depot of Texas" and that a group of New York capitalists have purchased a league of land on the island, "including Laffite's old fort on which they design building the city of Galveston."

Gray reported that on January 2 he had met a Mr. Yates, a New York lawyer, who had told him that he was going to settle a plantation on Galveston Bay. Yates related that he would go into the cattle business, buy some native Mexicans who had forfeited their liberty by debt, and use them as herdsmen. While talking, Yates showed Gray a chart of Galveston Bay, which was made under his direction by an old sailor. Gray borrowed it to copy. Gray recorded that he was much interested in Mr. Yates and his plans because he was very intelligent and gentlemanly.

Further research about Mr. Yates revealed that upon arriving in Texas in 1835, he applied for a

headright in Lorenzo de Zavala's colony. He located near the town of Liberty, where he lived until 1841 when he removed to Galveston. There he began publishing the *Daily Advertiser*. In 1851 he moved to San Jose, California, where he practiced law until his death in 1856. Opal Rosson wrote her M.A. thesis at the University of Texas (1939) on Mr. Yates; it was titled "The Life of Andrew Janeway Yates." (Author's note: has any of our readers seen this thesis?)

After Gray talked to Mr. Yates, he relates in the diary that he wrote a letter to Mrs. Gray on January 10. Perhaps much more information about Galveston is contained in this letter, as well as in the chart commissioned by Yates and copied by Gray, but it is not known if they still exist and can be located in any surviving Gray and Yates papers.

On February 28, 1836, while at Washington (present-day Washington-on-the-Brazos) for the election of members to the new convention (he was not elected as he had hoped), Gray met Lorenzo de Zavala, whom he noted as "the most interesting man in Texas." He recorded that Zavala was a native of the Yucatán, Governor of the State of Mexico for five years, minister of the fiscal department, and Ambassador to France from the Republic of Mexico, which latter post he renounced when Santa Anna proved recreant to the liberal cause.

Zavala had resided for some time in the United States. He then was living on Buffalo Bayou, near Galveston Bay. He was a fine writer and had published a volume recounting his travels in the United States; it was printed in Paris in the Spanish language. Gray wrote himself a note to procure a copy, and a letter to Mrs. Gray on March 5 which perhaps mentioned Zavala. (Author's note: it would be interesting to locate (a) the memoirs/papers of Zavala and search for mention of Laffite either in Galveston or the Yucatán, and (b) Colonel Gray's letter to Mrs. Gray in the Gray papers.)

On March 21, Gray and many other gentlemen, including Robert Triplett, left for Harrisburg (see below). On March 23, he visited the home of Zavala on a point at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and the old San Jacinto River (the present San Jacinto running some distance off). He reported that the house was small, and that it contained one large room, three small bed closets, a porch, a kitchen, etc. He met Mrs. (Emily) Zavala, who was 27 years old, a native of the

State of New York, and whose maiden name was West. She was Zavala's second wife. Gray mentions that Zavala was 47 years old.

Further research has revealed that Zavala was born in 1789 in Tecoh, near Mérida, Yucatán. He was a member of the Yucatán Provincial Assembly in 1820-1821 representing Yucatán in the Spanish Cortes in Madrid, until he learned of the Mexican declaration of independence. He was a member of the Mexican Constituent Congress and the Mexican Senate from 1822 to 1826.

Gray reported that the Zavalas had one son, Lorenzo Zavala, Jr., who was born in the Yucatán. He must have been born during the period Laffite lived, and supposedly died, there. Perhaps Zavala, Sr., may have encountered Laffite or may have written about him in any journals he may have kept.

Zavala received an *empresario* contract on March 12, 1829, to introduce five hundred families into Texas. On October 12, 1830, he, with David G. Burnet and Joseph Vehlein, transferred his *empresario* contract to the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company. Zavala left Texas for a period and went back to Mexico, but he returned to Texas in July, 1835, where he bought a home (built c. 1822) on Buffalo Bayou from Philip Singleton and installed his family in December. Following the battle of San Jacinto, the Zavala home, just across the bayou from the battlefield, was used as a hospital for wounded Texans and later for wounded Mexicans.

Between 1820 and 1832, Zavala published a number of works on Mexican politics; probably the most important was his two-volume "Ensayo Histórico de las Revoluciones de Méjico, desde 1808 hasta 1830," which was printed in Paris in 1831-1832 and reprinted in 1845 and 1918. Also, Raymond Estep wrote his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Texas (1942) entitled, "The Life of Lorenzo de Zavala", and this is another source worthy of research.

The diary goes on to report that on April 6, 1836, Gray boarded at Clopper's Point (New Washington), near present day Morgan's Point, the steamboat *Cayuga*, bound for Galveston Island. He was accompanied by Robert Triplett (from Kentucky via Tennessee), a Dr. Neblett (from Virginia), and Nathaniel I. Dobie of Harrisburg, Texas (Author's note: do any readers possess information on Dobie?). On April 7 they passed to the west of Pelican Island, "the harbor being between that island, Galveston Island and Point Bolivar." He went ashore with Triplett and Neblett from the harbor and walked across the island and around its head by the beach, where he enjoyed for the first time a full view of the great ocean. "The fresh breeze from the south brought the waves in with a noise

resembling a great waterfall."

"Triplett and Neblett measured off two sections of ground here [Author's note: where is a copy of said survey, if it exists?], as the site of a future town [Galveston]", which included "the site of Laffite's old fort, the shape of which, and some remains of his operations, in the shape of broken bottles, crockery, bricks, nails, etc. are still visible [Author's note: is this description of the site the first one since Laffite's leaving Galveston Island?]."

While in New Orleans on December 31, Gray recorded that Triplett had made a conditional purchase of land in Texas [Galveston] of A. C. Allen, dependent on his being satisfied with the title, etc., after having looked into it. Gray further records that "the whole island is low, no part that I have seen ten feet above ordinary tide, and I am told has all been overflowed since the settlement of the country." (Author's note: As far as I know, there were no major hurricanes after Laffite left Galveston until Gray arrived that could have damaged what was left of the site. The hurricane of 1818 occurred during Laffite's habitation, and there was a hurricane in October, 1837.)

Gray further reports that "the shores are very shoal and no part presents a good site for a city. But no other place can vessels drawing more than two or three feet approach within two or three hundred yards of the shore. The Island is forty miles long-only three trees on it [he was probably told this, as he does not recount going to the west end of the island]. No habitation, except for many birds, cranes, curlews, gulls and pelicans; fine pasturage. A great number of deer on the island. The best entrance to the harbor is from the east. (See Canty's Chart.)" (Author's note: who was Canty, and does his chart exist in any archives?) A. C. Allen also told Gray that he and a company of New York owned a league at the harbor where they intended to build a city. Gray records that Burnet said that it had never passed from the government.

Further research reveals that Dr. Neblett was Robert Caldwell Neblett, a Virginian, who located on the east bank of the Sabine River in 1833 at what is known as Neblett's Bluff. Many Texan immigrants received medical attention, supplies and hospitality at his plantation. He later moved to Houston in 1840 before locating on a plantation in Grimes County. He died in Anderson in 1871. W. T. Neblett wrote "Neblett's Bluff on Sabine River", which is located in the archives collection (MS), University of Texas.

On April 13, 1836, Gray records that Triplett, Neblett and Dobie left Lynch's (Ferry) and hastened on to Harrisburg in order to get a grant from the government of the land they had located on Galveston and Point Bolivar, in which Gray had taken an interest

equal to his interest in the loan. He further relates on April 15 that that morning Neblett rode out to meet President Burnet to ask him to sign the grant for two sections of land on Galveston Island and one on Point Bolivar.

While Gray was waiting for these gentlemen, who had borrowed his horse, to return, he wrote Mrs. Gray an account of Galveston Bay and Island. (Author's note: do these letters exist, and would they detail his visit to the site of Laffite's fort in more detail?) He further notes that on May 9, while back in New Orleans, Neblett is much elated with his Galveston city scheme and thinks he can make a good speculation in it. Gray also reports that Neblett and several gentlemen have agreed to take shares in it at \$1,000 each, and run all risks. S. W. Williams, James Power, John T. Austin, Alfred R. Guilt, etc., are here and Williams is one of the company that claims a league of land on Galveston.

As of May 14, he was still in New Orleans and was being urged by Dr. Neblett to remain until Triplett arrived, to try and arrange a plan of operations about Galveston, he (Neblett) being obliged to go to the sales at Chockchuma.

"May 25th--at Lake Borgne. Triplett arrived last night. Had a meeting with the subscribers to the loan and they refused to accept the form of script which Triplett brought from the Executive of Texas. Appointed a committee to draft the proper form."

"May 30th-- sent script to Texas by Gail Borden to be executed and returned as quickly as possible. Also sent by him the proceedings of the meeting respecting the script [Author's note: do these records exist in the Gray papers?]. Settled with Triplett for my twentieth part of the Galveston script. \$30 paid in Texas, \$66 paid now. It is for Texas script Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, one section of which is laid on Galveston Island, where the proposed town is to be (See my receipt). Got from Triplett his plan for the city of Galveston; not satisfactory [Author's note: does this plan exist in the Gray or Borden papers?]."

Further research reveals that Triplett was a wealthy Kentuckian who had amassed a fortune

speculating in military script in that state and who held a rival claim at Galveston (see Galveston City Company papers, Menard to McKinney, April 11, 1837). Triplett and nine other U.S. citizens had subscribed to a \$200,000 loan for Texas in January, 1836, expecting to receive in return land script worth fifty cents per acre and early location rights. Triplett and Gray staked a claim to a section of land near the eastern tip of Galveston Island. However, they lacked the political influence to receive a title. Later, Triplett joined Menard in the Galveston City Company ownership due to his failure to get his claim recognized. In fact, Michel B. Menard received a grant for Galveston Island on December 9, 1836. (Author's note: Robert Triplett was a cousin of one of my Triplett ancestors.)

The papers and diaries of Gray warrant further review, particularly as they reference other documents, maps, and charts, some of which exist in archives outside the State of Texas. The quest for valid information about Laffite is very challenging, but always interesting and surprising, especially as we discover evidence that others have left behind that reveals their fascination about him too. I would welcome hearing from other Laffite researchers who have investigated some of these sources or would like to do so. This shared information would make interesting sequels to this article, sequels which I invite you to author.

The Laffite Society would like to hear from any of our members and other fellow researchers about their particular areas of interest in regards to Laffite. The Society also welcomes the submission of articles for consideration for inclusion in *The Laffite Society Chronicles*.

*Randy Pace is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Laffite Society, having served as Second Vice-President and Membership Chair. He is now an Ex-Officio Advisor on Historical Preservation.*

## THE SHIPS' COOKS

WIL ZAPALAC

*Author's note: this article is the second installment of a work involving an offhand comparison of nowadays Cajun, or Creole, boat men with those commanded by Jean Laffite. My last offering, titled "Laffite's Men" (see The Laffite Society Chronicles, Volume I, Number 2, July, 1995), dealt with the privateer's seamen or deck personnel.*

This essay concerns a section of the crew that was, although very valuable, continuously overlooked, even scoffed at. A section that surely added some spice to the lives of Laffite and his men: the cooks.

While sailing alongside some of the modern-day counterparts of such, one word to describe them comes to mind: nosy. But not just nosy; maniacally inquisitive.

And yet, on the other side of the coin, they are the boats' walking data banks. What if something were about to change in the boat's work pattern, or the estimated time of arrival at port or destination? And, say, a seaman wanted simply to know. One would go ask the cook. Forget the captain; if he did know, he was not going to inform you - not *correctly*, anyway. The mate, who more than likely did not know, would act as though he did and try to gain a bribe. So one would just hope to be on good terms with the person that held sway over his daily nutriment supply, and try there.

Cooks are somewhat like cats. They seem to always just idly hang around, nonchalantly observing the world or the day's happenings. Get in a conversation over an engine room problem with the chief engineer and right around the stairway would be the all-cars cook. Have a guest or office personnel come aboard and the first person gushing forth overwhelming hospitality (spiked with "innocent" questions) would be the cook.

Laffite's cooks definitely wore other hats, as well: ship's physician, fortune teller, lead rat killer, on-board comedian, and so on.

And one may as well throw in the fire marshal's helmet as well to these other cooks' trades. I've seen present-day chefs fill the galley with plenty of smoke and flame, while using hi-tech cookery with fire-retardant bulkheads. So Laffite's *gastons* probably really laughed it up with swing kettles, fires and such, with the main stove, in high seas. And all that wood about the place!

Occasionally, one sees a female holding down the cook's position on present-day oil or cargo vessels in the Gulf. But very rarely. Given Laffite's knack for being frequently paradoxical, he may have allowed some feisty female Creole hellcat to sail as a cook. Or, instead, given into the ever-present superstition that a woman on board was bad luck, trouble, or both.

A modern-day cook can refuse to cook in rough weather. One would think, however, that many of Laffite's captains probably frowned on such, especially when just a few spits could be set up to give the boys something to gnaw on, while waiting for the dullard captain of the prize (he who was being chased for days) to finally make a choice of ship's heading that agreed with that of their *captain*.

One Cajun cook that I sailed with while hauling construction barges through bayous and about the Gulf held the just-right name of Tattoo. Tattoo epitomized the very image of one of Laffite's "boys" that had slipped through a time warp.

Jumpy as a cat, with subtle wisp-like moves in the galley and on the deck as well, Tattoo believed that if a person had not ever been in prison-much less jail-then more than likely that person lived in a "@#\$% closet"! He looked at the world through a huge question mark of a keyhole. Forever interested! Consequently, the Louisiana legal system felt Tattoo should (for the sake of all parties concerned) just stay at sea. Or as much as possible, at least.

Even captains would not play cards with this Tattoo, for his fingers moved just as fast as his playfully benevolent eyes. All this wizardry of the "Bicycles", peppered with a hard bayou rap.

If Tattoo showed a fondness for a fellow seaman, that could mean anything. But if he thought the person a "punk" (his favorite tag) or "powder puff", than he just did not like the person.

This straight-forward deceitfulness, blended with various levels of spooky or unusual moods, describes the typical Cajun cook.

"You got problems with somebody, you ride dat broom, Wil," Tattoo matter-of-factly stated one night in the galley, as he sat across the table from me.

More than half bored to death by the vessel's slowed work schedule, I looked at him and groaned.

"What *are* you talking, Tattoo?"

And with that I was given a short and serious lecture on witches, brooms, and how to not waste money on spell-casting booklets down at the "Quarter".

Yet, Laffite mentions in his Journal about his concern over the spread of voodoo or black magic in the islands; so one would very

well wonder as to how much control he bothered to display over its practice within his own commune.

Laffite's cooks must have had an absolute field day with the various arrivals of captured Epicurean supplies from English and Spanish vessels. This potpourri, tacked onto the reliable flow of Laffite's teams of hunters, fisherman and what-nots...no, one would not have seen many, if any, of his men walking around hungry.

Yet present-day offshore vessels (for reasons the main office would have considerable trouble explaining) often get down to crackers and canned food and whatever they could catch from the Gulf. For over a week. This could have-would have-sent what little morale there was *on board overboard*.

And such it may have been with the cooks within Laffite's fleet. One moment moodily stirring the on-board cauldron and the next preparing to come along the prize with knife and meat-ax in hand.

One last note on Tattoo *le gaston*.. He was the only person I have ever seen do a one-*finger* pushup-with the other hand behind his back. And he would do it one time and *only* one time.

For money.

## Charles Nathan Tilton Privateer with Jean Laffite

*Dr. Reginald Wilson*

Early in the month of January 1821, the United States brig-of-war *Enterprise*, under the command of Lieutenant Kerny, anchored off Campeachy, Jean Laffite's commune on Galveston Island. Lieutenant Kerny came ashore and informed Laffite that he must abandon his establishment, destroy his buildings, and leave the island.

This Laffite agreed to do, but he requested sixty days for his men, some with families, to disband in an orderly fashion. Lieutenant Kerny agreed to this proposal.

Some of the men returned to New Orleans, some to various islands in the Caribbean, some to the Sabine River area, while others remained in the immediate area of Galveston Bay and quietly integrated with the ranchers and farmers. One of these last was Charles Nathan Tilton.

Charles Nathan Tilton was born in New Hampton, New Hampshire, on December 11, 1799, to Green and Judith Favor Tilton, who had eleven other children. He decided to seek his fortune in the early 1800's by going to sea, something commonly done in those times. Just how he ended up aboard a ship commandeered by pirate Jean Laffite is not clear, although some believe that he was captured at sea by Laffite's men and was assigned as a cabin boy to one of many ships in the fleet headed by the buccaneer.

When the pirate ships came to Galveston to establish their headquarters, young Tilton was with them and had moved up to the rank of bosun's mate. Nothing is known, however, about his voyages or time spent as a privateer. As with most of those who shipped under a letter of marque, silence was the best way to handle this delicate situation.

It was during this time in Galveston that Charles Tilton became a close friend to Charles Cronca, and he remained so the rest of their lives.

Not until 1820 did Charles's family learn that he was alive and well. They feared that he had been lost at sea.

After Laffite sailed out of Galveston in 1821, Tilton's whereabouts were not known for some eight or nine years. He may have shipped out, or lived in Chambers County, or he may have gone immediately to Matagorda Peninsula where records show that he bought one hundred two acres of land in 1829. He called his place "Tilona".

When he married in 1831, he took his bride to Tilona, where he had his house and farm and raised cattle.

Salt water was still in his blood, so in 1840 he purchased a ninety-ton schooner named *Blackjack*. His cargo is unknown, but in those times the transporting of slaves along the coast was widespread.

In 1847 he sold his Matagorda land, house, and four hundred head of cattle to Samuel Maverick, one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Maverick left a slave on the property to brand the new-born calves and keep fences in repair - an assignment the slave failed to carry out. As a result, Maverick's cattle began to roam all over the peninsula and the locals began to call these "Mavericks". This terminology gradually spread across Texas and to this day all lost, unbranded cattle are called "Mavericks".

Tilton, with his wife and children, moved to Cove, Chambers County, Texas, where he had acquired property ten years earlier from the Mexican government. Here Charles continued to maintain a low profile and live quietly with the families in that area. During the Battle of San Jacinto he is listed under the command of Major McNutt at Harrisburg, guarding the baggage of General Sam Houston's army.

In Galveston in the 1850's, Tilton started a freight-hauling business, using heavy



wagons and horses to haul freight from ships in the harbor.

It has passed down through the family that on a number of occasions Charles would leave for a week to visit Charlie Cronea at High Island, and upon his return he would be "flushed" with money!

Charles Nathan Tilton died in Galveston on December 24, 1860. He is buried in the Tilton Cemetery on the banks of Old River at Cove, Texas.

After Tilton's death, Charles Cronea and his daughter, Annie, came to visit Mrs. Tilton. The trip by schooner took two days. Unfortunately, they missed the Tilton boat landing by a half mile, so that it was necessary

to slog through heavy marsh to get to high ground.

#### Bibliography

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## PROGRAM ABSTRACTS

The Laffite Society generally publishes in *The Laffite Society Chronicles* abstracts of featured talks presented at the General Meetings, when the nature and length of these featured presentations lend themselves to such inclusion, and when the speakers facilitate same. The abstracts are usually prepared by the featured speakers and might contain information which is in conflict with the opinions of others or established documentation.

The material contained in this section does not, therefore, necessarily reflect the position of The Laffite Society. The Laffite Society does, however, encourage discourse regarding conflicting viewpoints, because it believes such discourse often leads to a broader and deeper understanding of the topics of discussion.

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE MAISON ROUGE SITE

R. DALE OLSON

*Editor's Note: Although treasure hunters have long engaged in digging at the site of Maison Rouge (1417 Avenue A, Galveston Island), the first professionally conducted archaeological investigation was not to occur until the year 1984, when the Houston Archaeological Society and the Archaeological Laboratory of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Houston cooperated in a rather exhaustive excavation.*

*A preliminary report on the investigation was authored by Randolph J. Widmer, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, and Anne Sullivan, a graduate student. A final report was never completed.*

*On Monday, the 11th of September, 1995, archaeologist Sheldon Kindall, former President of the Houston Archaeological Society, met with approximately seventy-five members and guests of The Laffite Society at the site of Maison Rouge. He later addressed the General Meeting concerning the results of the investigation and provided a slide presentation of many of the artifacts found.*

*The following summary of findings was not prepared by Mr. Kindall. Written by the president of The Laffite Society, R. Dale Olson, it is a synopsis of the interim report authored by Widmer and Sullivan and originally published in The Journal of the Houston Archaeological Society, August, 1984, 79, 14-19.*

*Certain conclusions reflected in the paper, according to conversations with the supervising archaeologists, were later altered. Both Dr. Widmer and Mr. Kindall have represented that they are of the opinion that the site was consistent with an occupancy during the time of Laffite.*

*Although not reflected in the interim report, time allotted for the original excavation expired just as the investigators reached the depth of Maison Rouge. Insufficient time was available to the researchers for a conclusive investigation.*

*A new, very focused, excavation at certain specific locations on the property is currently being discussed by Mr. Kindall and site owners Diane and R. Dale Olson. Such an investigation could very well provide further documentation to*

*support the existence of an occupancy consistent with Laffite's time on Galveston.*

## Introduction

The focus of the 1984 excavation was to archaeologically uncover the early non-native-American settlement of Galveston, which dates to the Aury, Mina, and Laffite era of approximately 1816-1821.

Archaeological investigations are an important assist for the understanding of this early era on Galveston due to the paucity of historic documentation. This relative lack of historic data has resulted in much folklore and speculation regarding the location of Jean Laffite's "Maison Rouge" and many of the events concerning his stay on the island.

According to the researchers, "... the site of the excavation afforded an ideal look into Galveston's past" (Widmer and Sullivan, 1984). Permission to excavate the site was graciously provided by Douglas Zwiener, owner of the site at the time.

Several situations existed which had the potential to interfere with the archaeologists' task. Most prominent was the fact that the island's grade had been raised after the 1900 hurricane. Although this was indeed an initial apprehension, it was later learned that the fill stopped approximately in the alley behind 1417 Avenue A.

Second, historical records document that the early nineteenth century settlement of Jean Laffite was burned, obscuring if not obliterating this early occupation.

The team of archaeologists initially mapped the exposed architectural features onto a grid system. This grid system was oriented perpendicularly to the east side of the foundation of the house. After establishing the grid, a series of sub-surface post-hole probes was excavated to determine the stratigraphy - that is, the historical arrangement of sub-surface layers, or strata - of the site. From these tests it would be possible to discern if different cultural "horizons" (the strata visible in a vertical cross-section of soil) were uniform across the locale. These strata were confirmed by more

extensive, five-foot-square, excavations.

#### Site Stratigraphy

Five separate stratigraphic zones were noted during the excavations. These zones were very distinctive and were found in all undisturbed portions of the site (that is, those areas which are not covered by buildings, cisterns or other architectural features). The third through the fifth zones were subdivided into vertical levels measured off at three inches each (a measure selected arbitrarily), so that the team could distinguish and refine the stratigraphic profile in the event the zones proved to be of no chronological or cultural significance, or were insufficient for chronological phasing of the site occupation.

*ZONE I* - Zone I consists of a twelve-inch layer of gray, loose, humic-stained sand. The upper six inches of this deposit consist almost exclusively of modern trash, primarily liquor, wine and beer bottles. After recognizing the contemporary nature of this material in the first few pits, the upper six-inch level was not saved.

The lower six inches of Zone I were devoid of such contamination and contained staggering quantities of historical artifacts, including bottle glass, pane glass, nails, brick fragments, ceramics and buttons. This material seems to date to the late nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth centuries.

*ZONE II* - Zone II consists of a distinct cultural stratum approximately six inches in thickness. The upper three inches consist primarily of crushed oyster shells, which were intentionally deposited on top of a three-inch layer of oyster and brick, the latter functioning as a macadam surface for the upper crushed shell layer. The density of brick and shell varies throughout the site, with the greatest density being observed in the area adjacent to the southwest wall, or rear, of the house. It is clear that this zone served as a pavement or other intentionally-prepared surface for the last house built on this property, in 1885.

*ZONE III* - Zone III is a variable zone both in terms of thickness and composition. It extends from a depth of eighteen inches to twenty-five to thirty inches below the surface, and represents a fill

episode which raised the level of the ground for construction of the 1885 house and the oyster-and-brick yard. This zone is composed of sand which is tan to reddish-brown in color and which contains numerous pockets and lenses of clay. It is mixed and contorted, and is clearly fill. This zone was the first to be subdivided into the arbitrary three-inch levels, the fill being screened to determine if there were any temporal differences in these segments.

*ZONE IV* - At a depth of between twenty-five and twenty-nine inches below the surface, a distinct color and texture change is observed across the site. The tan-to-reddish-brown mixed clay/sand fill is replaced by a grayish-white sand devoid of clay. In many areas, this soil is extremely hard packed, surely forming a yard or surface. Toward the eastern margin of the site, this soil is yellower in color but is still sand. It appears that the top of this zone represents a prepared surface.

Originally the team felt that this horizon represented the original, intact island surface, and therefore, hopefully dated to the Jean Laffite era. This proved not to be the case. Instead this zone also represents a fill episode for an occupation dating to before the 1885 house, but after the Jean Laffite era.

*ZONE V* - Zone V consists of a dense gray, muddy sand, encountered at a depth of thirty-nine to forty-two inches below the ground surface. In the central part of the back yard, the surface is very hard packed, but east and west of this area it is much looser. This gray, muddy sand extended as deep as it was possible to dig (the limit was determined largely by the water table, which continually dropped as the excavation proceeded).

It is known that the gray, muddied sand horizon extends to a depth of at least sixty inches below the ground surface.

#### General Discussion of the Findings

One of the interesting findings of the excavations is the fact that unlike many parts of the Island, this property was not raised or filled after the 1900 hurricane. This is not all that surprising since two fill episodes, approximately two feet thick, were added to the site prior to 1885. A retaining wall built of brick encircles the property, and served to retain the fill used to raise the level of the 1885

house.

The interior foundation of the 1885 house had a concrete floor with two drains that connected to a sub-floor pipe which was uncovered during excavation. The team desired to excavate under the "basement" floor of the 1885 house to see if the stratigraphic relationships outlined above still applied. To their surprise, they found a concrete floor located under the 1885 house floor. This was not simply an earlier floor of the 1885 house since a foundation pillar of the 1885 house clearly cut into the earlier floor. This meant that the lower floor was part of a previously unrecognized house, at least one not recorded in the title and deed abstracts of Galveston County.

Ule Haller, archivist of the Rosenberg Library at the time, obtained a bird's-eye-view map of the waterfront for three different periods: one in 1865, one in 1871, and one in 1885. On the 1865 map there is no house or structure at the location of the property; on the 1871 map there is a structure on that property, as there is on the 1885 map. The house on the 1871 map, however, is clearly different from that on the 1885 map, obviously indicating that they are different houses!

The insurance survey done to provide a map of Galveston in 1886 states explicitly that the remains now found on the property are those of the house owned by Captain Hendricks and built in 1885. Therefore, not only is it apparent that an earlier house has been documented historically, but archaeologically as well, and said house seems to have been built around 1870.

The archaeologists' task, then, became to link the various architectural features and out-buildings to their respective houses.

#### Specific Feature #1: The Cisterns

A large rectangular cistern found on the west side of the back yard was first built during the earlier, circa-1870 house phase, but later added on to during the later, 1885 house phase. This cistern was not excavated because its bottom was well below the water table, and the owner had informed the team that he had had it filled. This latter was accomplished reportedly because a young boy living in the neighborhood had, at a time past, fallen into the well. Although the boy was not injured, Douglas Zwienner ordered the cistern filled.

A smaller cistern, six feet square, was

located on the east side of the back yard, opposite the larger cistern. This cistern dated to the 1885 house, since its eastern side was incorporated into the eastern retaining wall. This feature was excavated in its entirety, but contained only clean, yellow, culturally sterile sand. A few soft drink cans, a broom handle, a modern flower pot and a shallow aluminum baking pan, all obviously modern, were found on the bottom of the cistern, indicating it was recently filled and had been empty for most of its history. A single mother-of-pearl button embedded in the asphalt-covered concrete floor was the only *in situ* artifact recovered from this feature.

#### Specific Feature #2: The Well

Perhaps the most exciting feature associated with this property was a well. This structure was oval in shape, and was constructed of bricks which were plastered with cement on both the outer and inner surfaces. The opening of the well was just visible on the surface.

The well was excavated in arbitrarily-selected three-inch levels by Sheldon Kindall to a depth of approximately eleven feet, and a staggering amount of cultural material was recovered. In fact, most of the fill was cultural refuse rather than soil.

In the lower levels of the well water was encountered. For a while, this could be bucketed out, but eventually the inflow became too rapid and a pump was used to remove the water. Later, even the pump could not keep up with the insurging water and the excavation of the well was terminated.

The archaeologists were able to demonstrate stratigraphically that the well was originally built during the occupation of the earlier, circa 1870 house. This has already been seen in that Zone III, the fill for the later 1885 house, meets the well and is not interrupted by a builder's trench.

The proof is also supported by the internal stratigraphy of the well itself. In the well, at a depth of about four feet, there was found a large quantity of wood shavings which appear to be from a carpenter's plane. These were not found in appreciable quantities at more than one foot above and below this four-foot depth. These shavings were viewed as the waste associated with the cabinetry and woodworking which took place during the construction of the later, 1885 house.

Their presence also means that the well was abandoned sometime during the occupation of the earlier house; that is, between 1870 and 1885.

#### Specific Feature #3: The Foundation

Of considerable interest is that the foundation of the later, 1885 house was built directly on top of the foundation of the earlier house.

This has been firmly established because Zone IV and Zone V directly join the house foundation with no discernible interrupting trench. It was also ascertained that the base of the wall is in Zone V. The foundation was set into Zone V, with its trench being back-filled prior to the deposition of Zone IV.

It is further known for certain that the top of Zone IV represents this earlier, circa-1870 house surface because, in the central back yard south of the existing house, a patio surface was located which was composed of square, gritty asphalt at a depth of twenty-five inches below the surface of the ground.

Of greater importance is the fact that a normal sidewalk, intersecting the later 1885 house, was superimposed over this patio. This sidewalk had a low, narrow concrete retaining wall on either side and was filled with crushed oyster and brick, as well as an iron pipe running down the center of it. Also, it is readily apparent that the foundation walls of the 1885 house are made of a different material, a gray crushed shell and sand mortar, or stucco, than is the earlier 1870 house foundation which consists of a light, buff-colored concrete/plaster without much shell. The earlier foundation wall also has a more uneven surface, indicative of hand plastering, while the later foundation surface is clearly poured into a frame.

#### Evidence of the Laffite Era

In the earlier stages of their investigations, the archaeological team reported that they had not found evidence of Maison Rouge. Subsequent to the compilation of a brief preliminary report, however, they *did* find an earlier structure which could have been the home of Laffite.

The team did find and isolate the early Aury, Mina and Laffite *occupational* horizon, this being Zone V. Furthermore, they noted that in the area under the central portion of the house interior, and extending south into the backyard, is a very hard packed surface overlaid by a thin layer of

crushed shell. The cultural material associated with this level dates to the 1818 period.

In the area under the house interior, west of this central area, this hard packed surface drops off into a broad shallow trough which extends at least fifteen inches to the west. This trough contains quite a bit of cultural material, some of which dates to the Laffite era, some of it to a later period. Since this material is on top of, and not in, the gray matrix, it can actually belong to a later fill episode that became associated with earlier era material as it became incorporated into the fill placed over it.

In the backyard portion of the site, this trough-like area is not in evidence. Instead, there exist distinctive refuse areas, one located to the east and one to the west of this central area, with virtually no cultural material found in this central area in Zone V. This material all seems to date to the early nineteenth century, making it contemporary with the earliest known European settlement on the Island.

It was tempting to the archaeologists to suggest that the hard-packed gray sand with the thin shell layer on top represented the front yard of a Laffite-era residence, with the trash areas in the back yard representing disposal sites behind the house. At present, however, they could only state that there are distinct differences in the density and location of artifacts found in the Zone V strata, and that these artifacts were deposited *in situ* in this soil horizon. They did, therefore, conclusively determine that a Laffite-era occupation of Galveston occurred on, or near, this property.

#### Summary

The archaeologists summarized their preliminary findings as having uncovered three chronologically-distinct occupational levels. These were characterized as follows, from earliest to latest occupation:

*The 1815-1821 Occupation* - This occupation consists of an extremely hard-packed, prepared, mud/sand stratum at a depth of about forty inches below the present ground surface. The central portion of this horizon seems to be somewhat elevated. This surface has cultural material extending to a depth of sixty inches, and appears to total at least 311 square feet, as determined through the excavation.

The trash deposits are located to the south of the 1885 house, on the east and west portions of the property. No architectural remnants other than a single post-hole filled with charred material were found associated with this horizon. Archaeologically, this occupational horizon was designated Zone V. Characteristic of this horizon is a large amount of charcoal, perhaps accounting for the dark gray sand. This might indicate the burning of the Laffite settlement upon its abandonment in 1821.

*The circa-1870 House and Yard* - Subsequent to the abandonment of the early settlement, a house was built on the property some time between 1865 and 1871. The foundation was set directly into the Zone V surface. The dimensions of this building, as determined by its foundation, are thirty-six feet by thirty-four feet, for an area of 1,224 square feet. The interior of this house and the areas around it were then filled with sand. This sand is either a grayish-white color, or as was noted in the eastern and western portions of the back yard, a yellowish-orange color. In this colored sand numerous iron pellets of the size of BB's were noted, and it is probable that these pellets are responsible for the sand coloration.

In the interior of the house a concrete floor was constructed on top of this fill, while in the central area south of, and adjacent to, the house, the partial remains of a patio constructed of square asphalt tiles 18 by 18 inches in size were discovered. Also associated with this house is a well located eleven feet south of the house along the eastern margin of the property, and a large rectangular cistern 13 by 19 feet, located 23.5 feet from the south wall of the house along the western margin of the property, both made of brick. The well functioned only during this occupation, and in fact, was abandoned while this house was still in use.

It is not known whether this house was destroyed by a storm, or was disassembled for the next construction phase. Zone IV is the archaeological stratum for this occupation.

*The 1885 House and Yard* - This is the best known of the three occupational phases. This house was built by Captain J.W. Hendricks in 1885. It was a two-story frame house on top of 10-foot-high walls

made of crushed oyster shell, mud and brick fragments. In the insurance records for 1885 to 1937, the ground floor interior was called the basement. The house was popularly known as "The House of the Twelve Gables" because of the three second-story gabled windows protruding from each side of the house. Another name given to the house was "Hendrick's Castle".

By 1894, the house had been divided into three apartments and these rooms rented out. Although the house weathered the 1900 storm, in 1937 it was considered to be a "very poor windstorm risk" (insurance records of 1937). Through lack of repairs and general neglect, the frame structure of the house finally collapsed in the 1950's.

Of considerable interest is that the foundation of the 1885 house was built on top of that of the earlier circa-1870 house, as was an addition to the large rectangular cistern in the western back yard area. In addition, another cistern measuring six feet by six feet was built on the east side of the property.

A low brick retaining wall was built to enclose the property. This brick wall has post-holes placed approximately every eight feet, indicating a wooden fence existed on top of this low footing wall.

A kitchen area was built at the extreme southern end of the property, consisting of an L-shaped concrete wall with a concrete floor at, or close to, the contemporary ground level, an earlier floor having existed at the lower level.

This house was enclosed by the retaining wall and, together with the area inside the house, was filled with a sand/clay deposit some eight to twelve inches thick. In the interior of the house, a concrete drain pipe and a series of pier supports made of brick were set into Zone III, actually cutting into the earlier house floor in a few instances. A crushed brick and oyster shell substratum was then put down, and a smooth concrete floor laid in rectangular sections was poured on top of this substratum.

In the back yard area, a smaller oyster and brick surface was laid over much, but not all, of the Zone III horizon. This surface is six inches thick and was designated Zone II.

In the center of the yard, running perpendicularly to and thus intersecting the south

wall of the house, a formal walkway was uncovered. This walkway was approximately five feet wide and consisted of a crushed oyster shell bed filled between two narrow low concrete retaining walls. Down the center of this sidewalk, an iron pipe, possibly connecting to the drain system inside the house, was found. The pipe was not followed to its terminus. The sidewalk is elevated three inches above the general surface of Zone II of the site.

Trash disposal during this occupation was considerable and consisted of sheet refuse in the yard area, and trash disposal into the well.

No privy, another favored locale for trash disposal, has been uncovered to date.

#### Closing

A final note was appended to the preliminary report. The note was handwritten by Sheldon Kindall, whose credentials include the positions of Regional Director of the Texas Archaeological Society and Field Director of the Houston Archaeological Society. The note states, "A lot more was learned about this site after this report went to press. We did find a structure which was of the right time period to be Maison Rouge. SMK".

In 1991 the artifacts excavated at Maison Rouge were housed at the University of Houston in the Archaeology department. Fragments of Spanish ceramics, and part of a Spanish plate, have been the prime evidence which dates the site to the era of Jean Laffite. As if Jean personally dictated precisely which items would be excavated by the

archaeologists, a fragment of wood, part of a larger piece preserved by the ever-present ground moisture, was taken from its resting place four feet below the surface. This was of the correct location and depth to have once been a part of Maison Rouge. A stone ax, possibly European in origin, was also found.

Mr. Kindall was originally skeptical about the authenticity of the site as being that of the original Maison Rouge. Following the excavation, however, his opinion changed. He currently harbors "little doubt" that the site is that of Maison Rouge (Kindall, 1991).

One hundred seventy years after Laffite sailed from Galveston, fragments of his existence rested in an academic office at the University of Houston, some fifty miles from the site of Maison Rouge. In 1995, these artifacts were finally returned to Galveston Island (Editor's note: see the article titled "Maison Rouge Site Artifacts Return to Galveston Island" in this same issue). According to Sheldon Kindall, these items "... are not very interesting to a layman, but definitely so to an archaeologist. Several nails, pieces of metal, etc., could probably make a profound statement about the location and Laffite's occupancy if someone would only undertake the project" (Kindall, 1991).

As of 1992, another student working under Dr. Randolph Widmer of the University of Houston has undertaken analysis of the 1984 artifacts uncovered at 1417 Avenue A. It is expected that prior to the end of 1996, a new group of artifacts will have been excavated for analysis.



## MAISON ROUGE SITE ARTIFACTS RETURN TO GALVESTON ISLAND

DALE OLSON

Following an approximate eleven year residency on the shelves of the University of Houston's Department of Anthropology, artifacts removed from a 1984 archaeological excavation at the site of Maison Rouge have been returned to Galveston Island.

One hundred twenty-two boxes of material were originally removed from the site during a joint dig by the University of Houston and the Houston Archaeological Society. These items were to have originally served as material for a Master's thesis by a University of Houston student, but were relegated to gathering dust when the student abandoned the goal of a degree.

When Sheldon Kindall, past President of the Houston Archaeological Society, addressed the Laffite Society at the regular General Meeting in September 1995, he indicated the possibility that the University of Houston might be interested in releasing the artifacts to provide needed storage.

Members of The Laffite Society contacted Dr. Randolph Widmer of the Anthropology Department of the University of Houston and instigated discussions which resulted in the release of the material.

On Thursday, September 28, 1995, Laffite

Society members Jim Nonus and Dale Olson, and friend of The Society, Bobby Weakley, retrieved the numerous boxes from the University of Houston, stacked them in a rental truck, and headed for Galveston Island. The artifacts are currently stored on the upper floors of a building on the Strand.

Probably few of the artifacts are from Maison Rouge, but are instead remnants of later structures built on the same site, one approximately in 1870, the other in 1885. There are no doubloons, treasure chests, swords, or other stereotypical "pirate" items. Perhaps the most important piece in the collection is a painted plate, possibly Spanish *Majolica*. If the identity of this plate is confirmed, it would date to a Laffite-era occupation.

Members of The Laffite Society are now attempting to obtain site plans, excavation and lab notes, photographs, and other documentation related to the original investigation.

Andy and Becky Hall, with Tom and Sarita Oertling and other members of The Society with archaeological training, plan to review the material for purposes of cataloguing. Progress toward this goal will be reported in subsequent editions of The Chronicles.

## HISTORICAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE MAP "BAHIA DE GALVESTON"

TOM OERTLING

*Editor's Note: the following article is an abstract of the presentation given by Tom Oertling at the general meeting of The Laffite Society held on Monday, November 13, 1995. Mr. Oertling, who provided the abstract, is a member of the Society and has expertise in the field of nautical archaeology. The map which formed the focus of the presentation, its legends in Spanish, and their translations into English, were employed as visual aids during the presentation, and are reproduced in this article. The translation was provided by Dorothy Karilanovic.*

The map "Bahía de Galveston" can give us important information, not only on the geography of Galveston Bay in the early nineteenth century, but also on how it was perceived by those who explored it. The map itself fits in with the "filibuster period" of Texas, as will be seen below. The legend in the upper left hand corner (#1) gives the basic purpose of the map, "Derotero de las islas antillas - año 1810." More will be said about the date below.

There are several clues of an historical nature that can be investigated through the historical record. The first is legend #3: "Bocas del Río la Trinidad," etc. There are the names Orcoquisas and St. Augustine de Aumada. The Orcoquiza Indians were an Attacapan tribe living on the north side of Galveston Bay along the Trinity and Colorado Rivers. From time to time this tribe was associated with the Bidai, Aranama and other tribes. In 1756 the Spanish built the Presidio of San Agustín de Ahumada as an outpost against French incursions by French traders. At the same time, the Mission of Nuestra Señora de la Luz was established. Fifty families of Tlascalán Indians were transplanted from southern Mexico with the idea that these Indians would teach the Orcoquiza how to adapt to mission life<sup>1</sup>.

The San Agustín de Ahumada Presidio, also known as El Orcoquisac, replaced a temporary garrison sent to El Orcoquisac after a French trader was arrested in the area. The Presidio was named in

honor of the viceroy of New Spain and was located, according to the viceroy's orders, on the exact spot of the arrest of the Frenchman. The site, near a lagoon, was ordered moved on several occasions, but because of the procrastination of first civil authorities and then the priests attached to the mission, the move was never effected. The site has been identified as being near Wallisville, in Chambers County<sup>2</sup>.

The buildings of the Presidio were damaged in a storm in 1766 and the site was moved to higher ground a short distance away. In June of 1770, part of the garrison left the fort for Bexar to aid in a campaign against the Apache. By February, 1771, only three soldiers and two priests remained at the site. A few weeks later these five abandoned the Presidio and mission. San Agustín de Ahumada was officially discontinued in 1772. In 1805, a short distance below this site, the Spanish established a port, also called Orcoquisac, which operated only for a short time<sup>3</sup>.

The next historical clue is in legend #10: "Tierra llana 3 pies arriba del nivel de la marea a donde campaba el Gn Humbert con sus tropas." Jean Robert Marie Humbert was one of the many colorful characters who inhabited New Orleans, many of whom nurtured a passion to find fame and fortune in Texas in the name of Mexican independence. Humbert was born in Rouvray, Lorraine, on November 25, 1775, of peasant stock. He enlisted in the Army of the Rhine at an early age and quickly rose in rank to become a Major General in 1794. Humbert's attack on Landau was lauded as "one of the boldest feats of arms ever recorded."

Because of his record, he was appointed to command the French invasion of Ireland in 1798. The expedition was a failure and many of the Irish peasants were slaughtered. Humbert surrendered to Lord Cornwallis at Ballymuck and was exchanged for British prisoners shortly after. His next command was with the Army of the Danube in 1799 where he was seriously wounded.

Two years later, another ill-fated episode in

his career began. Under the direction of Leclerc, Bonaparte's brother-in-law, he was sent to Santo Domingo/Haiti, in command of one third of the French forces, to quell the slave revolt led by Toussaint L'Ouverture. When he arrived, the country was in turmoil. The negroes had ransacked the countryside, looting and burning the plantations. The French soldiers fell victim, not to the revolting slaves, but to yellow fever. Leclerc died and the French met with defeat at every turn. Napoleon had to recall his army.

Humbert's actions at this point were to presage some of his antics in Louisiana. He took Leclerc's widow - Napoleon's sister - Pauline Bonaparte, as his mistress. His actions plus his Republican ideology caused an open rift with Bonaparte. Humbert was exiled to Brittany, where he gave full vent to his anger and was arrested for sedition<sup>4</sup>. He escaped to the United States, arriving in Philadelphia in 1813.

He still had grandiose plans of campaign and glory. In Washington he stated that he could conquer Canada for the United States with only the help of Irish troops that he could raise himself. He also offered to establish a military academy. The U.S. officials would not receive him, but suggested that he should go to Texas or Cartagena. After a month in Philadelphia, he took ship with other French and Spanish officers for New Orleans. Once there, Humbert decided to attach himself to the cause of José Alvarez de Toledo, despite the fact that Toledo did not want him! Toledo had just suffered a crushing defeat in Texas and was now in Tennessee.

By the fall of 1813, Humbert was again making claims that he could raise 1,500 troops and invade Texas in Toledo's name, but Toledo wrote an associate in New Orleans claiming no association with the General and that he should desist in using his name. It was at this point that Humbert became involved with the Lafitte brothers, whereby the Baratarians would lead a naval expedition to Matagorda or Tampico at the same time that Humbert led his troops from Nacogdoches. These plans, like so many others, failed to materialize<sup>5</sup>.

In the summer of 1814, Humbert was involved in yet another intrigue. He arrived in Nautla, Mexico, with Dominique You, with a cargo

of gunpowder. Humbert started making claims that he was there as a representative of the United States (which he was not) and was empowered to negotiate with the revolutionaries for an alliance. This caused the different factions within the movement to become more estranged and did great damage to the cause of Mexican independence. By this time the General had acquired a reputation for being somewhat *loco*.

More pressing events for New Orleans and the United States eclipsed those of Texas filibustering operations as the war between the U.S. and Britain was coming to a head in this area. General Pakenham, at the head of a British army, had made offers to Lafitte to join the British against Jackson's forces defending New Orleans. For fear of this and also in response to Lafitte's continued violations of the revenue laws, a combined U.S. army and naval force was sent to dislodge Lafitte and his men from Barataria<sup>6</sup>. The Battle of New Orleans occurred on January 8, 1815, and General Humbert, along with the Lafittes and the Baratarians, took a part in it<sup>7</sup>.

Humbert next became involved with Don José Manuel de Herrera, who had credentials as a representative from the revolutionary government of Mexico to the United States. By this time, Toledo was also involved again (Sword, p. 127).

In 1815, General Humbert left New Orleans with fifty men to join Colonel Henry Perry (Sword, p. 130). Perry had been involved with the cause of Mexican independence for several years and was at the time of this expedition under indictment from the federal courts in New Orleans, along with several others, for violations of the neutrality of the United States. Perry left his base in Vermilion Bay, Louisiana, in September, 1815, and arrived on Bolivar Peninsula, the name given by Perry. A camp was set up here and they waited for additional supplies and men. However, two of the vessels bringing these were wrecked in the channel and, faced with these discouragements and declining conditions, the expedition was abandoned. In February of 1816, Perry, Humbert and the men they commanded returned to New Orleans<sup>8</sup>.

Humbert was on Bolivar in 1816, not 1810. A careful examination of the photostat copy shows that the apparent zero of the "1810" is very

much lower case. It can be assumed that the numeral is "6" with its upper part faded.

The questions now arise, "For whom was the map made, and why?"

After the failure of the Perry expedition, Herrera tried again, allying himself with Don Louis Aury, a distinguished naval officer who was Commodore of the fleet of the Republics of Venezuela, La Plata and New Granada. Herrera appointed him Commodore of the Navy of Mexico and sent him to take possession of Galveston. Aury arrived in Galveston Bay on September 1, 1816, in command of twelve to fifteen small vessels. At that time there were only three or four small cabins, made of boards and ships' sails<sup>9</sup>. There can be little doubt that one of the members of the Perry expedition, probably an American or a Frenchman, had made the map for Aury's benefit.

Every map has a purpose, an intent to show information beyond simple geography. This one is no different. Although the course and bearing for the main channel into Galveston are marked, along with places of anchorage and the small boat route down to the Bay of San Bernardo (#20), this map is mainly concerned with the land. There are many notes on the type of land: marshy, swampy, firm land, mud flats. Of particular note is the comment (#11) that the beach on Bolivar is "firm beach where one can go by horse." There is a spot on the west side of the Bay (#25) where there is an "excellent position for a watchtower and fort." There is a new road twenty miles from the mouth of the San Jacinto River, which itself is navigable for twelve miles through beautiful country with sweet water (#'s 29 and 30).

This map seems specifically intended for military uses. The spot for a fort on the mainland is obvious; the beach on Bolivar is firm enough for a rider to communicate at least to the Sabine. The type of ground is, of course, of great importance to an army on foot, as is the presence of good land (off which an army can live) and sweet water.

A copy of this map is in the cartographic collection at the Texas History Center at Rosenberg Library, Galveston (reference number 204). The copy there is a photostat of a manuscript map in the National Archives in Mexico City. Among other things, the comments on the map state, "Jean Joseph

Humbert was associated with José Alvarez de Toledo and Perry in filibustering efforts against Mexico. Aury probably named the area 'Bolivar Point' in honor of Simón Bolivar, from whom he held a commission." It also says that the area that is now Fort Point was separated from Galveston Island by a five- to six-foot channel, and that it was this island that was named "Little Campechey," not Lafitte's town. This channel was also the best way to get a small boat into Galveston Harbor<sup>10</sup>.

This map is of great importance to those interested in Jean Lafitte, because it is the best detailed map from a period closest to the time when Lafitte occupied Galveston Island.

#### Footnotes

- 1) Webb, Walter Prescott, et al., eds., The Handbook of Texas, Vol. 2 (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1952), p. 317.
- 2) Ibid, pp. 294, 539.
- 3) Ibid, pp. 294, 317, 539.
- 4) Saxon, Lyle, Lafitte the Pirate (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 75-77. Thompson, Ray M., The Land of Lafitte the Pirate (New Orleans, LA: Borman House, 1948), p. 66.
- 5) Warren, Harris Gaylord, The Sword Was Their Passport (New York City, NY: Kennikat Press, 1972), pp. 77-80.
- 6) Lay, Bennet, The Lives of Ellis P. Bean (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1960), pp. 93-95.
- 7) Arthur, Stanley Clisby, Jean Lafitte, Gentleman Rover (New Orleans, LA: Harmanson, 1952), p. 122. Lay, op. cit., p. 96.
- 8) Hayes, Charles W., History of the Island and the City of Galveston (1879; reprinted, Austin, TX: The Jenkins Garrett Press, 1974), pp. 16-18.
- 9) Ibid, pp. 18-19.
- 10) Taliaferro, Henry G., comp., Jane A. Kenamore and Uli Haller, eds., Cartographic Sources in the Rosenberg Library (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1988) pp. 100-101.

# TRANSLATION KEY TO 1810 [1816 ?]<sup>1</sup> MAP OF GALVESTON BAY

D. Karilanic

(Not for Quotation Without Permission)

*Translator's Note: I acknowledge with thanks Jeff Modzelewski for his helpful comments on this translation, and both him and Tom Oertling for interpreting the nautical signs on the map, and in those instances where my eyesight failed, for reading the small print.*

1. *Diré el derotero [sic] de las islas antillas [?] - año 1810 [1816 ?]<sup>1</sup>* : I will say the route of the antillian islands - 1810 [1816]

2. *Llanos de los Caramanches [?]* : Plains of the [?]

2A. *Arroyo* : Gully, arroyo

3. *Bocas del Rio la Trinidad* : Mouths of the Trinity River

*8 millas subiendo al lado oriental del rio se encuentra el antiguo sitio del fuerte de Orcoquisas, o San Augustin de Ahumada* : 8 miles going up the east side of the river one encounters the old site of the fort of Orcoquisas, or St. Augustine of Ahumada

4. *Es miu [sic] [muy] fácil de venir [sic] [venir] de Orcoquisas á la punta de Humbert por el lado de la mar* : It is very easy to come from Orcoquisas to Humbert point along the coast [by the side of the sea]

4A. *Arroyo* : Gully, arroyo

5. *Llanos del Barroso* : Muddy plains

*en muchas partes pantanosas* : in many parts marshy

6. *Arroyo* : Gully

7. *Punta del Norte* : North Point

8. *Ensenada [?] del Barroso* : Muddy bay [inlet ?]

9. *Tierra pantanosa* : Marshy [swampy] land

10. *Tierra llana 3 [?] pies arriba del nivel de la marea á donde campaba [?] el Gn Humbert con sus tropas* : Flat land 3 [?] feet above the level of the tide [?] where General Humbert used to camp with his troops

10A. *Aneganissas [sic ?] [Anegadizas ?]* : Overflowed - under water

11. *Playa firma á donde se puede ir á caballo* : Firm beach where one can go by horse

12. *Punta d'Orcoquisas [sic]* : Orcoquisas Point

13. [Cannot read words due to small size. May be *arena firma*, firm sand]

13A. [This translator cannot read word due to small size, but Jeff Modzelewski thinks the word might be *barrado*, having to do with mud]

14. *dirección del la [sic] entrada sobre el 2 arbol [sic ?] NX [?] NNE* : direction of the entrance over the 2 tree [?] NX [?] NNE [North, ¼ point, North, Northeast - nautical term, according to Tom Oertling]

15. *Punta de Culebras* : Snake Point

15A. *Barra 29 degrees 10 inches* : Sand bar 29 degrees 20 minutes<sup>2</sup>

16. *Arbolitos* : Small trees

*Casas* : Houses [3 dots here on map indicating houses ?]

17. *Llanos firmas* : Firm land

18. *Playa de arena firma* : Beach of firm sand

19. *Isla de Culebras* : Snake Island

20. *Camino de las lanchas para ir en la lagunasso [sic ?] [laguna ?] hasta la bahia de San Bernardo* : Ship road to go into the marshy lake [lagoon] toward the bay of San Bernardo

21. *Ostiones y lodo* : Oysters and mud

22. *Derota [?] [derrota ?] de las lanchas* : Boat route [?]

23. *2 [?] [3 ?] millas de la isla de culebras* : 2 [?] [3 ?] miles from Snake Island

24. *Tierras aneganissas [sic ?] [anegadizas ?]* : Land under water - overflowed ?

25. *Tierra de diez pies arriba el [sic] [del] nivel del mar excelente [?] position [sic] [posición ?] para un vigia y fuerte* : Land 10 feet above the level of the sea excellent [?] position for a look-out and fort

26. *Punta de Sn Jacyntho* : San Jacinto Point

27. *Barra que atraviesa [sic] [atravesa] de punta á punta y tienne [sic] [?] [tiene] trespassas [sic] [traspasos ?] lo demás un pie de agua* : Bar that crosses from point to point and has crossings the rest one foot of water

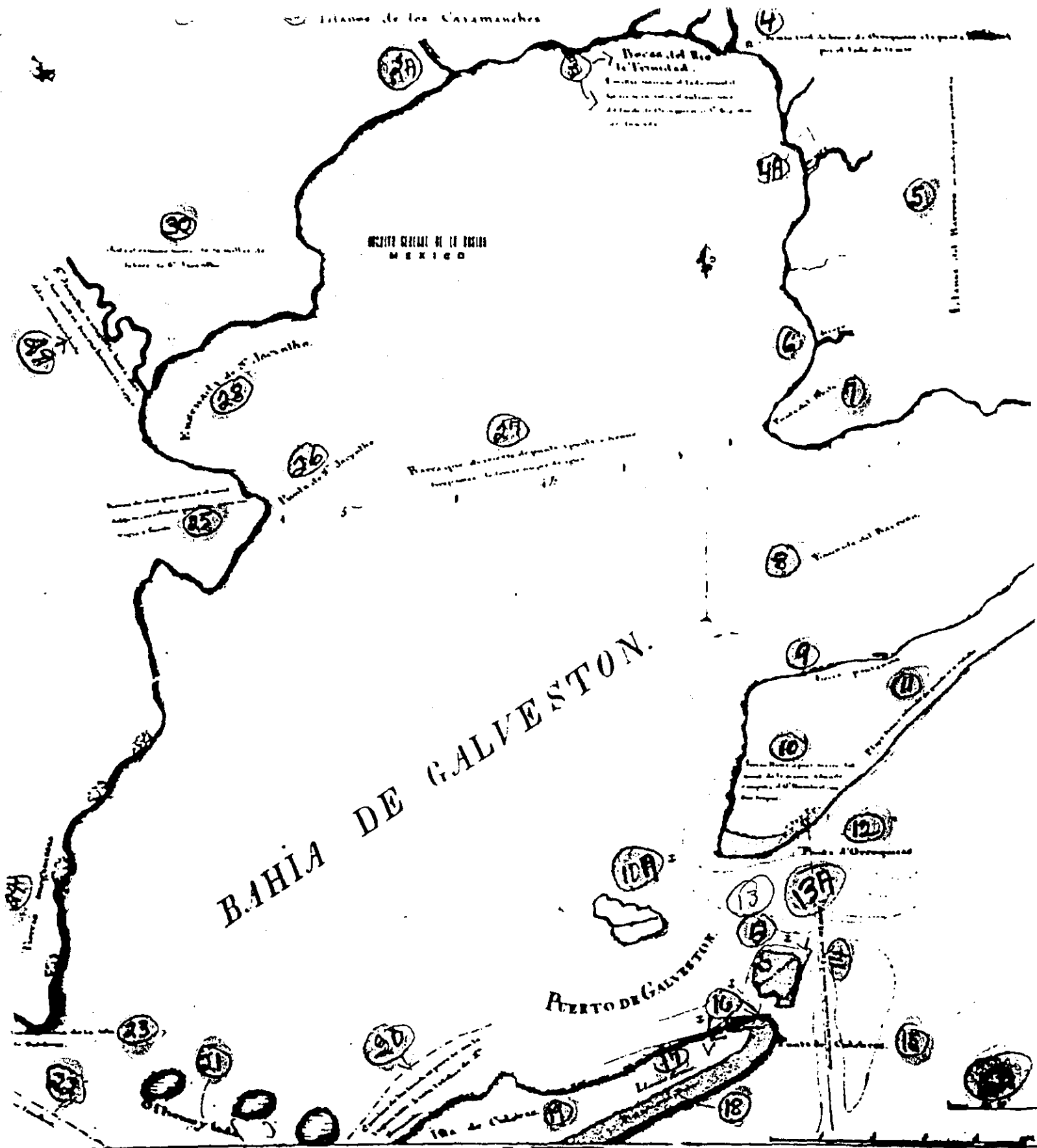
28. *Ensenada de Sn Jacyntho* : San Jacinto Bay

29. *Sn Jacyntho navigable hasta 10 o 12 millas, tierras hermosas, agua dulce, muy [?] excelente* : San Jacinto navigable for 10 or 12 miles, beautiful land, sweet [pure ?] water, very excellent

30. *Dista el camino nuevo de 20 [?] millas de la boca de Sn Jacyntho* : The new road lies at a distance of 20 miles from the mouth of the San Jacinto

#### Notes

- 1) The actual date of the map may be 1816. It's possible that in some earlier transcription the numeral "6" may have been mistaken for a "0". The Humbert encampment is not thought to have been in existence until after 1810.
- 2) Per Jeff Modzelewski.



Translation and key by Dorothy McD. Karilanovic  
 Secretary, THE LAFFITE SOCIETY, P.O. Box 1325, Galveston Island, Texas 77553

3/18/96

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY SOCIAL

The regular General Meeting for the month of December, 1995, was replaced by what has become a traditional, annual holiday social event.

Over forty-five Laffite Society members and guests attended the event - held in an elegant setting at the newly renovated Eiband's Gallery at 2201 Postoffice Street, Galveston, Texas - on Monday, December 11, 1995.

Postoffice Street (also called "Avenue E") was, until the early 1960's, the "downtown" district of Galveston Island and the location of most of the major Island retailers. E.S. Levy Department Store, Michael's Jewelry, McCrory's (still in business), the Kress "Five-and-Ten-Cent Store", Nathan's Ladies Store, Lopez Jewelry, and the huge Eiband's Department Store all called Postoffice Street "home".

These former retail establishments now house a number of art galleries, restaurants,

boutiques, and coffee houses. The upper floors of the businesses have been converted into deluxe loft apartments.

Members of the Board of Directors welcomed newcomers (quite a few from the newly revitalized commercial and residential downtown area), some of whom have since joined The Laffite Society. First Vice President Jim Nonus supervised the hors d'oeuvres and drinks for the evening, while specially-made *taquitos* from neighboring Manny's Restaurant were provided by hosts Jim and Margaret Earthman, owners of The Eiband Gallery.

Laffite Society members and their guests are invited and encouraged to attend future annual holiday socials. This is one event each year which does not feature a guest speaker or program, but is reserved simply for an evening of entertaining conversation in a relaxed and festive social setting.



## CURRENT NEWS

### NEW WORK BY MEMBER DON MARLER NOW AVAILABLE

Laffite Society member Don Marler, an authority on the life and times of Jean Laffite, Aaron Burr, and many facets of Texas and Louisiana history and related subjects, is the author of *The Neutral Zone: Backdoor to the United States*, recently issued by Dogwood Press, of which Mr. Marler is the publisher.

According to the book's Preface, the area now known as southwest Louisiana served as home to many different Indian tribes for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. Since their coming, the area has played a significant role in the development of the country. Perhaps the most colorful role it played was as the "Neutral Zone" or "No Man's Land".

John Quincy Adams termed this area "the backdoor to the United States". Through this back door came smuggled merchandise and slaves, along with pirates, privateers, outlaws, politicians,

farmers, riverboatmen, trappers, timbermen, ministers, and soldiers of fortune.

*The Neutral Zone* contains twenty-four chapters within 238 pages, with copious endnotes and a bibliography. Some of the chapters have as their subjects colorful historical figures such as Philip Nolan, Ellis P. Bean, Zebulon M. Pike, Aaron Burr, Dr. Timothy Burr, the Bowie family, Joseph Willis, the Laffite brothers, the Stephens family, John A. Murrell, the McGees, the Copeland Gang, and William Woodruff. The Rawhide Fight, the Westport Fight, and the Blackmon-Phillips Shoot-Out occupy other chapters.

Marler's new offering is in paperback and bears a cost of \$15.00 (plus \$2.00 shipping and appropriate sales tax within the State of Texas). It is available from Dogwood Press, Route 2, Box 3270, Woodville, Texas 75979.

### FOREIGN RESEARCH UPDATE

Laffite Society officer Dorothy McD. Karilanovic continues to open avenues of research to members of The Society. Mrs. Karilanovic generously donates her time and energy to translate Spanish and French historic documents of the Laffite era, and to compose foreign-language correspondence facilitating the acquisition of same. Projects in which she has been involved in the second half of 1995 include the following.

1. In relation to an 1810 (1816 ?) map of Galveston Bay (see related article in this same issue): (a) the composition in Spanish of two letters to the Mexican Archives pertaining to the acquisition of a photocopy of the map; (b) the translation from Spanish to English of the two responses to the letters mentioned in (a); and (c) the transcription, and the translation from Spanish to English, of more than thirty legends on

the map.

2. The composition in Spanish of a letter to Dr. Michel Antochiw, Director of the Center for Support of Historical Investigation of the Yucatan (*Director del Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán*). The letter requested information on the 1949 research of Dr. Edmund Kilbourne Tullidge into the alleged death of Pierre Laffite in the Yucatan.

3. Translation from Spanish into English of the article, "Summary Investigation Against the Englishman *Don George Schumph* Relative to the Pirate *Don Pedro Lafit* (sic), His Death and His Burial in the Port of Dzilam, Yucatán" (twenty-four pages). The article had been sent by the Center mentioned in 2, above, and a copy of Ms. Karilanovic's translation was forwarded to it.

## WELCOME, NEW LAFFITIANS

JULY 1, 1995 - DECEMBER 31, 1995

Paul Gardiner  
Edwardsville, Illinois  
Manny Green  
Galveston, Texas  
Robert Looper  
Golden Meadow, Louisiana

Dave and Ginny Roberts  
Galveston, Texas  
Harold Totten  
Fallbrook, California

## THANK YOU FROM THE SOCIETY

Thanks to ...

Jim Nonus, Don Marler, Dr. Reginald Wilson, and all others who have generously contributed books, articles, and research material to The Society.

Bobby Weakley for his assistance in the transferral of Maison Rouge site artifacts from the University of Houston to Galveston Island.

Jim and Margaret Earthman for their contribution of a permanent meeting place at the beautifully restored Eiband Gallery.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Laffite Society is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the study of the privateers Jean and Pierre Laffite and their contemporaries, and to the geographical locales and chronological era associated with them.

Annual dues are as follows:

Student .....	\$ 15.00
Senior (Over 65) .....	15.00
Institution .....	15.00
Individual .....	30.00
Family .....	35.00
Sustaining Member .....	100.00
Life Membership (One Payment) .....	350.00

## SPONSORSHIP OF MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING SPEAKERS

Since its inception, a special feature of The Laffite Society has been a presentation at monthly meetings by a Laffite Society member or guest speaker.

In an effort to augment the pool of available speakers, The Society has begun a program of "sponsorships" in which the expenses of guest speakers are paid by donations from individual members.

Given that all members of The Society do not enjoy equal access to meetings due to their distances from Galveston, it was felt by the Board that any expenses incurred relative to a guest speaker should not be taken from the general fund.

Sponsorships in the suggested amount of

\$20.00 each are available to members who wish to make such donations. While speakers, themselves, do not receive an honorarium, accommodations and other expenses incurred during travel are underwritten by The Laffite Society through these sponsorships of its members.

Members purchasing sponsorships are given special recognition at the appropriate meeting, and in the pages of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*. Persons wishing to make suggestions regarding future speakers should contact First Vice President Jean L. Epperson at the regular Society mailing address.

## CALENDAR 1996

*Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place at The Eiband Gallery, 2201 Postoffice Street, Galveston, Texas 77550.*

January 8, 1996

6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

January 13, 1996

10:00 a.m. Special Event: Visit to The Laffite Collection at the Sam Houston Regional Library, Liberty, Texas

12:00 p.m. Lunch at the Home of Dr. and Mrs. Reginald Wilson, Liberty, Texas

February 12, 1996

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

March 11, 1996

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

April 8, 1996

6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

May 13, 1996

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

June 10, 1996

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

June 13 - 16, 1996

Special Event: The "Plantation Tour" of the

Nottoway, Oak Alley, Viala and Destrehan Antebellum Estates, and a Weekend in New Orleans

June - August, 1996

Saturdays, 7:00 a.m. The Archaeological Excavation of the Maison Rouge Site, Galveston, Texas (a Cooperative Study by the Texas Archaeological Society and The Laffite Society)

July 8, 1996

6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

August 12, 1996

7:00 General Meeting

September 9, 1996

7:00 p.m. Fund-raising Event at The Strand Street Theater, Galveston, Texas: Silent Auction and Presentation of the 1938 Film, "The Buccaneers"

October 14, 1996

6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

November 11, 1996

7:00 p.m. General Meeting

December 9, 1996

7:00 p.m. Annual Holiday Social

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY  
FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
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HISTORIAN .....	BERNADETTE FOLEY

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