

# Texas A&M University at Galveston

Jack K. Williams Library

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## Laffite Society

### An Inventory of the Organization Records & Research Files

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- Creator:** Laffite Society
- Title:** Organization Records & Research Files
- Date:** 1976-
- Abstract:** Organized in 1975 as the Laffite Study Group by a group of historians, it reorganized in 1994 as the Laffite Society in Galveston, Texas, as a study and social group researching the lives, descendants and associates of privateer brothers Jean and Pierre Laffite who lived on Galveston Island, 1817-1821.
- The records include the publications of both organizations, membership rosters, programs and copies of presentations, photographs and other materials. In addition, members and historians have contributed research files containing copies of articles and correspondence pertaining to facts and myths about the Laffites. They include information about descendants of the Laffites; friends and associates of their group; significant locales and topics of interest, such as slavery, piracy, privateering; connections in Louisiana, France, Mexico, and South America; and political associations dating from the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson, Napoleon and many others.
- Location:** MC020
- Size:** 6 cubic feet.
- Repository:** Jack K. Williams Library, Archives and Manuscripts, Texas A&M University at Galveston. Phone: 409-740-4560; Email: [LIBRARY@tamug.edu](mailto:LIBRARY@tamug.edu)
- Donor:** The Laffite Society, 2012.

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## HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

First established as the Laffite Study Group in 1975, this non-profit organization grew out of the correspondence of interested historians Jane Lucas DeGrummond, John L. Howells, Sue Thompson and Robert C. Vogel. They planned to publish a series of occasional papers focused on pirates/privateers Jean and Pierre Laffite's role in American history, folklore and literature.

The first installment, *The Life and Times of Jean Laffite*, was published in 1976 with more to follow in succeeding years. Additional publications were added until 1990. The membership, essentially the mailing list for the publications, had grown into an international group. After a few years of inactivity, a new organization grew out of the old. In 1994, The Laffite Society of Galveston formed a board and continued to collect and compile information about the Laffite brothers, Jean and Pierre, their descendants and contemporaries which they publish in the *Laffite Society Chronicles*.

Jean Laffite (ca.1776-ca.1823) and his older brother Pierre Laffite were French pirates and privateers in the Gulf of Mexico in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though historical characters, the facts of their lives were surrounded by myth and legend. Few facts about their birth or arrival in the New World are absolute. "By the fall of 1809 the Laffites had a modest smuggling operation well founded, matching buyers with well-established slave importers. Jean took buyers to Grand Terre to make the sales, while Pierre stayed in New Orleans to handle the Laffites' business affairs there. (Davis, *The Pirates Laffite*, p.51) Jean Laffite proved himself a shrewd patriot during the War of 1812 by helping Andrew Jackson and the United States in the Battle of New Orleans against the British while bargaining for a presidential pardon. Nevertheless, when their criminal activities made them unwelcome in Louisiana, the Laffites moved their operations in 1817 to Galveston, Texas, which they called Campeche. The Spanish government accepted their presence on Galveston Island because they spied for the Spaniards. Meanwhile, the Laffites continued their involvement in smuggling and the slave trade. By 1820, as a result of the Adams-Onis Treaty with Spanish Mexico, the United States "stepped up naval activities aimed at pirates and smugglers in the northern Gulf of Mexico." [Robert C. Vogel] The Navy agreed to let the Laffites gather their belongings and leave peaceably, which they did on May 7, 1820.

Sources:

Robert C. Vogel. *The Laffite Society chronicles*. Vol. V, Number 2, August 1999,  
*The Laffite Society Chronicles*,

Silliam C. Davis. *The Pirates Laffite: The Treacherous World of the Cordairs of the Gulf*. Harcourt, Inc., 2005.

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## Scope and Contents Notes

The Laffite Society records consist of 6 cubic feet of records. The records include four series: 1) Laffite Study Group; 2) The Laffite Society; 3) Photographs and Illustrations, 4) Subject files and 5) Articles and Books. Series 1 and 2 are the organizational records of the two founding organizations including the publications, membership rosters, programs and copies of presentations, photographs and other materials. The Subject Files were compiled and collected by members from various archives, newspapers and other publications, and descendants of the Laffite's and the members of their associates. The files include genealogical information, descriptions of significant locales and topics of interest, such as

slavery, piracy, privateering, connections in France, Mexico, and South America, and political associations including the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson, Napoleon and many others.

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## Arrangement of the Records

- Series 1:** Laffite Study Group, 1974-1992
- Series 2:** The Laffite Society, 1994-
- Series 3:** Research Files: Topical
- Series 4:** Research Files: Published Material
- Series 5:** Photographs and Illustrations

## Description of the Collection

### Series 1: Laffite Study Group, 1975-1992

#### Box/Fd.

Box 1

#### History

“The Laffite Study Group, 1975-1980,” an article by Robert C. Vogel, published in . . .

#### **Publications: *The Life and Times of Jean Laffite***

For full-text digital version of this journal enter this address on the Internet:

<http://journals.tdl.org/ltjl/index.php/ltjl>

Volume I, Number 1	January, 1976
Volume I, Number 2	July, 1976
[Volume 1], Number 3	December 1976 [printed 1977]
LTJL Reprints No.1	March, 1979
Number VI	June, 1982
Volume IX, Number 4	Winter 1989
Volume XII, Number 1	Spring 1992

#### **Publications: The Laffite Study Group Newsletter**

For full-text digital version of this journal enter this address on the Internet:

<http://journals.tdl.org/lsgnews/index.php/lsgnews>

Vol. 1, No. 3	Spring, 1981
Vol. II, No. 1	Spring 1982
Vol. II, No. 2	Summer-Fall 1982
Vol. IV, No. 1	Spring 1984
Vol. V, No. 2	Summer 1985
Vol. V, No. 3-4	Fall-Winter 1985
Vol. VI, No. 1	Spring 1986
Vol. VI, No. 2	Summer 1986
Vol. VI, No. 6	Fall 1986
Vol. VI, No. 4	Winter 1986
Vol. VII, No. 1	Spring 1987
Vol. VII, No. 2	Summer 1987
Vol. VII, No. 3	Fall 1987

Vol. VII, No. 4	Winter 1987
Vol. VIII, No. 1	Spring 1988
Vol. VIII, No. 2	Summer 1988
Vol. VIII, Nos. 3-4	Fall-Winter 1988
Vol. IX, No. 2	Summer 1989
Vol. IX, No. 3	Fall 1989
Vol. IX, No. 4	Winter 1989
Vol. X, No. 1	Spring 1990

Publications: Olson Inventory of Laffite Study Group Publications, 26 Feb. 1996.

## **Series 2: The Laffite Society, 1995-**

### **Box 1**

#### **Board of Director's**

Officers

Minutes of the Laffite Society, Misc. (Published in *Chronicles*)

#### **Membership**

Membership Forms

Membership List, 2007

Founding Officers, 1994

#### **Presentations and Events**

Programs: Miscellaneous

Speaker: William Simpson, "Jean Laffite Collection", Aug 12, 1997  
[CASSETTE TAPE], with edited account of the talk by Don C. Marler.

Speaker: Reginald Wilson, "Jean and Emma Laffite's Descendants," 1999

Speaker: Jean L. Epperson, "Jean Laffite and the Schooner Pegasus,"  
March 13, 2000

Speaker: Robert C. Vogel, "1818 Hurricane," Sept./12/2000 [CASSETTE TAPE]

Speaker: Jim Nonus re: Letters to *The Rhode Island American* about  
British attack, 1815, Dec. 11, 2005

Speaker: John Howell, "Verification of Jean Laffite's Journal," no date.  
[CASSETTE TAPE]

Speaker: Jean L. Epperson, "Testimony of Three Escaped Prisoners from  
Galveston in 1818," no date.

Speaker: Pam Keys, [Researching] Laffite." 4/9/2002

Program: Annual Banquets

Anthology: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary correspondence.

Louisiana Historical Association, annual conference.

**Member Files, etc.**

Clegg, Sam

Davis, William C. "Jack"

Epperson, Jean (2 flds)

Fay, Stanley K. (*Beacon-News* historical news editor) Obituary; letter to J.  
Frank Dobie, May 12, 1930 (copy that is fading-needs transcription)

Fretz, Gary

Grunewald, Pamela

Hingley, Cheryl (author of fiction *Siren*, based on Jean Laffite and Anne  
Bohner)

Howells, John

Klinger, Jerry (re: book *Jews on the Frontier*- mentions Jean Laffite)

Marler, Don

Modzelewski, Jeff & Kathy

Olson, Dale

Pettus, David

Power, Dennis

Pullen, W. E. (to Congressman Martin Dies)

Keyes, Pam

Rasche, Richard R.- obituary

Santos, Richard

Stine, Peter (Archivist, Anahuac Library) re: Thomas Mexican Thomas

Villar, Cindy (novelist)

Vogel, Robert

Wilson, Reginald

Zapalac, Wil

### **Tours**

Grand Isle, Grand Terre, New Orleans, May 1995

1996: "An Evening in Plantation Country, June 1996

Wetlands Acadian Culture Center, **no date**

### **Photographs and Illustrations**

This includes organization photographs of events and tours, photocopies of illustrations of the Laffite brothers and others.

## **Box 2**

### **Publications: *The Laffite Society Chronicles***

The Laffite Society Chronicles are available full text on the  
<http://journals.tdl.org/laffitesc/index.php/laffitesc>

Volume I, Number 2, July 1995- Current

## **Series 3: Photographs and Artwork**

### **Box 2**

## **Series 4: Research Files: Subjects**

*The Subject files are arranged by a broad topics indicated by the headings below. The individual files are arranged alphabetically within the broad topic. The files contain emails, letters, articles and news clippings.*

**Box 3-4 & 6**

### **About the Laffites**

### **Primary Sources**

### **Laffite Descendants**

### **Friends and Associates**

### **General Pirate Information**

### **Places associated with the Laffites**

### **The Journal of Jean Laffite**

### **Bibliographies**

## **Series 5: Research Files: Publications**

*Primarily articles arranged alphabetically by the surname of the author. Also includes photocopies of books and book chapters.*

**Box 5**

Arthur, Stanley Clisby, *Jean Laffite, Gentleman Rover. Harmanson: New Orleans, 1952.*

Avila, Lillian Paz. "Laffite: A History in Dzoila, de Bravo." *Unicorn* (a scientific and cultural supplement to the Yucatan newspaper *That's Why!*) Year 11, No. 564, on Sunday, February 24, 2002.

Baird, Robert Bruce, "Morgan, Lafitte and Merovingians," *DailyNewArticles.com*, June 17, 2006

Barker, Eugene C., "The African Slave Trade in Texas," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*.. October 1902. Vol. VI, no. 2, p. 145-158

Beluche Mora, Isidro A., "Privateers of Cartagena," *The Louisiana Historical Society*, Vol. XXXIX, no. 1, Jan. 1956. Translated by Jane Lucas De Grummond.

*Block, W.T.*

"The Legacy of Jean Lafitte in Southwest Louisiana" [Re: Napoleon's plans to come to the U.S. and J. Laffite assistance.]

"A Tale of Jean Baptiste's Brass Cannon"

"A Buccaneer Family in Spanish East Texas: A biographical Sketch of Captain James and Mary Sabinal Campbell. Beaumont: *The Texas Gulf Historical Society*, 1991. Vol. XXVII, No. 1, 1991.

" 'Crazy Ben' Dollivar's Secret Gold Cache," [Laffite associates]

"A Buccaneer Household in Galveston: Capt. Jim and Mary Sabinal Campbell." [

"The Legend of John Fletcher's Buried Treasure." [Reference to Laffite associates living in the N.2.

Butler, Joseph T., Jr. *The Lafitte Skiff: Workboat of the Bayou Country*. Center for Traditional Louisiana Boatbuilding. Nicholls State University: Thibodaux, LA, 1985.

Carroll, Lewis. *The Treasures of Galveston Bay*. Texian Press, Waco, 1977.

Delery, Simone de la Souchere. "The Tremoulet Hotel," *Napoleon's Soldiers in America*. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972

Dobie, J. Frank, "Laffite & Pirate Booty," *Coronado's Children*, Chapter XVIII, p 306-332. New York: The Literary Guild of America, 1931.

Faye, Stanley, "Great Stroke of Pierre Laffite," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol 23, No. 3, July 1940, p. 733-826.

Faye, Stanley, "Types of Privateer Vessels, Their Armament and Flags, in the Gulf of Mexico," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January, 1940.

Faye, Stanley, "Privateers of Guadeloupe and Their Establishment in Baratavia," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April, 1940.

Faye, Stanley, "Privateersmen of the Gulf and Their Prizes," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol 22.

Gayarre, Charles, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte: The Famous Smugglers of Louisiana*, Austin: Pemberton Press.



Gayarre, Charles. *The Story of Jean and Pierre Lafitte: The Pirate-Patriots. Formerly, "Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte: The Famous Smugglers of Louisiana, 1809-1814.* Published by The Louisiana State Museum.

Hamilton, Charles. *Great Forgers and Famous Fakes.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1980. Chapter 8, "The Scion of a Pirate," by John Laffite. [Refers to the Journal of Jean Lafitte and John Laflin]

Hayes, Charles. *History of the Island and the City of Galveston.* Cincinnati: 1879. Chapter IV: Jean Lafitte.

Howells, John, "Jean Lafitte's buccaneers at New Orleans."

Klier, Betje Black, "Champ D'Asile, Texas." *The French in Texas, edited by Francois Lagarde.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

*Le Plongeon, Alice D. Here and There in Yucatan: Miscellanies. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1886.*

Luttig, John C., "The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813."?? Expedition led by Manuel Lisa of the Missouri Fur Company.

Lewis, Carroll. *The Treasures of Galveston Bay.* Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1977.

Lewisohn, Florence. *What So Proudly We Hail: The Danish West Indies and the American Revolution.* The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of the Virgin Islands, 1975.

Maygarden, Benjamin D., "The Silent Legacy of the Laffite's Private Lives," [Paper] Presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of The Louisiana Historical Association, March 18, 2005, Lafayette, Louisiana.

Olson, R. Dale, "French Pirates and Privateers in Texas," Chapter 5 in *The French in Texas.* Edited by editor Francois LaGarde. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

Ramsdell, Charles, Jr., "Why Jean Lafitte Became a Pirate," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 43 No. 4, April 1940, pp. 465-471.

Reeves, Sally, "Cruising Contractual Water: Searching for Laffite in the Records of the New Orleans Notarial Archives," *Provenance*, Vol. XVI, 1998, p. 1.

Robbins, Fred. "The Origin and Development of the African Slave Trade in Galveston, Texas, and Surrounding Areas From 1816-1836." *East Texas Historical Journal*, Vol. IX, no. 11, 1971.

Romero, Pablo Bush, "Second Great Expedition: Operation Laffite," *Under the Waters of Mexico*. New York: Carlton Press, Inc., 1964.

Schaadt, Robert L., "The Journal of Jean Laffite: Its History and Controversy," *Provenance*, Vol. XVI, 1998.

Schoonover, Franke E. "In the Haunts of Jean Lafite," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, December 1911

Smith, Richard Penn. , or, The Baratarian Chief: A Tale: Founded on Facts. Auburn: Oliphant & Skinner Printers, 1834. [fictional].

U.S. Magazine & Democratic Review, "The Cruise of the Enterprise: A Day with Laffite," Vol. VI, no. XIX, July 1839. Note on article copy: "This article considered 'unreliable'."

Vogel, Robert C., "Jean Laffite, the Baratarians, and the Battle of New Orleans: A Reappraisal," *Louisiana History*, no date.

Vogel, Robert C., "Paul Bouet Laffitte: A Borderlands Life," *East Texas Historical Society*, Volume XLI, Number 1, 2003, p. 15-27.

Warren, Harris Gaylord, "Documents Relating to the Establishment of Privateers at Galveston, 1816-1817," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4, October, 1938.

Wheeler, Richard, "Jean Laffite," *In Pirate Waters*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969. Chapter 4, p.50-62.

Wilson, Earl J. *The Mexican Caribbean: Twenty Years of Underwater Exploration*. Smithtown, New York: Exposition Press, \_\_\_\_date? [CEDAM erected this tombstone over the grave of pirate Jean Lafitte. . ."] See photographs.

Wilson, Reginald Wilson. *The Laffite Society Chronicles*. Printed and bound as one of the Chronicles without volume or dates. April 2010. A compilation of Wilson's articles previously published in the *Laffite Society Chronicles*.

Faye, Stanley. Privateers of the Gulf (unpublished manuscript)

**Oversize folders    Box 6**