

The Laffite Society Chronicles

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 1
FEBRUARY, 2008

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Editor's Page

Don C. Marler

Through the years I have been involved with the start-up of many non-profit organizations and all have experienced organizational problems in the early stages. Some issues have been based on personality clashes, and other differences; some have been terminal and other just wasteful and debilitating, while some served to clarify issues so we could move on in a positive manner. The Laffite Society has, from its beginning, had fewer problems than any organization with which I have been associated.

Some members have dropped out and it would be of interest to know why they did so. No doubt some were upset with someone or some aspect of the operation of the organization, but the general impression is that most did so because of a loss of interest or other personal reasons. New members continue to join to replace the ones who have dropped out. The degree of interest and enthusiasm for Laffite related research continues to be high after fourteen years of monthly meetings.

What is the explanation for this

longevity? The subject matter cannot be discounted, but it is doubtful that that is the only factor; after all the history of the Laffites is not a critical issue at a time when our lives and society are filled with critical issues. Perhaps that is part of the answer to the question—it is a diversion from the more serious issues. And within many of us there is an attraction to those who stood outside or on the fringes of the law. Do we get some vicarious pleasure watching someone who successfully defies those who would control us--over control some would say? Field trips provide opportunity for some purposeful adventures of our own and hold promise for more to come.

Not the least of the factors contributing to our success is good leadership and faithfulness of those who do the housekeeping. The next monthly meeting comes about very fast and the planning, preparation and execution of them takes their toll. And then there is the social interaction between members. We may not know our neighbors but we know who comes to the Laffite Society meetings.

Laffite Society Christmas Party – 2007

Jim Nonus and Dorothy Karilanovic

Holiday Cheer filled the Jockusch Building Sunday, December 9th, for The Laffite Society's Annual Holiday Dinner. Founders Dale and Diane Olson shared their swanky Art Deco Chicago speak-easy bar in the Maceo Bakery stocked with the best of Pirate swill. Mixing the Sazerac punch was Laffite Prez, Jim Nonus, along with George Najarian uncorking the French wines with Victor Moncebaiz. Party Chair, Lizette Gaudin, luminous in deep red velvet, greeted members Claudette Braley, Tom Shehan, Jan and Larry Porter. Pam and Mike Gilbert, Lynette and Bill Haaga, Betty and Ed Conner all enjoyed the balcony overlooking the Strand. Treasurer, Nancy Beaman, beamed as she greeted fellow Ball High School classmates Lou Graves MacBeth, Dorothy Karilanovic, Ed Jamison and escorts Roberts McGee, Alex Karilanovic, and Sandra Rodgers. Master of all occasions, Ed Jamison acknowledged Board members and performed throughout the course of the evening the Herculean task of introducing all members and guests with appropriately chosen remarks.

Barbara Davis and the Bistro LeCroy crew served up scrumptious meal of shrimp, crab cakes, and dirty rice topped off with the finest holiday bread pudding.

Preceding the special

presentation, *Cinema Laffite – The Celluloid Pirate*, Dale Olson introduced speaker-Historian, Robert Vogel, and Kathleen Taylor in from Minnesota. Soaking up this film history were Ondree and Linda Kuhn, Kathy and Walter Modzelewski, with Jeff Modzelewski giving the Traditional Laffite Toast by the poet Lord Byron, and honoring our departed members with a moment of silence.

Karen and Bob Derr had front row seats with Clifford Johnson in the glistening Buccaneer Room decorated in red and silver, with Poinsettias and Christmas Cheer. The Society's *Laffite Chronicles* editor, Don Marler, and Sybil Marler, Maison Rouge archaeologist, Sheldon Kindall, and Laffite genealogist, Jean Epperson, posed as Dave Roberts snapped pictures with Ginny Roberts, Steve Broadstone, Lucia Bonno, Michael Bailey, Stan and Janice Murray. Wil Zapalac greeted café society group, Bob Coffman and Debra Danberg, Barbara Cannetti and Carlos Rios, Susan and Jimmy Fox with Susan and Jody Larriviere. Special guest, Galveston Historical Foundation's, Dwayne Jones, and George Clooney look-alike, Sam Steph, sat at the President's table along with the Tiara-clad Lady Elizabeth Galloway. Privateering at its Holiday Best!



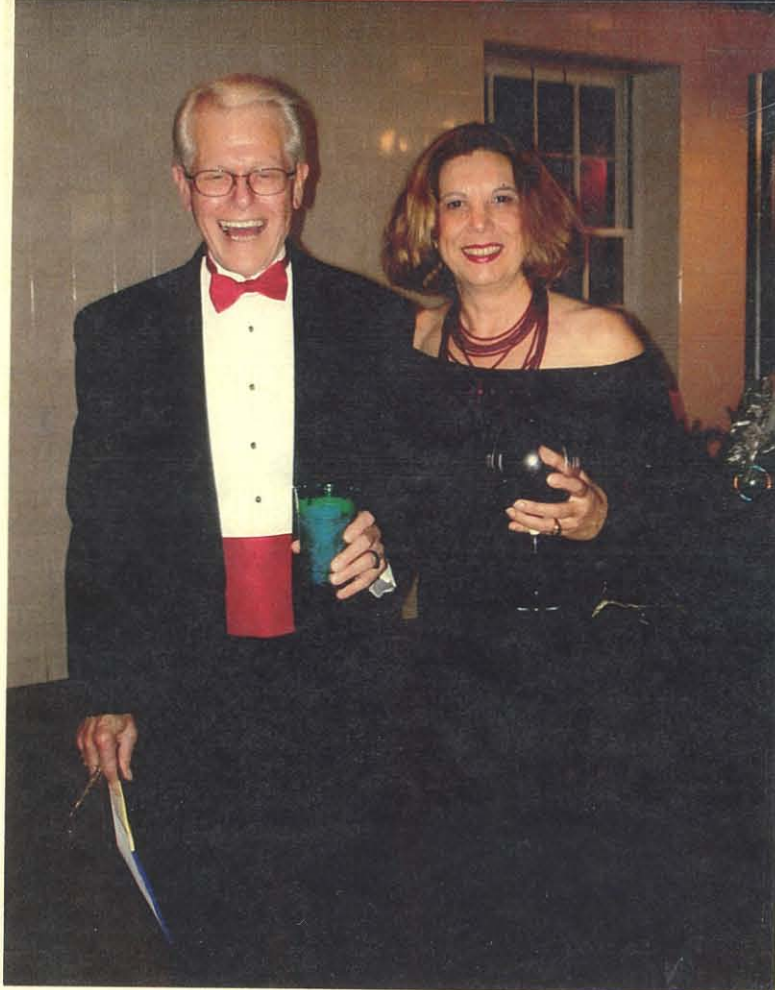
Pam Gilbert, Dorothy Karilanovic
and Betty Conner



Jim Nonus and Lizette Gaudin



Lady Elizabeth Galloway and Mike Bailey



Ed Jamison and Sandra Rodgers



Sam Steph Conner, Dwayne Jones,
Tom Sheham, and Claudette Bradley



Dale Olson, Jan Porter, Betty Conner,
Robert McGee, Lou Mac Beth and Larry Porter

MYSTERIOUS PIRATE PORTRAIT

Jean L. Epperson

Displayed on the third floor of the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas is a large oil painting of a handsome, brooding pirate. Speculation is that the man depicted is that of the pirate/privateer Jean Laffite. He preferred to sail legitimately with letters of mark but did not curtail his activities when his legal time limit expired.

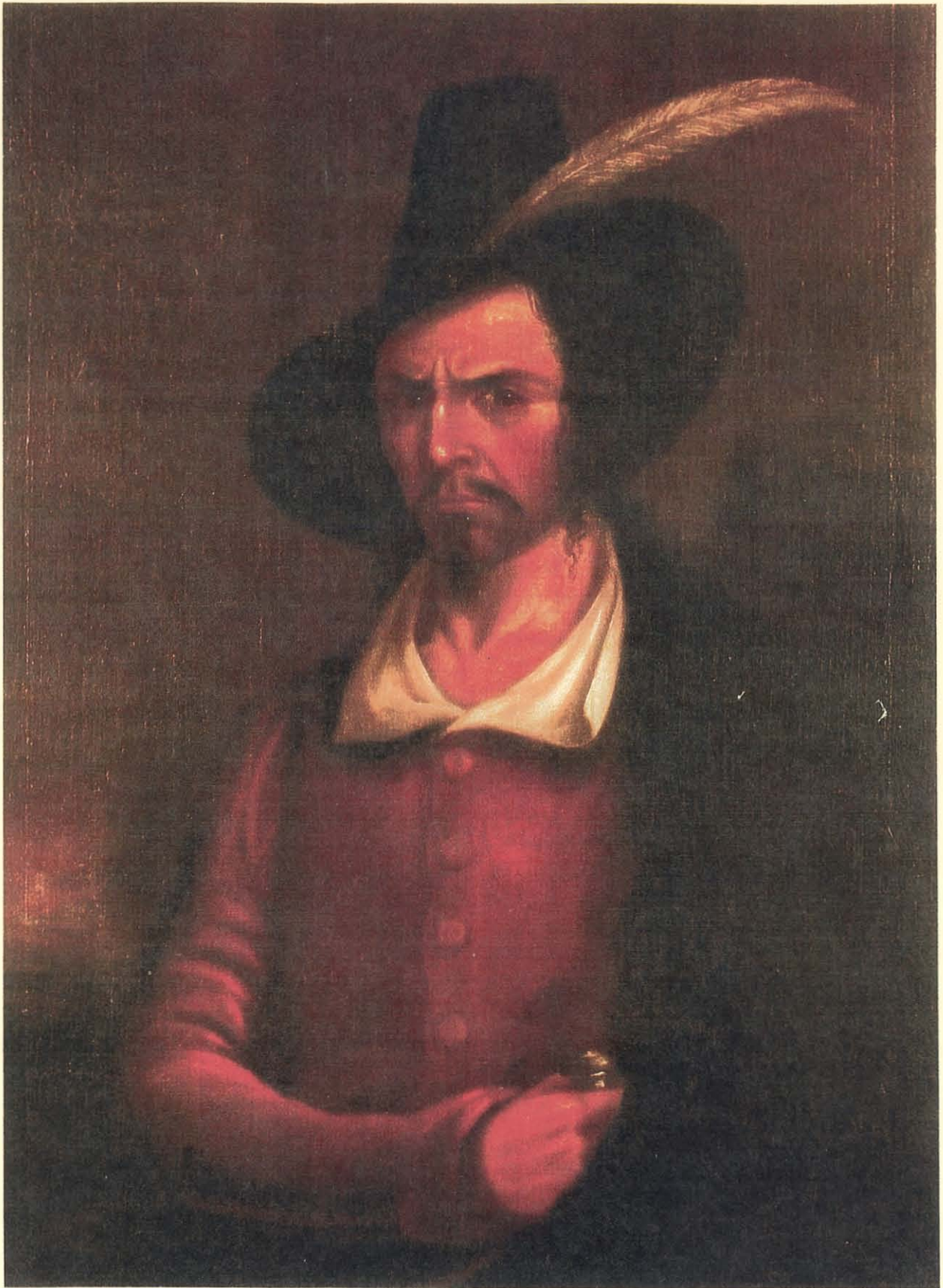
The discovery of the portrait reads like romantic fiction. It surfaced during the nineteen seventies through a granddaughter of George Sealy, the Galveston business tycoon and founder of John Sealy Hospital. The family story says that one day in 1890, while excavating to prepare for the foundations of the George Sealy Mansion at Broadway between 24 and 25 Streets, a tin box was discovered with the pirate canvas rolled up in it. The home of E. B. Nichols had been razed on the site in preparation for the Sealy Mansion. Nichols had moved to Galveston in 1850 and was not there during Jean Laffite's tenure.

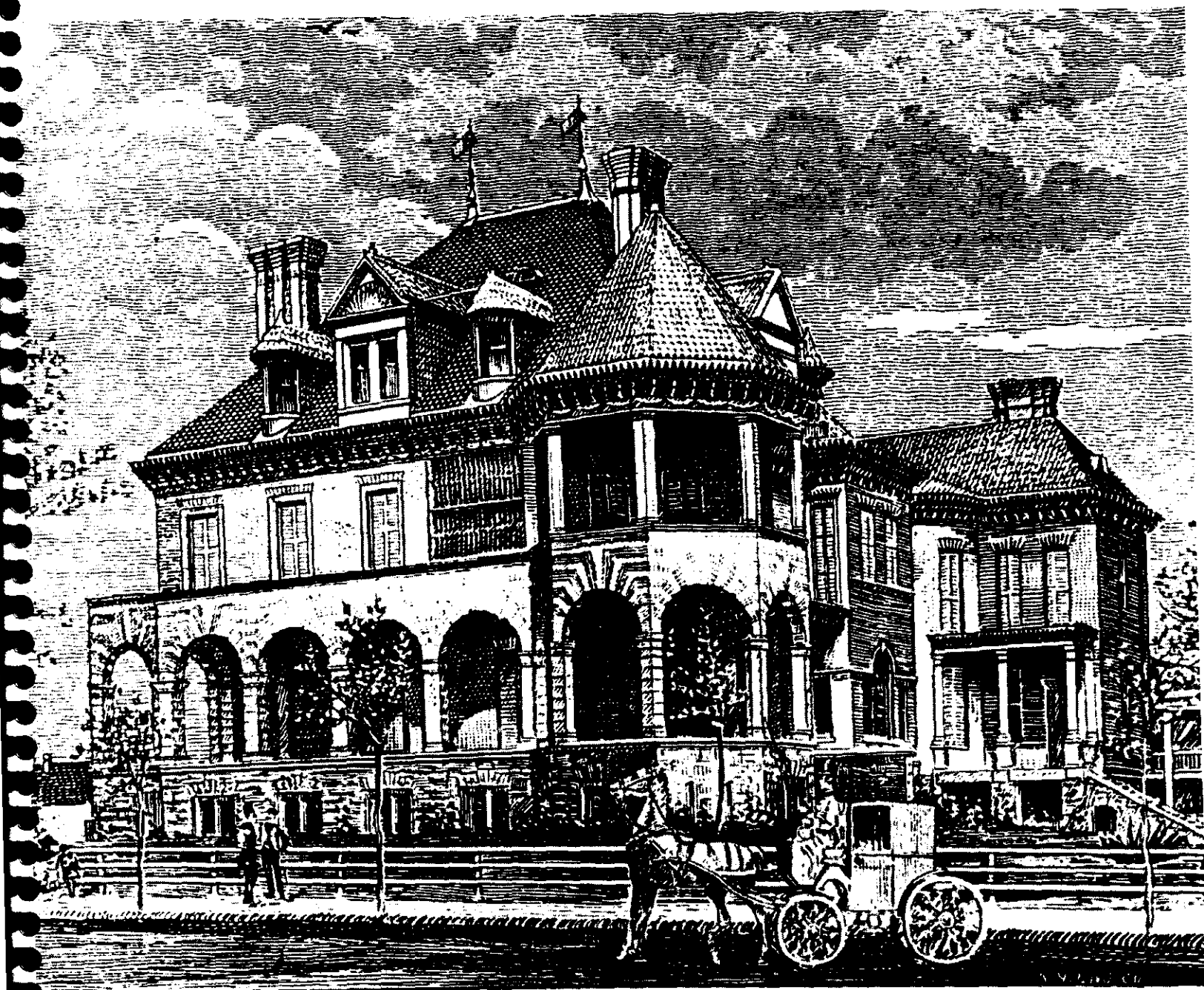
In 1970 the painting, in poor condition, with seven patches on the back and

badly in need of cleaning, was sent to the Houston Fine Arts Museum to be evaluated and restored. The painting was said to be worth two thousand, to two thousand five hundred dollars after restoration. The professionals estimated that it was painted during the early part of the nineteenth century by an unknown artist. No signature or date was observed on the canvas. The restored painting was donated to the Rosenberg Library in 1979 by Mrs Jane Burton Pinckard of Houston.

Mysteries abound! Is the portrait a likeness of Jean Laffite? There is a certain resemblance to the early Telfer illustration of Jean Laffite, but the portrait is of a younger man. Who painted the portrait? The professionals would not even hazard a guess. Who buried the portrait and why? Did the Sealy family frame the canvas after it was found and hang it in the Sealy Mansion? Where was it from 1890 to 1970, some 80 years, when the framed picture was sent to the conservators? Readers, can you solve some of these mysteries?

Laffite Painting





Sealy Mansion



The Story of John A. Laffite ⁱ

Reginald Wilson

John Matejka, aka John A. Laffite, was an impostor all of his adult life. First he claimed to be John Nafsinger, then at some point in time before 1942, he claimed to be John Andrechyne Laffite, the great grandson of Jean Laffite the privateer. On several occasions he claimed to be John Lafflin. Many suspected he was an impostor, but no one really proved who he was until years after his death. Jean Epperson, a member of The Laffite Society, was able to obtain John A's records from the Railroad Retirement Board and the records of the Omaha, Nebraska, Census Bureau. The first page of the R.R. Retirement Board "Record of Employee's Prior Service" showed the name "Matejka". John A. stated that he had only worked as Nafsinger and Laffite. However, Ms. Epperson was able to find the Matejka family in the 1900 census with the birth dates for John, his little sister, and his Mother the same as John gave at other places. His father's birth date was slightly different. The 1920 census showed only John Nafsinger, age 26, in the Douglas County Jail.²

Due to several unusual circumstances, John A. was able to hide his real identity. First, he was born to parents of Bahamian immigrants who had no relatives in this country. Secondly, John, in some manner, came into possession of material that was related to Jean Laffite.

This manuscript must be labeled a story or tale because much of the information came directly or indirectly from John A., later proven to be one of the biggest fabricators that ever lived. We know that any statement made by him or passing through his hands must be questioned: is it truthful or a fabrication; is it authentic or a forgery.³

John stated he was born in Childs Point, Sarpy County, Nebraska. Childs Point was apparently a small town close to Omaha that has now been incorporated into the City of Omaha. Very little is known about his childhood. He told his wife, Lacie, that when he was growing up he "lacked attention" and that his bad personality was due to abuse by other children. In fact, it was his bad personality that caused the abuse! John would aggravate his playmates in some way, then run home as fast as he could. One day he did not run fast enough and was caught by one of the boys who held him down, sat on him, and proceeded to hit his face with his fist until his nose bled. John also told Lacie that on his first train ride from Omaha to St. Louis with his grand mother, he was afraid and cried all the way. Eventually, his occupation was a locomotive engineer.

John's "terrible twos" remained with him the rest of his life. It is unknown why he was in jail in 1920, but with his personality, one can imagine. This event apparently separated John from the rest of his family. Lacie, in her many letters to Audrey Lloyd, never mentioned John visiting his family or any of them coming to visit him. In a personal interview with Lacie's nephew, John Surratt, he stated the same. During his teenage years, John stated he was acquainted with Lois Ann Little and visited with her many times. Lois Ann was the grand daughter of Jean Laffite and wife, Christina. Lois Ann died in 1914 at the age of 74. John's age in 1914 would have been 21. Could it have been that John, in some way, obtained the *Journal of Jean Laffite* and the 3 copy books from Lois Ann?⁴

In 1937, John applied for a Social Security number. He signed the document using the name, John Nafsinger, and gave his mother's name as, Mary Perlieu (Pauline) Fontonello (Fontenelle). He did not fill in his father's name. Apparently at this time he had not decided how he was to be a descendant of Jean Laffite. Fontenelle was a well known and well documented early Nebraska family; therefore, it was easy to confirm that Mary Pauline Fontenelle never existed.

In 1942, John made a visit to New Orleans where he met with Ray and Sue Thompson, both recognized as the two outstanding Laffite aficionados in New Orleans. John introduced himself as John Lafflin but told them his real name was John Laffite, great grandson of Jean Laffite. The Thompsons invite John to stay with them for a while so they could learn what he knew about

Jean Laffite. They were surprised at how little he knew. He spent most of his time in the library reading about his "ancestor". John told them about the journal written in French by Laffite, the family Bible, and the 5 other journals that he had. He returned the following year, but failed to bring any of this material. After a few days, the Thompsons sent John on his way feeling that he was not who he claimed to be.

Pam Keyes, a member of The Laffite Society, found in the *St. Joseph City Directory, 1958*, John A. Laffite and wife, Alice, living in that city across the street from the depot. This information did not appear in the directory before 1958 or after that date. Was this John A's first or second marriage? He failed to mention to Lacy that he had been previously married. John and this wife divorced or at least separated. John did marry Lacie Surratt on December 23, 1950. Lacie was living on the East coast and John in the Kansas City area. How did they meet? Lacie was a "mail order bride"! Lacie was 49, unmarried and apparently very much wanted to be. She placed her name in the back of one of the romance magazines. John Surratt confirmed this. John A. saw the ad and started corresponding with Lacie. They became engaged and when Lacie came west to meet John the date for the wedding had already been set.

Their marriage was not a happy one. A few months after marriage, they visited New Orleans for several days. It was not long after this that Lacie realized she had made a big mistake. However, Lacie, being a good Christian woman, determined to follow her marriage vows and try to make the best of the union. John had retired in 1958. His pension was about \$65.00 per month. She found it extremely difficult to make ends meet on this small amount. John would not give her money when they really needed it for food. In 1959 they moved to Pacolet, South Carolina, located 10 miles South of Spartanburg. Lacie's nephew, John Surratt, lived in Spartanburg and her sister lived about 75 miles north of there. On December 8, 1959, their fairly nice home caught on fire in the attic. Before they realized it, the fire had engulfed the whole attic. The only item saved was a trunk John threw out the window. This contained the Laffite memorabilia. All their clothes, furniture, food, pictures, 23 copies of *The Journal of Jean Laffite* etc. were destroyed. This was confirmed by John Surratt, Lacie's nephew. They moved into a small four room house, out of town, that was unpainted and run down.

As time went by, he became abusive, not only verbally but mentally and physically. John would get upset over some little thing then take it out on Lacie - verbally abusing her in a loud voice and slapping her around until she cried. When John had these tirades, her little dog would get between John and Lacie, bark at John and nip at his heels. John would kick the dog away but then it would come back barking and nipping again. John would finally throw it out of the house. Several times Lacie went crying over to the neighbors home. Twice Lacie went to visit her sister for a month or two but he gave her so much trouble she had to flee to her friends in Columbia. She actually feared for her life.⁵ John begged her to come back, promising not to abuse her any more. She wanted a divorce and with the divorce part of the royalty John might receive from any book he published. The Judge would not grant a divorce until this was settled and it never was.

During his retirement, John wrote a book length novel in longhand. This manuscript is now in the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty, Texas. If published it would be a good pirate story for the 8 to 10 year old child. In the 1950s, John A. had an agreement with Madeleine Fabiola Kent for publication of *The Corsair* for which John was to receive one cent for each book sold. The first two chapters of this book followed somewhat *The Journal of Jean Laffite*, but after that it was pure fiction. Now John was searching for someone to type his dictation for *The True Story of Jean Laffite*. The Galveston Library suggested Rebecca Tumlinson, a local school teacher. He contacted her and she agreed. John thought he was going to move into her and her roommates home to work on his book. Instead Rebecca told him to get his own room or apartment. After one week John finding that Rebecca had too many other duties and not enough work was being done on his book, returned to Pacolet.

Audrey Walls Lloyd and her husband lived in Galveston. Over the years, she had short articles published in a number of magazines. She frequently did research in the archives at the Rosenberg Library at Galveston. Audrey overheard the library staff talking about John Laffite and his phone calls to them about Jean Laffite, his great grandfather. At that time Audrey was

writing "Jean Laffite Is Back" an article published in the *Texas Parade*, July, 1966. After being published, Audrey wrote a long letter to John giving her experience in publishing and that she had researched Jean Laffite for a period of years and stated her article had just been published in the *Texas Parade*. This began a long association between the two. About this time Christie Mitchell, a public relation person for the City of Galveston, wanted John A. to appear as a V I P in Galveston for a three-day celebration of the 150th anniversary of Laffite landing in Galveston. It was arranged that John would use his free rail pass to Midland. Audrey's husband had died and now she was living with her sister, Elda, in Midland, Texas. They would work on the book a few days, then fly to Galveston for the celebration. Christie Mitchell had his hands full pacifying John, getting him to meetings, dinners, speaking, etc. When John was asked why he did not bring his wife he answered that she had been in a mental hospital several times and could not be around crowds, she was "cuckoo". The truth was that Lacie really wanted to go to Galveston. He also said that when there was a full moon he could not let her go outside. At the end of the second day, John told Christie that he had to return home because his chemical plant was having a problem and only he could solve it. After Christie wrote a check for John, he decided that he did not need to go after all.

On the airplane flying from Galveston back to Midland, John told Audrey, in detail, about his visit, with his grandfather, Jules, on July 9, 1922 to Jean Laffite's grave in the Fosterburg cemetery. This cemetery was located in Fosterburg, Illinois, a small town in Madison County just six miles northeast of the city of Alton. Audrey took notes and then typed them out in full after returning home. Reginald Wilson asked his cousin, Paul Gardiner, who lived in Edwardsville, Illinois, to check the facts as presented. Paul made two visits to the cemetery and the immediate area speaking to old timers, and a visit to the County Court House before reporting back to Wilson. Everything checked - the distance to the cemetery, the little hill with headstones going back into the 1850s, the Culp family that lived across the street in 1922 with a 21 years old daughter named Edith, and the old barn now torn down. After this, Wilson wrote "A Visit To Laffite's Grave" that was published in the *Laffite Chronicles*.⁶ The next issue of the *Laffite Chronicles* carried Paul Gardiner's "The Final Resting Place Of Jean Laffite".⁷ Due to the accurate description of the cemetery environment we know John visited it, but in reality it was another of his fabrications. It was a well-planned farce; we now know that Jean Laffite was killed in a sea battle off Honduras.

John and Audrey continued to work on the Laffite book that was finished but never published. Audrey also wrote her version of the Laffite story but it was not published either. Audrey said that the two weeks that John spent with her and Elda were the worst two weeks of her whole life! He claimed to be a vegetarian but at the grocery store he would pick out the most expensive steaks, ham, and meat loaf. He continually complained about Audrey's typing and changing his dictation. During John's visit, Audrey kept a daily diary giving her emotions and observations of John's actions and reactions to different situations. Audrey sincerely believed John was the great grandson of Jean Laffite. She was enthralled by his heritage.

John realized his marriage was over. He was not going to stay by himself and prepare his own meals. He sold the house for \$18.00. Yes, \$18.00. It was run-down, no taxes had ever been paid so that was about what it was worth. He packed his clothes and went to the Florida panhandle. He drifted from one place to another and told his yarns about pirates and being the great grandson of Jean Laffite. One seaside restaurant gave John a room and meals for a week in exchange for Public Relations. You can imagine - John, the great grandson of Jean Laffite, the pirate, telling tales and yarns of his famous ancestor! Later he drifted to San Antonio where his hang out was the famous Buckhorn Saloon. While there John tried to get a divorce but the Judge would not consent because the Law requires a person to live in the State of Texas for six months. Here he met and married a lady of Mexican-American descent. Was he divorced from Lacie? They lived in Mexico for a few months then John was back drifting around again. After John died and Lacie inherited his "estate" she found the divorce papers and a photo of the Mexican lady.

John was in Montgomery, Alabama, when he became seriously ill. He hired a taxi and packed in everything he had. The taxi drove him to Columbia, South Carolina, where Lacie was at that time. When he arrived she was sick with the flu, running 104 temperature. She sent him on to the local hospital. Lacie visited John briefly the next day standing just inside the door. John's condition was worse. Not much was said. John died the next day, February 20, 1970. The diagnosis was pulmonary emphysema. He was buried in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

To make this story complete, we must follow the life of Lacie. Unknown to John, Lacie and Audrey started corresponding secretly. This started a few months after John visited Audrey in Midland and continued almost on a weekly basis. All of Audrey's letters were addressed to Mrs. Mae Franks in Spartanburg. They became great pen pals since John was their major subject. Lacie's last letter was August 13, 1978 and Audrey's last was Sept. 4, 1978 right before she died. All of these many letters are in the Sam Houston Regional Library in six folders in chronological order.

As beneficiary Lacie received a car and some funds. These funds were probably what were left from the sale of *The Journal of Jean Laffite*. Lacie did not know how to drive so she took drivers lessons. After a fender bender or two she was able to drive fairly well. She moved to Cayce, South Carolina, where she became a live in caretaker. The last place she worked as a caretaker was with a couple where the wife was bedridden with arthritis. This lasted until the husband began to "hit" on her. Lacie's next job was with a dry goods store where she had worked many years before as a young lady. About this time she met Carl Sanders whose wife had died the year before. Carl was a really good, happy extrovert, a Christian that had many friends. After a short romantic interlude, they were married on June 23, 1974.

After 20 years in a very unhappy marriage, Lacie now had three years in a very happy marriage that was made in Heaven. They went every place together except once a month Carl went to the VFW meeting. Carl had two little grand daughters that begged their parents to let them visit Grandpa and Grandmommie every weekend. Carl and Lacie went out of their way to bake cookies, go places, and do fun things to please the girls. Lacie was extremely happy. A short time after their marriage, Carl had a heart attach and was hospitalized for almost a month. He did recover but died on March 13, 1977 from another heart attack. Carl's two daughters continued to look after Lacie and take care of her until 1992 at which time she was admitted into a retirement home. Lacie died December 28, 1995.

Endnotes

1. All the material in this manuscript came from the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center and found in the Laffite Collection. The index is 35 pages. This collection consists of: Gov. Price Daniel collection, Audrey Lloyd collection. Ms. Lloyd was a Laffite aficionado for 10 years before meeting John A. Laffite. All her correspondence was typewritten with a retained copy. All correspondence received was filed. Stanley Clisby Arthur collection. Author of *Jean Laffite, Gentleman Rover*. Laffite Study Group. Publications and Newsletters Missouri Historical Society Collection. The Laffite Society collection, Galveston, Texas. *The Laffite Society Chronicles* 1995 - 2007. Also includes numerous articles, publications, books, research manuscripts.
2. Jean Epperson, *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, Vol. VI. No. 2, September, 2000.
3. For more information on John A's character: see Reginald Wilson's "John Andrechyne Laffite and the Laffite Collection, *The Laffite Society Chronicle* Vol. X I, Number 2 October, 2005, pp. 17 - 21.
4. Lois Ann's relationship to Jean Laffite has not been established to the satisfaction of all members of the Laffite Society.
5. Letter from Audrey Lloyd to Gov. Price Daniel, March 31, 1977 Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center.
6. Wilson, Reginald "A Visit To Laffite's Grave" *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, Vol. I V, Number 1, February, 1998
7. Gardiner, Paul "The Final Resting Place Of Jean Laffite" *The Laffite Society Chronicle*, Vol. IV, Number 2, August, 1998.

Southern Barataria in the Era of Jean Laffite

Frederick J. Stielow

Note: This article was published in *The Life and Times of Jean Laffite*, July 1976.

Accurate knowledge on the people and landscape of southern Barataria has been lacking or obfuscated (sic) during much of the region's history. Misconceptions on the area's geography were evident in all available colonial French and Spanish cartographic representations and it was not until Latfon's 1806 "*Carte Generale du Territoire d'Orleans...*" that a map approximated its correct outlines. The availability of more accurate charts in the nineteenth century did little to prevent frequent confusion in newspapers of the day, which often interchanged Grand Terre or Grand Isle with each other or a long list of other locations. Such uncertainty even spread to Acadian settlers to the north and west of Barataria, who in the 1800s reportedly also feared these ever changing marshlands as *the terre de lepraxu*, in reference to wandering bands of lepers who supposedly inhabited the region.¹ The following few pages attempt to correct a portion of this body of misinformation and to describe the inhabitants and conditions of the southern edge of Barataria, Cheniere Caminada, Grand Terre, and especially Grand Isle, from the late colonial era through the reign of Jean Laffite.

According to geologist William Conaster, the lands of southern Barataria were formed as recently as the fourteenth century A.D. and thus constitute one of the newest additions to the North American continent. European interests in the region date from the French incursions into southern Louisiana at the close of the seventeenth century, which accelerated with the founding of New Orleans in 1718. By the 1720s, the French had founded Barataria an excellent source of timber and food stuffs, which led to the construction of a canal into the

region in 1736. Maps as early as 1729 reveal the use of the designation Barataria for the region and also the French awareness of a water route through it from New Orleans to the coast. Yet, French cartographers and explorers failed to produce any really accurate picturizations (sic) of this territory or to even indicate with any accuracy the existence of Grand Isle and her neighbors along the coast to the west of the mouth of the Mississippi. Through most of the century, they were content to merely repeat the inaccuracies made in the Guillaume Delisle drawings of 1703 and 1718.²

The Spanish, who took control of Louisiana in the 1760s, had a number of reasons to continue to promulgate French inaccuracies. On one hand, they were conforming to their long established pattern of creating buffer zones to protect vital inland interests and sought to further this protection by denying correct naval charts to potential invaders. In addition to invasion fears, they were wary of the region's use by smugglers, as seen by use of frequent Spanish coastal patrols and a series of laws against contrabandiers (sic), such as the 1796 enactment directing that cargo manifests and royal seals be given on landing at Balize (sic) specifically to avoid transshipment into the Crescent City by smugglers through Barataria.³ The Spanish constructed a pilot station on Grand Terre and Spanish military leaders repeatedly sought the erection of a fortification at the southern entrance to Barataria Bay, recommending that Grand Terre be fitted "with a battery of 4 cannons of a caliber of 12."⁴ Further, more property records and early nineteenth century maps reveal the presence of a Fort Blanc, perhaps a Spanish customs post, on Cheniere Caminada.⁵

There is evidence that Spanish officials had clear personal knowledge of the region along the mouth of Barataria Bay in the 1780s. During that decade, most of the Spanish land grants were issued and with them as a matter of course came a report of survey. The Spanish also sent survey teams to map the waterways along the lower coast. In 1785, Don Jose de Evia was dispatched to southern Barataria and remained in the region for several weeks gathering information, though his charts did not extend to mapping the interior of the bay. De Evia's representations contain a number of what were possibly purposeful errors that would allow one to navigate along the coast but confuse one if he should try to penetrate inland, yet they remain as the first clear pictorial statements documenting the existence of many of the islands of the lower coast. His observations may also have overstated the dangers of travel on what is now a rather placid area for navigation.

The bar of Barataria is 13 leagues to the west of the mouth of the Mississippi. Its entrance runs east-southeast, west-northwest, and its shoals extend a league out to sea. They are covered by fourteen feet of water, but beyond it is three, four and five fathoms deep. It communicates with New Orleans by way of narrow channels and estuaries, the said river discharging through them. On this bay, which is large, one always encounters a strong current. The land is very low and subject to overflow which permits no buildings other than two huts, which are on the eastern point of entrance. There is a harbor pilot, who has a flagstaff, and a cannon for signalling (sic) vessels which, falling to the leeward of the Mississippi because of strong current or some other accident, frequently list into these waters, and in order to bring them inside, if necessary, where they can be aided with whatever they need.⁶

The Spanish navigator continued his less than attractive description.

Between Chica [Cheniere Caminada] and Larga Island [Grand Isle] there is another very narrow bar with five feet. There are two houses on these islands, which are kept only for hunting and fishing, which abounds.... All these lands are flat and subject to overflow, with no trees except myrtles, and full of drift logs that come down the Mississippi. These the storms and currents cause to be beached. They are only encountered on the shores, on some beaches of oyster shells about two feet high. Therefore the navigation is very hazardous in the months of August, September, and October, in which storms are frequent from the southeast and east-southeast which inundate them. All may be coasted in three fathoms as a distance of one league. Between the islands and the peninsula there is no passage except for pirogues as is shown on the chart. A more thorough examination was not possible, because of the land being very low and devoid of timber, except that from the front of Larga Island to that of Timbalie, where a chain of small oaks will be found. The rest is of marsh grass.⁷

In spite of these negative statements, Spanish colonial policy in the late eighteenth century favored the dispersement (sic) of settlers in Louisiana in order to help establish an economically and militarily self-providing colony. Thus in the 1780s they began to open the lands of southern Barataria for settlement. The first recorded donation, however, was a French one that took place in 1763 and gave Cheniere Caminada, then called the Isle of the Chitimarchas, to a Monsieur DuRoullin, who apparently made little use of his new lands. Active settlement dates from a July 2, 1781

land grant to Jacques Rigaud of the eastern end of Grand Isle.⁸ That island by virtue of its stand of scrub oaks was the only section of southern Barataria suitable for habitation, though early settlers on initially viewing the island from its beach probably concurred with Father Charlevoix's description of Dauphin Island in 1721:

It is continually exposed to a burning sun, and the soil is so poor that it is hard to raise even salads or other vegetables. It is indeed almost nothing but sand, which, on the sea-shore, is very bad for the eyes.⁹

Rigaud's donation on Grand Isle was followed by ones to Joseph Caillet in 1782, to Francois Anfrey in 1785, and finally to Charles Dufrense in 1787. The last Spanish grant in the region came with transfer of Grand Terre to Joseph Andoeza in 1794, but in contrast to his neighbors on Grand Isle, Andoeza did not develop his properties.¹⁰ Colonization was slow in this part of the lower coast, and Lewis DuMain in his reports to the United States Senate in 1807 noted the sparse settlement there, even though the "Bay of Barataria is the best harbor on all the coast from the Mississippi to the Sabine." (11) As late as the summer of 1810, the only significant population concentration was reported by the United States census taker as-

A Grand Isle out to the sea attached to the Interior of Lafourche & Called by the French Grand Isle. The island is about 17 leagues from the closest settlement on the Bayou Lafourche. The people here raise corn to eat and live by catching fish & oysters, and making fish oil. They live poor. The island is not situated to receive large vessels being surrounded by marsh. Grapes grow natural & well here.¹²

Available evidence indicates that the first generation on the island took a rather barren and unpromising section of earth and slowly converted it into an attractive and productive setting. The

February 11, 1811, will of Jacques Rigaud revealed that he had been able to construct a home with native materials, using local shell deposits for the *bousillage*, or daubing, and probably initially roofing it with palmetto fronds. Rigaud and Francois Anfrey had also succeeded in raising cattle on the marsh grasses of the island, which was reportedly dried in salt water and transported for sale in New Orleans along with oysters, fish and game. Farmers slowly built up the weak, sandy soils by applications of fish and shrimp remains into lands, which in the 1820s were capable of supporting large scale sugar plantations.¹³ By the 1880s, continued efforts had produced a transformation, so that "with its imposing groves of oaks, its golden wealth of orange-trees, its odorous lanes of oleander, its broad grazing meadows yellow-starred with wild camomile, (sic) Grand Isle, remains the prettiest island of the Gulf; and its loveliness is exceptional."¹⁴

In June of 1810, there were only inchoate dreams of "the prettiest island of the Gulf," for most of the fewer than one-hundred slaves and free residents of southern Barataria "live poor." A few may have augmented their incomes by aiding in the illegal transfer of undeclared cargoes into the interior, but most were apparently more concerned with retaining their privacy and the mundane matters of survival in a frontier area. But later in the same year the pioneers of Barataria found their ranks and economic possibilities increased by the appearance of the smuggling, privateering, and filibustering crews, who were soon to be led by the romantic and enigmatic Jean Laffite. Some chroniclers have suggested that this influx of undesireables (sic) met with strong opposition from earlier residents, but no corroborating evidence of any altercations has been uncovered.¹⁵

Islander involvement with Laffite seems clearly established in all published sources. The controversial *Journal of Jean Laffite* insists that certain settlers from Grand Isle were active members of the Baratarian brotherhood, though one of those named, Louis Chighizola,

certainly came to the region at roughly the same time as Laffite himself. On the other hand, Manuel Perrin and Francois Rigaud, the son of the island's first resident, had lived in the area for some time and may well have "helped us design on maps commercial bases along the swampy bayous in the South of Louisiana," and also "enlisted as guardians of strong boxes and police constables."¹⁶ Islanders also helped provide the buccaneers with badly needed stores. Proof for this has been reported in the case of two hunters who followed Laffite lieutenant Barthelemy Lafon to Grand Isle, where they recorded his transactions with a Monsieur Nicolle, a stockraiser.¹⁷ Further documentation was included within a September 12, 1812 prize list of Frederick Youx, who listed payments totaling \$544.00 to a Mr. M. Henri "a Grand Isle" for horse fodder, vegetables, meat, and "bread made by the inhabitants."¹⁸

Yet the role of earlier residents in Laffite's activities has probably been expanded out of proportion by a number of journalists, who travelled (sic) to "The ancient haunt of the Pirates" after Laffite's departure for colorful stories.¹⁹ A key example of this is in the writings of George Washington Gable, who had vacationed on Grand Isle when it was a Gilded Age resort of sufficient beauty to inspire Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*. Cable, while reasonably accurate in many of his statements, seriously overstated the role of his vacation island in privateering ventures, suggesting:

In the beautiful, wooded, grassy and fertile "Grand Isle" lying just west of their stronghold on "Grand Terre", and separated from it only by a narrow pass that led out to sea, storehouses and dwellings were built, farms and orangeries (sic) yielded harvests and green meadows dotted with wax myrtles, casinos and storm dwarfed oaks rose from the marshy inland side where children and women plied their shrimp and crab nets, looked across the boundless

open Gulf toward the Spanish Main.²⁰

Physical factors and common logic mitigated against any extensive utilization of Grand Isle by Laffite and his cohorts. For that island lacked a harbor and because of sandbars on the Gulf side and marshes to the rear could only be approached in shallow draft vessels. As late as the 1910s, goods were commonly transferred to the island in small horse-drawn carts, which drove out into the water to meet incoming vessels so that they would not become stuck in the bay.²¹ Similarly, Cheniere Caminada has only shallow approaches that called for a large expenditure of energy before landing any sizeable cargo, such as the 1883 landing of supplies for the construction of a church there that saw the supply boat become enmired (sic) two miles offshore and a "veritable horde of humanity hitch themselves to the boat"²² though still requiring four full days to empty it. Such a waste of labor for the transportation of cargoes would not have entranced the freebooters on Grand Terre, with its excellent harbor, sufficient lands for storage, and an accommodating landowner, Francois Mayronne, who had purchased the island in 1795 and appears to have actively participated in privateering ventures. The erection of storehouses on Grand Isle also would have clashed with the privateer's tactical pattern of maintaining diverse and widely scattered retreats in case of an attack. In addition, the Laffite lieutenant and at that time surveyor for the Territory, Barthelemy Lafon, in his May 1813 map of proposed American fortifications on Grand Terre showed no evidence of storehouses or other facilities on the eastern half of Grand Isle. Interestingly, Lafon's map was made under the supervision of Colonel Ross, the future leader of the ground forces against Laffite's settlement, and did show an encampment and house on Grand Terre—but no fortification.²³

The oral traditions maintained among longtime area residents also deny a large role for Grand Isle and her residents in privateering ventures. The Rigaud family has consistently

repudiated any statements on the active involvement on the part of Francois Rigaud with the Laffites, only allowing for his incidental participation as an affable and realistic neighbor, who was willing to give information or recommend buyers for the privateer's goods. In support of these defences (sic) they offer the story of "Marie Rigaud and the Pirates Card Game," which Lyle Saxon also collected for his *Laffite the Pirate*. Essentially, this is an account of an unusual, late-night visit to the Rigaud home on Grand Isle by some of Grand Terre's new residents. The buccaneers requested the services of the young Marie, as the most innocent inhabitant of the region, to make a crucial and honest cut in a deck of cards in an extremely high stake game of chance. Marie's family allowed her to comply with the demand and the privateers soon returned her in perfect health. Soon thereafter, Jean Laffite appeared at the Rigaud's door bearing gifts and thanks for Marie's aid. This tale makes it clear that Laffite was actually a stranger up to the time that he went to repay his debt to the Rigaud's (sic) and stresses his unfamiliarity with the island. And this story is but one section of a body of folklore that sees very limited interaction between the settlements on Grand Terre and Grand Isle at the time of Laffite's hegemony.

Some reports exist which indicate that Jean Laffite returned to use Grand Isle as an isolated meeting place for his filibustering activities after his ouster from Baratavia in 1814. Yet, again these were only rare occurrences.²⁴

The bulk of a counter body of tales on Grand Isle's activity with the privateers may well have emanated from the Laffite lieutenant and later island resident Louis "Nez Coupe" Chighizola and other amused inhabitants, who have long enjoyed tricking gullible tourists and treasures hunters. Chighizola was apparently an excellent raconteur, who was capable of creating a number of stories to explain how he received the noseless visage that earned him the sobriquet Nez Coupe. These tales ranged from the result of a crooked card game, to a bloody sword

fight over the prize of a chained maiden, to his shortest rejoinder, that a dog had bitten it. From his son, Louis, Jr., probably came fanciful creations that a home built in the 1860s had been used as a meeting place and message drop for the privateers on Grand Isle. Such misconceptions were fostered by the willing acceptance of reporters, who came to the region in search of material on Laffite's band and in many cases refused to believe islander disavowal of their ancestors' involvement with the privateers. Instead, they looked for and perhaps invented tales to satisfy a curious readership.²⁵

The available information on southern Baratavia and Laffite shows rather strongly that the privateer leader came back to what had been a very recently and sparsely settled section of America. The original settlers of the land benefited financially from his presence, but in general concentrated on the difficult task of creating a liveable (sic) environment in this harsh and isolated section of America. Laffite was well received by area pioneers, both for the economic possibilities he brought and his own heroic nature. In addition, he was responsible for publicizing the existence of Baratavia and as a major agent in populating the region, for with his withdrawal from Louisiana in 1815 many of his former compatriots decided to remain as settlers. Though his tenure as the "Bos of Baratavia" was only four years, Jean Laffite's reign was of crucial importance for the identification and history of southern Baratavia.

Endnotes:

1. William Cumming, *The Southwest in Early Maps* (Princeton, 1958), plates no. 43, 47, 48, 55, 59; Vincent Casado, *Primero Anos De Domacion Espanola en Louisiana* (Madrid, 1942), pp. 16, 122; Bartelemy Lafon, "Carte Gernerale (sic) du Terriroire d' Orleans..." Map section, Historic New Orleans Collection; Charles D. Warren, "The Acadian

- Land," *Harper's*, 74 (1887): 352-54.
2. William Conaster, "The Grand Isle Barrier Island Complex" (unpublished Tulane diss., 1969), pp. 8, 42, 109, 122-32; Betsy Swanson, *Historic Jefferson Parish* (Gretna, La., 1975), pp. 85-90; James Robertson, *Louisiana under the Rule of Spain, France and the United States* (Baton Rouge, 1902), I, p. 119; Cumming, op. cit.; Casado, op. cit.
3. Herbert Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands* (New Haven, 1921); Robertson, *Louisiana*, pp. 119, 332; Charles Hackett ed. *Pirchardos Treatise on the Limits of the United States* (Austin, 1931), I, pp. 23-25.
4. Robertson, *Louisiana*, pp. 331-32.
5. Conveyance records for Jefferson Parish, located at Gretna Louisiana; Lafon, "Carte Generale."
6. Jose de Evia, *Y Sus Reconocimientos Del Golfo de Mexico, 1783-1796* (Madrid, 1958), pp. 87-122; translation taken from Hackett, *Pichardos Treatise*, p. 356.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.
8. *American State Papers: Land Series* (Washington D.C.), VI, p. 671, III, p. 597.
9. Quoted in B.F. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana* (New York, 1856), 1856, III, p. 199.
10. *American State Papers: Public Lands*, III, 558, VI, p. 673.
11. Lewis DuMain, "Report of Survey of the Coast..." in *Territorial Papers, 1789-1873*, Records of the U.S. Senate, National Archives.
12. United States Manuscript Census Returns, Jefferson Parish, 1810. (The only readable copy of the actual enumeration is located in the National Archives.)
13. Jacques Rigaud Will, Feb. 11, 1811, in *Wills and Succession*, 1807-46, Orleans District Court, New Orleans: Sally Evans, Fred Stielow, Betsy Swanson, *An Early History of Grand Isle* (Gretna, 1976), pp. 10-45.
14. Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (New York, 1889), p. 7.
15. Olin Dee Morison, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Athens, Ohio, 1972), p. 28; Stanley Faye, "Commodore Aury," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 24 (1941): 613-97.
16. Jean Laffite, *The Journal of Jean Laffite* (New York, 1958), pp. 37-40.
17. Stanley Faye, "The Privateers of Guadeloupe," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 23 (1940): 432.
18. Prize List of Frederick Youx, in *Papers of Privateers and Pirates*, Historic New Orleans Collection.
19. For example, Nicholas Hubbard, "Barataria, The Ruins of a Pirate Kingdom," *Atlantic Monthly*, 91(1903): 806-14; Frank Schoonover, "In Haunts of Jean Laffite," *Harper's*, 1911; Eugene Smalley, "Barataria: An Ancient Haunt of the Pirates," *St Nicholas*, 15 (1888).
20. George W. Cable, *The Creoles of Louisiana* (New York, 1884), p. 165.
21. Interviews on Grand Isle from January to March 1975, with Nolte Ludwig, Innocent Terrebonne, and Arthur Rigaud.
22. Missions de Louisiane, Cheniere Caminada, in *Papers, Circulars, and Documents: Orleans*, in the Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
23. Swanson, *Historic*, 88, 89, 152; B. Lafon, "The Plan of Entrance of Barataria with a projected Battery Proposed by Lt. Col. George Ross,"

24. Maps Division, National Archives.
"Bab" Riguard, "Gone With the Tide," (unpublished folk memoirs of the Rigaud family and early life in Grand Isle).

25. *Ibid.*; Nolte Ludwig, interviews; Alexander Walker, *Jackson and New Orleans* (New York, 1856), p. 35; Evans, Stielow, Swanson, *Grand Isle*, pp. 10-19.

THE SKULL OF JEAN LAFFITE

R. Dale Olson

Historical confirmation of myth regarding the Laffites is difficult. Compounding that difficulty is the periodic appearance of outrageous tales which may appeal to the uninformed, but which are summarily dismissed by scholars.

One of the most far fetched stories to ever surface purportedly related to the brothers Laffite was reported in the *Galveston Daily News* in articles dated 1966,¹ and 1970.² According to these writings a human skull, marked with a treasure map and the inscription "1852 Capt. Gene LaFitte" (sic) was traded to a local Galveston businessman by "an old Indian".

In about February, 1966, Harley F. Strong operated a store, "The Time Shop", located at 409 Moody (21st. Street), in Galveston. According to Strong, an old, wrinkled, weathered "Indian" visited his store asking for money. In a stereotype considered politically incorrect in the 21st. Century, and highly improbable in 1966, the old man spoke in broken English, saying, "Me want go to Beaumont". Strong refused to help, but the old man reached into a carpet bag he carried and said,

"Me have skull Squaw had long time. No come back, you keep". Mr. Strong gave the man some money, and the visitor left the skull, never to return.

The skull appeared to be marked with a felt pen, or other writing instrument and had an "X", marking what Strong

thought to be a Karankawa Indian burial ground, the possible site of alleged "treasure". Although the skull was confirmed to be that of a human, relatively intact, it was missing the teeth and jawbone. Strong claimed that "doctors" had examined the skull and ascertained it could have been of the same time period of the Laffites. No other investigation was made. The source of the inscription is unknown.

Laffite scholars would not read these articles a second time. Even the most gullible layman would pose questions. To what did the date "1852" (or 1858 in one report) refer? Where had the skull been kept for the approximate century between 1852 and its appearance at "The Time Shop"? Obviously, no Karankawas had been on Galveston Island for over a century, so who was the "old Indian"?

Mr. Strong, who lived at 1906 Avenue M, in Galveston, was reported to have been 65 years of age in 1966, would be expected to be deceased in 2008. The disposition of the skull following Strong's death, and its current location is unknown.

Endnotes:

1. "Jean Lafitte's Skull on Galveston Shelf?" *Galveston Daily News*, August 25, 1966, Section 2, P. 1.
2. "Is Skull that of Jean LaFitte?" *Galveston Daily News*, February 1, 1970, Section B, P. 15.

PASSAGES FROM *THE LIFE OF LAFITTE*

By James Rees

Note: The following are direct excerpts from some 1841 issues of the New World newspaper. They are from articles on Passages from the Life of Lafitte by James Rees. According to The History of Southern Drama by Charles S. Watson (University Press of Kentucky, 1997), Rees spent most of the 1830s in New Orleans, where he gave plays about Washington and the legendary Mike Fink as well as a very successful play "Lafitte" about Jean Laffite, which ran April 3-14, 1837, at the Camp Street Theatre in New Orleans. The first performance was billed as the "Nautical Drama of Lafitte" and had exciting stage effects in boats. On the fourth night of the production, Mr. Abbott, who played the lead, was wounded by a musket shot in the wrist. Watson says a competing play about Lafitte by Charlotte Barnes Conner was performed at Caldwell's St. Charles Theatre on April 15 and 17, 1837. It was a more sedate production, with chaste language according to a reviewer, and only ran two nights. Neither Lafitte play has survived in print, but Rees' fictional Passages from the Life of Lafitte may have been derived from his play. The following Gothic tale has Lafitte converted into a land pirate hiding in a cavern in the Cumberland valley, trading dark stories with his followers. The spelling and grammar are left unchanged. These stories were collected and transposed for the Laffite Society Chronicles by Pam Keyes.

Chapter VIII...The Bandit's Mountain Home--Social Habits of the Gang--Singfried's Story--Father Nicholas, a legend of the olden times--Bobby's idea of legends, and the Story Telling expressed by his actions.

In a former passage we introduced the notorious Mason to our readers. It is not generally known that this respectable personage acted as Lafitte's lieutenant, and occasionally took command of his men on land service, when other and more important matters called the attention of their Chief to the ocean. The broad mountains of the Far West were their abiding place; and one of those numerous caves so celebrated in traditionary love, and subject of wonderment and mystery in history, their home. Immediately after the incidents related in our last Passage, Lafitte sought his "horde", and, with Rebecca, soon forgot the world--but was not by the world forgotten.

Rebecca seemed the priestess of the cave. There was none of that delicacy about her which would have tended to mar their festivities. She even sat at the

table and drank the Brigand's toast--"A wide sea, a good ship, clear ground, and a swift horse."

It was on one of those social occasions, that Rebecca rallied Lafitte on his wild and peculiar doctrine, "that there was in nature the means of prolonging life." Nay, he even contended that the "elixir" spoken of as fabulous, actually existed.

"Well Captain," observed one of the men, "tell us that story which you have written in your journal, entitled "Father Nicholas;" it carries out your favorite theory."

"How do you know there is such a tale in my journal?"

"That's a question to ask a gentleman and a scholar! Why, doesn't it lay open on the desk in your room?"

"True, Singfried, now I remember, you once told me that in your youth your education was not, like mine, neglected. Your life, no doubt, would furnish a strange mixture of the serious and ludicrous, crime, and a few virtues. You

must tell us your history, for our amusement."

"As regards the matter, Captain, there is that in it which is serious enough, and some things which I would rather keep locked up here," laying his hand impressively on his heart.

"Old Barbeaux's death, for instance," whispered Bob.

"Silence, hell-hound, or I'll throttle you! Imp of Satan, you are my bane--my curse! Beware of my vengeance!"

"Yes, old one, but see, the Captain waits."

"As I was saying, Captain, when the bright-headed youth interrupted me, my life is a dark catalogue of crimes, some of which still disturb my rest--but no matter. Do you know, Captain, I once denied the existence of a Supreme Being. It was a battle between myself and Reason. The former conquered, but not until my soul was loaded to the brim with heavy crimes. No man should deny the Deity, Captain, though he be a murderer."

"Is there blood upon your conscience, Singfried?" asked the Captain.

"Aye, Captain, and innocent blood! In the dark hours of the night, when all around is calm and still--when Nature's self is asleep--these crimes are made manifest: the figures of those I have wronged rise up before me, and mock me with hideous gestures. I writhe upon my bed, still are they before me: I arise and approach them--they move, I follow, they vanish! Oh, Captain, such sights are dreadful!"

"Rebecca, can you listen to such things unmoved?" asked Lafitte.

"I could listen to his story with more interest."

"I do not want to hear old Singfried's story of ghosts," cried a robber, "give us the Captain's story."

"Presently, my men; but I should like to hear a portion of Singfried's--that part

of it which led him to adopt a robber's life. What caused you to quit the gay world and all its pleasures for these broad hills, and this barren cave?"

Singfried hesitated a moment, cast his eyes around the table, took a full glass of brandy, and in a low voice began:

"Captain, I will tell you that, but no more. Remember, 'only' that."

SINGFRIED'S STORY

My life has been one of crime, the retrospection of which drives me to madness. The thought has frequently struck me that a recapitulation of a few scenes would tend to withdraw my mind from the contemplation of them, and relieve me of a heavy load of crime which presses with a giant's strength upon my soul. I question, however, if this will avail much. Nothing but the annihilation of thought--the destruction of memory--can give me relief. The mind, that undefined and intuitive seat of reason, that embryo of eternity, with all its fearful imaginings, can call up at a moment's warning the dark, deep deeds of guilt and hold them up to the mirrored soul, as messengers from the grave. The recital of one event in my life may teach some of you a lesson, and probably draw from some sympathetic eye the tear of pity for my woes. I shall pass over the earlier years of my life, as they contain nothing that would interest you. They were of an infantine nature compared to the ones in which the event occurred I am now about relating. I was in my twenty-second year when I became acquainted with two sisters of the name of Clifford; they were beautiful and highly accomplished--the pride of their parents, the admiration of their friends.

{Some portion purposely omitted}

I was the monster who crushed all their bright hopes, and sent them to an untimely grave, victims of my hellish arts. Each one bore me a child--a daughter and a son. They separated; one left the city and went no one knew whither, the other died a prostitute in a

common brothel in Shippen street in Philadelphia. Her child, my son, was brought up in the poor-house, and turned loose upon the world. At the age of eighteen he was committed to prison for theft. Captain he is one of your gang! Start not; he is not here now, nor does he know me as his father.

"Where is he?" asked Lafitte.

"On duty--absent on duty. On my return home to my native land, after an absence of eighteen years, (during which time I suffered several years' imprisonment for petty crimes,) I learned the fate of my son. I made inquiry at the Cliffords. They were both dead. My daughter--I never heard of her until--but I will not anticipate you in the interest of my story, if it has any. I pressed my feet once more on my native soil; it was not the pressure of innocence and virtue; it was the heavy tread of guilt."

{Here follows several pages taken up with reflections, and vain attempts at philosophy, which result in his forming an acquaintance with a man of some character, whose name was Gilbert}

"I married the daughter of my friend Gilbert. She was just twenty-one years of age, handsome and accomplished. I was forty-three; the disparity of our ages seemed not to lessen the power of love. I was now comparatively happy. We lived on the borders of a sweet, romantic lake. Our time was spent in rural and rational enjoyment; my wife was fond of reading, and I of hearing her read. I thought then there was music in it. For hours we have sat together under a spreading oak, and read alternately to each other some interesting book."

"One afternoon, eight months after our marriage, my wife's delicate situation rendered it impracticable to take our accustomed walk. We were seated in our little parlor, looking over some old papers, trinkets, and such matters. Some of these papers belonged to my wife's mother, and she was intent upon them. To me they were of no value; a miniature fell to the floor, and exposed the features of a most beautiful woman.

I snatched it up, and uttered an exclamation of surprise, as I recognized the likeness of Mary Clifford! "Gracious God, what is this? My wife, alarmed at the exclamation, turned suddenly around, and seeing the miniature in my hand--"Tis my mother," she exclaimed, "and is a good likeness." "Your mother! speak, for the sake of my soul's salvation--speak! Helen, who are thou? Quick, your name ere I go mad! Was not Gilbert your father? In mercy say that he was! and I called upon heaven to save me from the damning--the worse of crimes. "Be calm, dear husband, you look wild: Gilbert was not my father!"--And your mother--who was your mother?"--Her name was Clifford--Mary Clifford." "Go on--go on--let me hear all. Name him she called her husband--your father." My wife held down her head and hesitated. "Be calm, my dear husband. Hear me confess a mother's frailty: I was not born in wedlock! I am the offspring of guilt. My father's name was ...""Hold!" I exclaimed, "one moment! my brain is on fire! reason is deserting me!--now go on--his name! "Was Collins!" "Miserable girl, you have wedded your own father!"

I remember nothing. Beyond this was all chaos. Years rolled away, and I was the inmate of a mad-house. Reason, however, once more resumed her seat. I learnt that my daughter died in giving birth to a male child--both lay in one grave! Captain, this is an awful confession. Pity me, comrades, for I am miserable."

The wretched man leaned his head upon the table and groaned audibly. The silence was broken by a voice from the lower end of the table, requesting the Captain to read the story of "Father Nicholas."

"I am afraid the story of Singfried has taken away the desire of listening to mine. His is an "ower true one," Father Nicholas but the phantom of the mind--a playful fancy of the imagination."

"Let us have it--let us have it!" was the cry. A look of unusual kindness from Rebecca decided him, and in a clear, distinct manner he read from his

journal the following strange tale, the production of his idle hours, and intended to carry out the idea of his new theory.

FATHER NICHOLAS

A Tale of the Fourteenth Century.

"I do remember an apothecary--
And hereabouts he dwells,--whom late I
noted
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming
brows,
Culling of herbs; meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the
bones." Shakspeare (sic)

In a retired lane in the city of London, lived in the year 1330, a man whose outward appearance denoted the extremes of poverty. His beard hung down to his waist, and the abject wretchedness of his person threw around it a wild and unnatural character which gave rise to dark rumours and deep suspicion of his being a necromancer--a name which allied the individual possessing it, to Satan himself. This man kept a small shop for the sale of herbs, and chemical preparations, the effect of which, upon those who had the courage to take them, was so extraordinary, that it obtained for him the title of the learned doctor. Business, however, came in very slow, and seemingly added nothing to his worldly gear, or limited household. Of an evening, this singular man was frequently seen gathering herb and plants from churchyards, and it is said that he was once seen to pluck a flower of a peculiar color from the grave of a murderer; and he was known to have given the executioner a large sum of money for the toe nails of a noted malefactor; these, and sundry other unspeakable things, he was known to place in a crucible made of the scull (sic) of a child murderer! The neighbors said, that on this occasion he invoked the devil and his angels. Be that as it may, Father Nicholas, for such he was called, pursued the even tenor of his way until the evening when we beg leave to introduce another character to our readers.

It was one of those dark nights peculiar to the city of London, that a little man, dress in black, presented himself at the dirty counter of Father Nicholas. "Good evening, learned sir," was the stranger's salutation. The doctor raised his eyes, fixed them upon the speaker, and inquired his business.

"You purchase herbs and scarce plants, I understand?"

"Yes; have you any for sale?"

"I have a few handfuls of "--placing his mouth to the ear of the doctor, he whispered the name.

Had a thunderbolt landed at his feet, the consternation of the poor doctor could not have been greater. He started back, his eyes rolled in his head, his hands relaxed their hold of some glasses which fell with a crash to the floor--The stranger in black stood unmoved, and repeated in a careless manner, the former question, "Do you purchase?"

"Purchase!" exclaimed Nicholas, "aye, with my soul's salvation, I'll buy them, sir, but speak--were--who--gathered them?"

"Myself," was the answer.

"And there--did you gather them there yourself?--from that spot where mortal footsteps have never trod!"

"Here they are, old man, view them; aye, smell them, prepare them, try them upon your whiskered form, ha! ha!" and his wild laugh rang fearful through the house.

"Name your price young man; name it--take it and begone."

"Tis easily told, and to be paid this day two hundred years hence on this spot."
"What is the price?"

"Yourself, living or dead."

"And my reward--I mean my gain?"

"The indulgence of life to the fullest extent of your ambition and desires; unbounded wealth and renewed

youth!"

A wonderful alteration appeared in the heretofore wretched hovel of Father Nicholas; a splendid new building arose upon the ruins of the old one. It was remarked at the time, that the workmen were forbidden to alter, or injure in any manner, the little room where the extraordinary scene above described, had occurred. The personal appearance of Father Nicholas was also changed; he seemed to be much younger. Riches poured in upon him. At last a dark story was circulated, that the means of its accumulation was dangerous to the monied institutions of Great Britain. Matters of this kind occurring in the age of which we speak, carried on their front an air of probable witchcraft; then, as well as in after ages, it was looked upon with the utmost horror and detestation. The accumulation of money by any other means than labor, or honest traffic, was at that period considered as alone the work of magic; hence Father Nicholas's sudden rise from the extreme of poverty to the extreme of wealth, became the subject of much conversation among his less fortunate neighbors. It finally reached the ears of England's avaricious king, who summoned the victim of superstition before him: a veil is drawn over this conference. Astonishment, it is said, was depicted on the king's countenance as he was seen suddenly quitting the chamber, and hid himself in his private library for the rest of the day. Father Nicholas was cleared from all imputation heretofore attached to him; he was countenanced by majesty, and taken, as history informs us, into his especial favor!

A short time after this, Father Nicholas decamped in a very mysterious manner, leaving his house under the especial charge of the king, who, to the astonishment of his subjects, gave especial orders that the house of Father Nicholas should stand until it fell of its own accord to the ground!

Strange as this order was, other circumstances of a mysterious nature, led people to believe that Father Nicholas was, or had been leagued with old Nick. The house was looked upon as

a doomed one, and one hundred years after the disappearance of the owner, the same old-fashioned uninhabited dwelling stood, the terror of the whole neighborhood and the fruitful subject of many a long winter evening's tale. The grass had grown over the steps, and the running vine completely enveloped its somber stone in its serpentine folds; it was pointed out by one generation to another as the place of demons; and posterity did full justice to the old story, by additions rendered ten times more awful by the contrast drawn between the then enlightened age, and the dark one in which such infernal rites were supposed to have been performed. The advancement of knowledge never has, and perhaps, never will clear away the rubbish of superstition from our minds which former ages have been gathering, as it were, for our especial inconvenience; nor does it seem probable that those wild notions of sorcery, magic & c., will ever be obliterated while the subject forms the theme of some of our ablest writers.

About one hundred years after the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Father Nicholas from England, a similar character appeared in France, whose immense riches attracted the attention of King Charles, who commissioned his master of requests to enquire into the means by which he became so opulent. The account given by this man differed widely, it is presumed, from the one given by the other. He said that having purchased an old thick book, gilt upon the edges, and written on the bark of a peculiar tree in Latin characters, with a thin cover of copper, on which were sculptured many strange figures and devices--he studied it for twenty-one years without being able to discover more than it was a treatise on the Philosopher's Stone. The book, however, was translated by a converted Jew named Sanchez, who taught him to decipher the characters. It was the art of turning quicksilver into gold and silver at his pleasure; and he stated that at two different times in the month of April, he had converted a half a pound of quicksilver into pure silver, and the same quantity into pure gold. This account, we are told, satisfied the

two, but raised doubts among the many.

"Twas on the evening of the 15th March, 1530, that a little boy, living in an obscure lane in London, ran to his mother in the utmost alarm, and in a hurried manner told her that he saw a man whose description answered exactly to the likeness of Father Nicholas, which hung in the aisle of an old church close by. He was pushing away the stones and rubbish from the door of the old deserted house, and applied a key, which opened it, and went in. The mother dropped some work which she held in her hand, and ran hastily to the spot, and to her astonishment discovered the most evident signs of some one having forced his way into the house. The reader no doubt remembers it as well as we do. The woman, as in duty bound, reported the fact to the next magistrate, who as also in duty bound, convened his officers, and concluded to march "seratim" to the house of terror. By this time the whole neighborhood was informed of the daring stranger, who had entered the house, and resembled the original owner who had been gone two hundred years that very day. They reached the place, and as numbers make cowards brave, they rushed in a body through the long entry. Not a sound but the hollow echo of their own footsteps were heard; everything was falling to decay; the tapestry was dropping piecemeal from the damp walls; pictures had by their weight loosened the nails, and they hung in a falling posture; many of them had fallen and were shattered to pieces on the floor. In the middle of the room, a table was set, with a number of dishes completely filled with dust; one or two bottles of wine stood upright, and uncorked, but no one dared to touch them, thinking that a devil had taken up his quarters in them. A dreadful gloom hung over the scene, and a chilly air rushed through the decayed apartments. In another room stood several tables covered with cards and dice; upon a sideboard stood the remains of a supper, which had been prepared two hundred years ago, for those who had long since become food for worms. Strange as it would seem, every thing had lost its original nature

but the bread--it had not even moulded, but was as hard as the marble upon which it had stood; a bit of curious form fell to pieces at the touch. The company who had thus unceremoniously entered the rooms looked upon one another in silence--not a word was spoken; they passed through the various rooms, every thing had withered beneath the hand of time; the beds had been eaten up by the few living inhabitants of this gloomy mansion, a host of whom attempted to escape, which gave additional fears to the already terrified officers of justice. Another door was pushed open. A cry of horror escaped them. Upon a chair beside the table sat the apparent living Father Nicholas, his head resting upon his hands his eyes were closed. In one hand he held a small phial twas empty; before him lay a sheet of paper, upon which was written, "my fate is sealed--the tempter claims his price--the price of the infernal drug--I have drunk it--I await the issue--it fails--hell claims its victim!"

He was dead! Life had not been long extinct for a gentle warmth was felt in the vicinity of the heart. The officers returned, locked up the house, reported the extraordinary circumstance to those more particularly concerned. The succeeding week the house, in despite of the King's prohibition, was pulled down, and not a trace remains of this once beautiful, yet dreaded mansion.

That the reader may not conceive this to be altogether an imaginary sketch on my part, I need only refer to the writings of Godwin and others, who not only wrote upon the subject of the Philosopher's Stone, but actually believed in the wild tale of the "Wandering Jew," who, as one grave writer asserts, is still in existence, and doomed to wander upon the earth without a local habitation or name."

There was a long pause among the stern followers of the writer of this wild tale, which was broken by the sudden entrance of red-headed Bob, who not being over-fond of story-telling had watched his opportunity and sneaked quietly out. "Well Bob, what's in the

wind now, eh?"

"There are four men well mounted, and well-armed, too, even now crossing the bridge,"

"Ah! Say you so? To arms--to arms! Rebecca to your chamber."

"Why should I to my chamber? Think you there are no charms in a mountain skirmish for me?"

"It is not fitting, Rebecca, nor would I have it so."

"If it is fit for me to go, I will."

"Hal say you so, proud one? Then let me tell you that Lafitte has no master, or mistress here. I say again, get to your chamber nor dare dispute my orders."

There was that in the flashing eye of Lafitte, and the curling of his haughty lip, which silenced the proud beauty at once, but it laid the foundation of a new passion, opposed in all its ramifications to the one she heretofore felt for Lafitte, and of which he was soon to feel the effects.

CONCLUSION

Some Account of Bridges--Legends attached thereto--Appearance of the four Travelers spoken of by Bobby--The Attack--The Result

All bridges--we make no exceptions--are more or less the resort of fairies, elfins, witches, hobgoblins, sprites, spirits & c & c. They are better calculated for these phantom ladies and gentlemen to play their freaks in and about, than the more gloomy recesses of a forest, or the ruins of some old antiquated castle where, in "by-gone days," some horrid deed was committed. On a moonlight night, when stars are struggling through the silver mist, and vainly trying to eclipse the queen of half the world, a rustic bridge bending its solid form over a rivulet or meandering stream, winding its way through a rich and fertile country, presents to the eye a scene more grand and picturesque, more poetic--or at least, more

romantic--than the high turreted castle, in the most superstitious country in the world; and when we ask why is it so? the answer is to be found in the thousand and one legends which are treasured up by the old, and narrated by the young. Beneath the arches of some lone, out of the way bridge, fairies, it is said, hold their nightly revels, witches and sprites their midnight orgies, and robbers select the bridge for their deeds of blood and plunder. Even the plain simply constructed bridge (I don't mean the new one) over a little stream of water which empties itself into the Cumberland river, a short distance below Nashville, Tenn., is not exempt from this popular superstition.

Cumberland river, one of the largest in Kentucky, takes its rise from the Cumberland mountains, and interlocks with the head waters of Clinch and Kentucky rivers, and thence flowing through the State, westwardly, more than two hundred miles, it enters the State of Tennessee, and, after meandering one hundred and twenty miles, reaches Nashville nearly in latitude 35 N. From thence, flowing NW one hundred and twenty miles, it joins the Ohio, nearly opposite Dog Island, once the hiding place of the celebrated Meason. As I observed, the bridge is not, or rather was not, exempt from the wild legends of robbers, and ghosts, and of strange sights which were seen there at divers times. These stories, however, go further back than the present generation can well remember, or they can remember only such portions as were gleaned from the nursery, that school wherein superstition builds its power, so that the combined efforts of Common Sense and Religion cannot pull it down. It may be said that these relations of the wild and wonderful, originated from a morbid state of feeling, actuated by fear. It may be: but their frequent repetition established the belief in the minds of people beyond the possibility of a doubt. Old Ben Wilson, well known to the settlers of the "Far West" swears to this day, that he saw numerous black and white dogs emerging from the eastern side of this bridge. Wild, and as he says, "unearthly music" announced their departure, and

hideous screams welcomed their return! He also swears--Ben will swear--that on one occasion he saw a beautiful young lady sitting on a large stone immediately in the centre of the bridge, who, at his approach, suddenly disappeared. The huge stone next morning was not to be seen! Horses, in passing over the sandy hill at a late hour of night, stopped suddenly in their career, and when the alarmed traveler looked down to ascertain the cause, a huge snake was discovered twining itself around the animal's feet, and holding him immovable. Many have remained standing in this position, with the monster hissing up his venom in their very faces, until day-break when the snake unwound himself, and left the traveler to pursue his journey unmolested. Ben, the chronicler of these, the "wild and wonderful," further swears, that whole troops of headless men, women, and children, were frequently seen dancing in the green meadows, and, if molested, would seek shelter under the bridge! I myself remember a young man, who in after years lived near the lime-kilns in the upper country, and who having drunk very freely at old Sam Walker's tavern, was, as he stated, tempted to join this unnatural band of dancers. He was never known to smile or drink a drop afterwards. His wife says to this day it was a spiritual blessing...We might write a volume upon this subject, but here we stop for the present.

Over this bridge, on a beautiful evening in the month of August, four horsemen were seen to pass. On the opposite side they stopped for a moment to gaze upon the beauty of the scenery. It was truly a pleasing sight. The rays of the setting sun yet lingered on the water, and tinted with golden hues the mountain tops. The murmur of insects became louder as the day-wind went down with the sun. All nature looked as pure as the limpid stream that gurgled from a rock, and mingled its chrystal waters with those of the dark Cumberland.

"Look yonder, Smith," exclaimed one of the company, "is not that a fitting subject for the pencil of an artist?"

"Indeed it is and one that I will not pass without taking a sketch." In an instant the artist, for such indeed he was, was at work.

"It lacks but a company of brigands to render it an Italian scene," observed a third.

"It is said," remarked the fourth, "that the wildest and most beautiful parts of Italy are the haunts of banditti; and yet is it not strange that we should associate that with the Italian brigands deeds of heroism and romance? The robbers of all other countries have no interest for us, unless it be those of Germany, and they only exist in the many old legends which have been translated, as it were, for our special wonder."

"True," observed the painter--"novelists have done much for the Italian brigands, and one of our own writers has thrown around them a degree of interest which is only excelled by the beauty and elegance of his style of narration: I allude to Washington Irving--his, indeed, is a gifted pen. But look yonder! what can be more beautiful? That form lacks but the human form to render it second only to the Para--Ha! what do I see?"

"What do you see, Smith" was the general exclamation.

"By heavens, gentlemen, I saw glaring at me through the under-brush a pair of as rascally-looking eyes as the most fastidious Lavater would wish to study from."

"It must be a panther; they abound hereabout."

"No, gentlemen--they were those of a boy that I saw."

"Nonsense."

"There, I see his head: it is like a bunch of carrots."

"It is a fox, Smith. Stand back--I'll fire."

"Hold, for heaven's sake! There, I see a man--we are among banditti!"

And so they were. In a moment the spot where the boy was first seen was covered with armed men.

"Silence, men--not a word--not a motion--leave this business to me. Stand close."

They obeyed, while their Captain walked leisurely down the hill. When he came within hearing distance, the eldest of the four travellers commanded him to stop. There was in the sound of his voice a something that carried awe along with it. To Lafitte it was not fearful but it emanated from one his equal in courage and daring.

"Stop, I say, or by the Eternal! you die," and the pistol was on a dead level with the robber's breast.

Lafitte spoke--"With me, gentlemen, it is needless to contend: I am surrounded by men who know not what danger is, men of the most reckless daring--men, if you please, of crime. So yield sirs, without hesitation."

"Trifler!" exclaimed he who had now assumed a degree of command over his companions, "do you think that I am to be intimidated by Lafitte--the successful pirate and robber? out of my path, or I'll crush you," and he dashed his horse toward the spot where Lafitte stood for the purpose of taking a route leading around the base of the mountain, and in a direction from the spot where stood the giant figures of the robbers. His three companions followed. Lafitte darted to the centre of the road, gave a shrill whistle and--the next moment lay bleeding on the ground. The unerring aim of the stranger took him, as the sailors say, between "wind and water." A dozen rifles blazed forth their fiery contents, but without effect, and the four travellers were seen in the far distance leaning over the necks of their horses, which were going at a rate that defied pursuit.

The band gathered around their fallen leader: he was wounded severely. "Stop the pursuit, Brown: had I known the man at first I would have acted differently.

"Who are they? to whom do you allude?"

"His name is--raise me up gently, gently boys--his name is--easy boys, I am badly hurt--his aim is deadly--that man--the one I mean who fired at me, was General Andrew Jackson."

There was a dead pause--every eye fell to the ground, and Lafitte was carried on the shoulders of four of his men into an inner room of the cave.

CHAPTER IX

Sick bed--Love and treason--Hatching mischief--Bobby's usefulness--the last scene--the drop curtain to these passages.

Lafitte lay on a bed in a chamber of the cave, suffering almost the agonies of death. The wound was a severe one, and added to mental suffering, it rendered his situation truly distressing. Where was Rebecca, the Jewess? Did her presence cheer the sick man's spirits? Did her smile lull his pain, or her delicate fingers dress and solace his wounds? No! there is a mystery about her--a change had come over her reality of life; her actions appeared to Lafitte of the most extraordinary nature. She seldom visited him and when she did, it was with a sullen air, and reluctant step. Still, was Lafitte kind to her, and for this kindness she became still more mysterious in her conduct toward him. The business of robbing went on as usual; a man by the name of Brown acted as Captain. Brown was a much younger man than Lafitte, tall and athletic; and in his youth had received a liberal education. Brown committed a forgery to show his knack in the free use of the pen--before he was one-and-twenty, killed his particular friend in a duel--before he was twenty-two, assassinated a man in Girod street, New Orleans, and performed numerous other acts, which, if he had lived in any other country except this, would have raised him to a considerable eminence in the eyes of the law. Brown was a base villain; he had not a redeeming trait. Lafitte knew this, but such were the men to suit his purposes, while he was able to command them, but not when he lay on

a sick bed. It is said that honor exists among thieves; so it does, but it is that kind of honor which lives only in the atmosphere of fear and dread; for now that the chief was unable to govern, there was not a man but would have slit his windpipe for the sake of his gold, and the prospect his death would hold out of getting command.

Brown and Rebecca were seen together frequently; their conferences were long, and seemingly interesting; there was also mysterious whisperings among the crew. All this did not escape the lynx eye of Lafitte; he looked upon Rebecca as one, to use the words of old Solomon, already "doomed." If he was apparently asleep to this evident infidelity on her part--or careless as regarded the subject upon which they seem to dwell in earnest and sometimes loud conversation--there was one who watched them with more interest and exercised a cunning in his vocation which would have done honor to the wiliest politician of the age. This spy on the actions of Rebecca and her paramour was "Red headed Bob."

Night had drawn its curtains close around the earth--the lamps of heaven had gone out one by one, and the great chandelier of creation had been quietly lowered down, its pale rays lingering in the west. The wind swept over the hills, and murmured mournfully in the vallies. The waters of the Cumberland rolled away toward the Ohio, while the wolf howled through the forest, sole monarch of the American woods. Jonas lay thinking--such nights as these were calculated to harass his wounds and render him fitfully unhappy.

"Who's there? Close the door quick, Bob--it is you is it?"

"Yes sir," and Bob carefully secured the door. "Sir does not this secret door lead through the rock to the top of the mountain?"

"It does, why do you ask?"

"Is the passage known to any of the men--is it known to Rebecca?"

"No, not even to her--and how you became acquainted with it, is to be

explained."

"That will I--but not now--you are in danger, sir."

"I know it."

"Know it, and lay here so calm and contented?"

"I have warm friends in the band."

"No sir--no one but him who stands before you."

"Ha! say you so? Place that iron bar over the door hinges--that way, now keep me up--there, gently boy--where are my pistols--fix a pair--that's right--boy, your fortune is made, whether I die or live. Hand me pen, ink and paper--see, I sign these checks--if I fall, fill them up to the amount I have in bank--it is yours--if I live, we will enjoy it together. So! there is nothing like business."

"But sir--why think of such things now?"

"Business, boy, before pleasure--I am glad the treachery of Brown is made manifest--equally so, that my men are ungrateful. Now tell me how you found it out: hand me that flint--there--now the powder horn. See that your pistols are in order--if they come, boy, we will be prepared. Now proceed--tell me about it, eh, go on."

It was evident that the mind of Lafitte was wandering. So thought Bob, who, during the time Jonas was talking and fixing his pistols, was gazing upon him with lacklustre eyes, scarcely knowing what to say or do. Being called upon, however, to account for his knowledge--he spoke as follows:

"I need not tell you, Captain, how Miss Rebecca and Brown have been kissing each other all about the cave 'afore the men and behind their backs--I need not tell you this, nor need I tell you much more of what I see'd. But this kissing I considers as nothing, for it is an innocent amusement--but when it smacks of treason and murder"--

"Murder--murder, Bob--eh?"

"Yes sir, murder. I overheard Brown say to the men at table, that your lungs were all shot away--that you would never rise from this 'ere bed. But you are risin' ain't you? And then he said as how you must be stabbed to the heart to put you out of pain, and make him Captain."

"The h--ll, I must!"

"And who do you suppose was to do it?"

"Brown himself!"

"No!"

"Smith?"

"No!"

"Jenkins?"

"No--none of 'em--why, Miss Rebecca!"

"It cannot be!"

"True."

"Did she consent?"

"Not then, because as how she was not there; but I followed Brown out--he sought her--they had a long conversation. I could not hear it all; but this I heard--'A cup of poison, administered by your hand.'"

"Umph!--Bob, I wish you to mix among the men; give then to understand that I cannot live;--to-morrow we will quit this place and mode of life forever. I will seek a city and try to live honestly, if I can. I would leave my men as they are--willing to serve under another, and that other, Brown. I will not see one of them, no not one; now leave me--but go out of the secret door, and be cautious. The horses you can have ready by early dawn."

"And Rebecca?_"

"Can go to the devil."

Before the sun was up on the morning after the above conversation, Lafitte, the

Pirate of the Gulf, the terror of the west, with his friend, red-headed Bob, were far away from the Robber's Cave.

In a lonely mansion, (bearing evidence of wealth about it), situated on a little rising ground, a few minutes walk from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, lay the body of a man, resembling more the picture of death, than the stern reality of expiring life. His eyes were fixed, and his once stern features relaxed, although bearing strong evidence of much mental and physical suffering. The time was December 19, 1819.

"I say, Bob, it is all up with me now."

"I am afraid so, sir. I cannot flatter you as I have for the last ten days."

"So Brown, you say, was hanged in New Orleans last week?"

"Yes, sir, as I told you--for the murder of Rebecca."

"Hush, Bob, do not mention her name; it is associated with many a dark deed committed on the high seas. Bob listen! I know her history; know how and when old Solomon became her guardian; it is a long story; let it pass. She is gone, where--if preachers tell truth--I too must render up a fearful account. Talking of accounts, has the lawyer finished the papers?"

"All finished and recorded."

"Then Bob, you are a wealthy man."

"Thanks to your kindness, and our industry, I am."

"Ha, ha! Bob--I cannot help laughing when I think of our pardon. We fought, though, fought like men, didn't we? We are honest now in the eyes of the law. Government has pardoned us. ha! ha! But Bob, do you know that for years after the Battle of New Orleans, I felt as if I would much rather have been at the head of a few bold spirits, and sailing under the bloody flag on the high sea. It was my element, Bob, and damn me, if I don't think I ought to be buried there. Ha! what a pang that was! Bob, I am

dying. Death is doing its work here-- here, Bob, hand me that glass. I cannot drink; my throat is choked up--there's another broadside from Death's battery. My eyes grow weak--Bob, your hand, I'm cold--chilly; shut that window. Hark! I hear the cry of Pirates!--up with the black flag! Ha! they prepare. No quarter, men, let no one escape to tell the tale! Clear the deck! hoist the

Death's head! no quarter! Be in at the death. Ha! ha!" Here the wretched man fell back, completely exhausted; the man he called Bob raised him up--then laid him gently down.

"He is dead," were the words he uttered; and red-haired Bob gazed for the last time on the features of Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf.

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AUGUST 2006-JULY 2008

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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

ADDENDUM

MINUTES

**OCTOBER 9, 2007
TO
FEBRUARY 12, 2008**

*** * * * ***

**MINUTES
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
October 9, 2007
SIMPSON'S GALLERIES
2413 Strand
GALVESTON, TX 77550**

BOARD PRESENT: President, Jim Nonus; First Vice-President, Lou Graves MacBeth; Second Vice-President, Wil Zapalac; Third Vice-President, Lizette Gaudin; Secretary, Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic; Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

BOARD ABSENT: Editor-of-Publications, Don C. Marler; Archivist, Ed Jamison; Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Historian (office vacant)

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: R. Dale Olson; Dr. Reginald Wilson

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: Ed and Betty Connor; Frank and Connie Dryden; Lady Elizabeth Galloway; Pam Gilbert; Ondree Kuhn; Linda Kuhn; Jeff and Kathy Modzelewski; George Najarian; Larry and Jan Porter; Ginny Roberts; Petty Wilson

VISITORS: Charlie De Rome; Victor Moncebaiz; Daryl Olson; Ella Pennington

CALL TO ORDER

The President called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. with a welcome to members and visitors.

MINUTES

No Minutes taken due to public lecture held on September 11 meeting date.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Nancy Beaman presented a hand-written report, as follows: Beginning balance September, \$2,885.04; ending balance in September, \$2,969.93; beginning balance in October, \$2,969.93; ending balance this date, \$3,018.15

BRIEF DISCUSSION ON PIERRE LAFFITE GENEALOGY

Dr. Reginald Wilson spoke briefly on the genealogy research done by Laffite Society member Diane Burkett, fifth generation great-granddaughter of Pierre Laffite.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON SAMUEL BANGS

First Vice-President, Program Chairman Lou Graves MacBeth presented a talk on the extensive research she has done on the family of Samuel Bangs, entitled, *"The Rest of the Story"*. This was a follow-up of the September presentation at Galveston's Strand Theatre by Dale Olson and MacBeth on the life of Samuel Bangs, the first printer in Texas.

HOLIDAY PARTY

President Jim Nonus reminded members that the annual Laffite Society Holiday Party will be held Sunday, December 9, 2007.

FIELD TRIP TO MEXICO

In December, members will discuss a possible special event trip to Soto de la Marina and Saltillo, Mexico, following up on recent research into Mexican revolutionary activities and the travels of Samuel Bangs.

PRESERVING VIDEO TAPES

Advisory Board Member R. Dale Olson suggested that members consider transferring video tapes of previous presentations to a CD file.

SOCIETY MINUTES FOR ROSENBERG LIBRARY

Dale Olson recommended that at some point a copy of the Society's Minutes, dating from its inception in July, 1994, be donated to the Laffite collection in the Rosenberg Library.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Program Chairman Lou Graves MacBeth announced that Laffite Society Editor Don C. Marler will give a talk at the November meeting on the Society's publication, *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, its description, goals, types of subject matter accepted for inclusion, etc.

BOARD MEETING IN NOVEMBER

A meeting of Executive Officers may be scheduled in November.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks and appreciation were extended to Laffite Society Hospitality Committee members for buffet and beverage refreshments and set-up to Lizette Gaudin, Betty Connor, Lady Elizabeth Galloway, Pam Gilbert, George Najarian, and Wil Zapalac, and to Simpson's Galleries for making available their premises for the meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the general meeting of Oct. 9, 2007 was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic
Recording/Corresponding Secretary
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

\dk:11-2-07

MINUTES
November 13, 2007
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
Simpson's Gallery
2413 Strand
GALVESTON, TX 77550

BOARD PRESENT: President, Jim Nonus; Third Vice-President, Lynette Gaudin; Secretary, Dorothy McD. Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Don C. Marler; Archivist, Ed Jamison; Press Director, Dave Roberts

BOARD ABSENT: First Vice-President, Lou Graves MacBeth; Second Vice-President, Wil Zapalac; Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson; Historian (office vacant)

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: Jean L. Epperson; Jeffrey P. Modzelewski; Dr. Reginald Wilson

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: Lady Elizabeth Galloway; Sheldon Kindall; George Najarian; Sybil Marler; Rob and Carolyn Peterson; Larry and Jan Porter; Betty Wilson

VISITORS: Dan Cote (former member); Bill and Lynette Haaga; Marilyn Harris; Alex Karilanovic

CALL TO ORDER

Following the customary gathering at 6:00 p.m. of members for refreshments, the President called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. with a welcome to members and visitors and an announcement that the December 9th holiday party invitations were printed this date and would be mailed out this week.

Members were asked to pick up their copies of *The Laffite Society Chronicles* and to sign the list showing they had done so.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Laffite Society Archivist Ed Jamison introduced the evening's speaker, Don C. Marler, the Society's Editor of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, with a brief description of his biography and literary record.

Don's main topic of the evening was *The Chronicles* – covering a short history of its development which includes 26 issues published since 1995. Recapping stipulations for submitted material, he also offered suggestions for authors, emphasizing the need to maintain a high quality of research:

- 1) Authors should expand the periphery of their research interests and choose from the many other historical figures contemporary with the Laffites in the early 1800s, such as Aaron Burr, Vice-President in the

Jefferson administration, who fatally shot Alexander Hamilton in a duel, and who conspired to conquer New Orleans and make it the capital of a new empire west of the Allegheny, of which, it is claimed, he vowed to be "king.

- 2) Authors should take care to identify clearly objective content presented as opposed to what may be speculative.
- 3) Publications should be documented as thoroughly as possible.
- 4) Utilize the end-note format rather than footnote style.
- 5) No limitations on length of articles
- 6) Submit material for publication in *Microsoft Word*, although handwritten material will be accepted if there is no other choice.
- 7) Use the *Chicago Manual* as a standard for bibliographic notes.
- 8) Omit pagination.
- 9) Employ more than one proof-reader before submitting articles.
- 10 Send photos to Editor separately (*i.e.*, do not include them in text).

Don will provide at a future meeting copies to members of a Policy Procedure covering requirements for authors. In closing this part of his talk, he emphasized the necessity for keeping the quality of publications high, stating that it is *The Chronicles* as well as the contents of the Society's Archive that will insure the preservation of academic integrity in research and respect of the scholarly community.

As a second part of his presentation, Don discussed two other areas of his own research interests: 1) the NEUTRAL ZONE, a 500 square mile area west of the Sabine River, active between 1806 and 1819 as a refuge for, among others, freebooters and outlaws, and even today a remote part of Texas where those absconding from the law may remain "lost" for years – no questions asked. (See Don's book, *The Neutral Zone: Backdoor to the United States.*)

2) The RED BONES – a little known, mixed minority community of Indian and Caucasian people. (See also by Don Marler *Redbones of Louisiana.*)

Don's presentation was followed by brief comments by Ed Jamison and Jeff Modzelewski in appreciation of Don's contributions and on the challenges of editorial management as described by Jeff, former Editor of *The Chronicles*.

BUSINESS MEETING:

MINUTES:

Copies were sent via e-mail to members.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

No report was available due to absence of Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP

The President announced that currently there are 77 membership listings, with 7 organizations, and 102 persons.

SOME GOALS FOR *The Chronicles*

- 1) Submit a full set of *The Chronicles* to the Smithsonian Institute and to the Rosenberg Library. Obtain original drafts of each issue to reproduce copies where necessary.
- 2) Offer a copy to the Texas History Center at the Rosenberg Library

ON-LINE INQUIRIES REGARDING LAFFITE GENEALOGY

Discussion followed on finding a volunteer from the membership to answer on-line questions regarding descent from the brothers Laffite.

The President suggested preparing a questionnaire to obtain genealogical information from persons who claim descent.

HOLIDAY PARTY PLANS

ACTION: 1) Invitations to be sent out as soon as possible. 2) Dave Roberts will take photos at the party, some of which may be used in a future issue of *The Chronicles*. 3) Lizette and the Hospitality Committee will coordinate the party buffet and set-up with Bistro Lecroy. 4) Dorothy to write a report of the party for *The Chronicle*. 5) Decorations, etc., etc. – to be assigned.

UPCOMING SPEAKER

Advisory Board Member Dr. Reginald Wilson volunteered to contact Member-at-Large Diane Burkett, descendant of Pierre Laffite, to see if she would like to speak at a future meeting

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks and appreciation to Lizette Gaudin and George Najarian, Jim Nonus, and Lady Elizabeth Galloway for buffet and beverage arrangements, and to Simpson's for use of the Gallery for the meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The general meeting of November 13, 2007 adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic
Recording/Corresp. Secretary
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

\dmk:11/15/2007

**MINUTES
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
January 8, 2008
SIMPSON'S GALLERIES
2413 Strand
GALVESTON, TX. 77550**

BOARD PRESENT: President Jim Nonus; First Vice-President, E. Lou Graves MacBeth; Second Vice-President, Wil Zapalac; Third Vice-President, Lizette Gaudin; Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Press Director, Dave Roberts.

BOARD ABSENT: Secretary, Dorothy McD. Karilanovic; Editor-of-Publications, Don C. Marler; Archivist, , Ed Jamison; Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson; Historian (office vacant)

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: Jean L. Epperson; Jeffrey P. Modzelewski

MEMBERS=AT-LARGE: Ed and Betty Connor; Frank Dryden; Sheldon Kindall; Harry and Anne Forester; Ondree Kuhn; Linda Kuhn; Kathy Modzelewski; Rob and Carolyn Peterson; Larry and Jan Porter

VISITORS: Frank Danforth Dick; Andrew Stevens

CALL TO ORDER

Following a gathering at 6:00 p.m. for refreshments, the President called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. with a welcome to visitors Andrew Stevens from England and Frank Danforth Dick from Texas City, TX, the latter a distant relation to the family of James Campbell, known as Jean Laffite's "lieutenant" from about 1810 to 1820. Mr. Dick stated that early family members started in New Orleans as possible outfitters or ship chandlers. One Dick relative became a Federal judge involved in prosecution of some of Laffite's men.

MINUTES

There was no meeting in December. A report on the Society's annual Holiday Party December 9 was prepared by President Jim Nonus and appeared along with photos as a news piece in the *Scenes* column of *The Galveston County Daily News* Monday, December 31, and will also be published in the next issue of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer, Nancy Beaman, presented a verbal report showing a balance of \$1,400 more after payment of all party expenses than was on file in 2006 during the holiday season.

MINUTES
February 12, 2008
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY
Simpson's Galleries
2413 Strand
GALVESTON, TX 77550

BOARD PRESENT: President, Jim Nonus; First Vice-President, Lou Graves MacBeth; Third Vice-President, Lizette Gaudin; Secretary, Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic; Archivist, Ed Jamison; Parliamentarian, Diane Olson

BOARD ABSENT: Second Vice-President, Wil Zapalac; Treasurer, Nancy Beaman; Coordinator of Research, Pam Keyes; Coordinator of Research, Gary Fretz; Press Director, Dave Roberts; Historian (office vacant)

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: Jean L. Epperson; Jeffrey P. Modzelewski; R. Dale Olson

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Ed and Betty Connor; Dan Cote; George Dersheimer; Frank and Connie Dryden; Lady Elizabeth Galloway; Bill and Lynette Haage; Sheldon Kindall; Walter Modzelewski; George Najarian; Rob and Carolyn Peterson; Larry and Jan Porter

VISITORS: Jean Goodwin; Charles (Chuck) and Cody Hix; Jeff Rabek

CALL TO ORDER: Following a gathering at 6:00 p.m. for refreshments and conversation, the President called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with an introduction of visitors and welcome to all. Secretary Dorothy Karilanovic and Advisory Board Member Dr. Reginald Wilson (not present) received Valentine Day birthday salutations.

MINUTES: Approved on motion.

TREASURER'S REPORT: In the absence of Treasurer Nancy Beaman due to family illness, First Vice-President Lou MacBeth reported she had deposited membership dues in the Society's account.

MEMBERSHIP: In the absence of Second Vice-President Wil Zapalac, away on a work assignment, Lou MacBeth reported that a 2008 membership list was now available.

ARCHIVE REPORT: Archivist Ed Jamison recommended that copies of the Minutes be included in future publications of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, the proposal of which was approved on motion.

MEMBERSHIP

No report was available, although a number of new memberships are on file, along with renewals for 2008, now due.

FIELD TRIPS

First Vice-President/Program Chairman Lou MacBeth presented for discussion a list of possible field trips, with a positive response from members present as follows:

1) Sam Houston Regional Library (Liberty, TX), a definite choice, but may be deferred until 2009; Don and Sybil Marler's Home, Montgomery, TX (a Saturday talk, date to be determined, on Don's archaeological experiences in Jerusalem; 3) New Orleans, LA Jan., 2009 for the Anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans ; Grand Isle, LA; Cuba, provided license to travel is granted by the U.S. Government.

Jeff Modzelewski suggested a trip to the Matagorda, TX area and Palacios to do some Laffite research and enjoy the surroundings.

Linda Kuhn will use her contacts to research requirements to travel to Cuba, as well as to scope out the current conditions of Grand Isle following the Katrina disaster, and Jim will contact historical society people in Grand Isle; the Secretary will provide Linda Kuhn with correspondence to date re Cuban travel; Kathy will look into travel conditions in New Orleans; Jean Epperson will check on dates available to travel to the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center

VIDEO ON LAFFITE GENEALOGY

Discussion followed on a video interview January 11, 2008 at Lee College in Baytown, TX, intended for a possible television airing on The Discovery Channel. Members of The Laffite Society were invited to attend. A report on this event will be given in due course.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks extended to Lizette Gaudin, Hospitality Chairman, Jim Nonus and others for refreshments, beverages, and set up/take down and to Jim Nonus and Simpson's for allowing the Society to use its space for the meeting.

The Secretary, who was absent this date, thanks Lou MacBeth and Jim Nonus for notes taken on which these Minutes are based.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business the general meeting of Tuesday, January 8, 2008, adjourned.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic
Recording and Corresponding Secretary
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

\dk:1-20-2008

SPECIAL DISCUSSION ON LAFFITE ALIASES: Program Chairman Lou MacBeth announced the evening's topic as a discussion on the various aliases possibly used by Jean Laffite. Surname of Billot (used by Jean Laffite); Jean Thomas; Lorenzo Ferrer; David Campbell; Wesley Clinton MacOrr (these last two used by Jean and Pierre Laffite respectively); Capt. Hillare (see p. 83 of William Davis' *The Pirates Laffite*); Mortimer Wilson (see *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, Oct., 2006 for two versions of the story of the alleged Wilson alias, taken from Charles W. Hayes' work *History of the Island of Galveston*, Vol. 1, and a 19th C. novella by an unknown author entitled *Laffite or the Baratarian Chief, A Tale Founded on Facts*, New York, 1828.) Lou provided copies of the article that appeared in *The Chronicles* written by Laffite Society Secretary Dorothy Karilanovic.

THE HIX BROTHERS SEARCH FOR LAFFITE CONNECTIONS: Visitors Charles and Cody Hix spoke briefly about their continuing search for genealogical links to Jean Laffite in the New Orleans and Donaldsonville, LA areas.

CHAMP D'ASILE INVESTIGATION: Laffite Society Member at Large and archeologist Sheldon Kindall announced that an investigation of a possible Champ d'Asile site will be held on March 15th.

PROGRAMS: According to Program Chairman, Lou MacBeth, Nautical Archeologist Tom Oertling will speak at the Society's March meeting on Tuesday, March 11.

Members will travel to the Brazoria County Historical Museum on April 14, for the monthly meeting, scheduled on a Monday rather than the usual second Tuesday of the month. Members will prepare program information on *Contemporaries of Laffite* for the May meeting. Editor of Publications, Don C. Marler, is scheduled to give a talk in the spring on his archeological dig in Jerusalem and environs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Thanks extended to Lizette Gaudin (Najarian), George Najarian, Jim Nonus, Pam Gilbert, and Lady Elizabeth Galloway for buffet and beverages, and to Simpson's Galleries for use of their premises as meeting space.

MEETING ADJOURNED: There being no further business of the general meeting of February 12, 2008, the President adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic
Recording/Corresponding Secretary
THE LAFFITE SOCIETY

\\dmk:2/27/2008