

## Wilson's honored by Laffitte Society

Members of the Galveston based Laffitte Society gathered at the Magnolia Ridge Country Club in Liberty to honor Dr. Reginald and Betty Wilson Sat., Sept. 29, 2012.

Laffitte Society President Larry Porter introduced society founder R. Dale Olson who presented the Wilsons with a plaque in recognition of their considerable contribution to the society and to the field of Laffitte scholarship. Olson added the presentation carried the deepest respect and admiration of the members of the society. Dr. and Mrs. Wilson have lived in Dayton since the end of World War II when he was discharged from the Army.

He had met and married Betty, a nurse at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, when he was assigned there as a young doctor.

Dr. Wilson retired after forty years of medical practice in Dayton.

In addition to serving the local area he and Betty traveled for seven years to the Yucatan as medical missionaries to provide care to Mayan natives in Presbyterian Church sponsored jungle clinics.

His love of history and a distant family connection to Jean Laffitte combined with knowledge of the Yucatan made him a natural fit for the Laffitte Society, which formed in 1994.

Dr. Wilson is well known among historians in this area of Texas and Louisiana and his name can be found in several books relating to buccaneers of the Gulf of Mexico and the western Caribbean.

Thirty members from Galveston, Houston and surrounding area attended the luncheon presentation.

Prior to the presentation members of the Society visited the Sam Houston Regional Library and



**Robert L. Schaadt**  
Feature Writer  
&  
Archivist

Research Center.

Darlene Mott, Center Reference Coordinator, shared her knowledge on the Laffitte Collections and the Center's many resources.

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

The Laffitte Society membership is comprised of nearly one hundred history enthusiasts throughout the United States and abroad.

The primary goal of the Laffitte Society is education and proliferation of information concerning the Laffittes and their historical times.

Although established in Galveston, Texas, the Society is not simply a group of connoisseurs and history buffs with a focus on Galveston Island. Active participation of members from various locales is encouraged. Many field trips have been made in Louisiana over the years.

Special events are held in other locations and members whose location does not encourage attendance at monthly meetings may join us at special events.

Others may participate by contributing to the Chronicles, or simply by advising us of their study interest.

The Laffitte Society generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month at The Meridian Towers Retirement Center, 23rd at

Seawall, in Galveston, Texas.

Attendees generally begin to gather for refreshments between 5:45 and 6 p.m., and meetings are called to order at about 6:15 p.m.. Meetings usually close by 8 p.m.

We try to schedule a featured speaker or fun event at many of our meetings. Visitors are welcome to attend.

The Laffitte Society is an organization served by volunteers; it has no staff. The Society receives questions regarding the activities of the Laffittes and usually there is limited opportunity to answer them.

Questions received often require time for research--not simply the time to write an answer.

Therefore, we have saved the questions we have received and now answer them in a Question and Answer (Q & A) format.

Laffitte Society member, Robert Vogel, is one of the most knowledgeable members of the Laffitte Society.

Consequently, we have asked him to take a first cut at answering the questions.

His answers represent his rather cautious and conservative views on the Laffittes and not all members of the Society agree with all his answers.

Some differing views are offered and these are set off in brackets.

The Laffitte Society encourages diversity in views and theories, making it an exciting and viable organization.

You, the questioner, will have to decide on the answer you think is most appropriate.

Thanks to Robert Vogel and those other members who have contributed including William C. "Jack" Davis, Jean L. Epperson, Jeff Modzelewski and R. Dale Olson.



Dr. and Mrs. Reginald Wilson pose with Laffitte Society President Larry Porter, left, and R. Dale Olson, society founder. The Wilsons were honored for their considerable contributions to the society since 1994.

We invite other questions to be added to this Q & A.

Your questions, answers, comments, corrections, additions and suggestions are welcomed. Send them to the editor:

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ed a warehouse in New Orleans to help disperse the goods smuggled by his brother Pierre Laffitte. After the United States government passed the Embargo Act of 1807, the Laffittes moved their operations to an island in Baratara Bay.

By 1810 the Laffittes pur-

ities successfully invaded in 1814 and captured most of Laffitte's fleet.

In return for a pardon, Laffitte helped General Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans against the British in 1815.

The Laffittes became spies for the Spanish during the Mexican War of Independence and moved to Galveston Island, where they developed a pirate colony called Campeche.

Laffitte remained the master of Galveston after his return in September 1817, and made it a center for smuggling and privateering.

When the expedition of Charles Françoise Antoine Lallemandqv arrived in January 1818, the Laffittes plotted to betray the French refugees to Spain.

Laffitte abandoned Galveston early in May 1820 and sailed to Muges Island, off the coast of Yucatan. There he continued his illegal activities until around 1825.

Speculation about his life and death continues among historians.



photos by Robert L. Schaadt  
Darlene Mott, left, holds an artist's image of the famous Gulf Coast pirate Jean Laffitte while Texas State Library and Archives Commissioner Sandra J. Pickett, standing, congratulates Dr. Reginald Wilson for his contributions to the Sam Houston Center.

The Laffitte Chronicles

• Access to past Laffitte Chronicles

• Access to

Laffitte Archives

• Access to Laffitte Yahoo

site for member

correspondence

• Friendly people and

great fellowship

For more information on

membership and dues, visit

<http://www.thelaffittesociety.com>, email [laffittesociety@gmail.com](mailto:laffittesociety@gmail.com) or write to:

The Laffitte Society, P.O.

Box 1325, Galveston, TX

77553-1325.

Jean Laffitte, c1776

-1800s?, was a French

pirate and privateer in the

Gulf of Mexico in the early

19th century.

He and his elder brother,

Pierre, spelled their last

name Laffitte, but English-

language documents of the

time used "Lafitte." The lat-

ter has become the com-

monly seen spelling in the

United States, including for

places named for him.

By 1804-05 Jean operat-



The Laffitte Society Logo

A reproduction of the Jean Laffitte signature originally affixed to the "Le Brave" documents was chosen as part of the logo of the Laffitte Society. This signature is generally considered to be the authentic in that it has been in the custody of the United States government since originally signed by Jean Laffitte in Federal Court in New Orleans. Its originality and provenance is therefore assured. The Society employs the spelling of Laffitte with two "f's" and one "t".

The Laffitte Society Chronicles, January, 1995



Darlene Mott, Reference Service Coordinator of the Sam Houston Center, gives a presentation on the Center's Jean Laffitte Collection to the members of The Laffitte Society based in Galveston that gathered in Liberty Sat., Sept. 29. The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center has one of the largest research collections on Jean and Pierre Laffitte in the United States including Dr. Reginald Wilson's years of research. Mott shared many of the Center's documents with the group.