

The Treasure of Lafitte

On

Galveston Island

From the Original Articles

By Dr. Joseph Osterman Dyer

*With Historical Assessments and
Location Analysis*

By



Houston

August 2020

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

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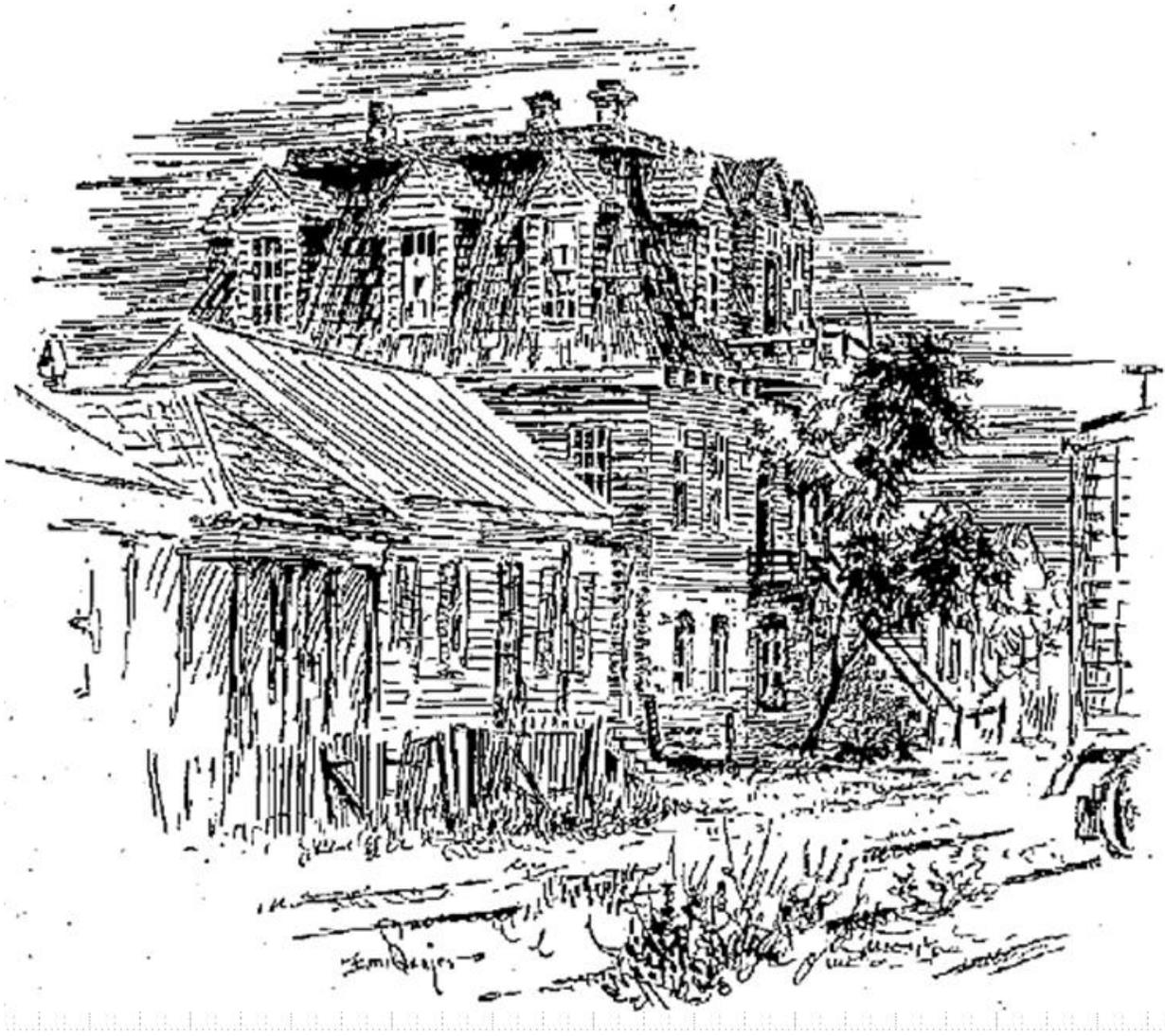
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The House with the Twelve Gables

Ave. A (Water Street)

Emil Bunjes - 1936

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INTRODUCTION

In 1874 a lone rider on horseback arrived in Galveston to visit his wealthy relatives. Not wishing to sponge on these rich relatives, the young man boarded a room from a clerk at the customhouse, where he met and befriended an old French Canadian man by the name of LaCassinier. In that instance the young man entered the dawn of a new singular history, setting foot on a unique journey which was to be pursued his entire life. The old gentleman spoke but little English, the young man having acted as interpreter on several occasions, gained the old man's confidence. LaCassinier had returned one last time to the island to recover the treasure that he and four others had buried in 1819 mid way down the island at the "Three Trees", not his treasure, but the treasure cache buried through the instructions of the communes leader, the pirate (or privateer) Jean Lafitte.

The young man returned to Galveston Island in 1881 with the earned title of *Doctor* Joseph Oysterman Dyer, this after graduating in medicine from the Sheffield Scientific School, later known as Yale, to set up residence and open up a medical practice. Shortly after arriving Dr. Dyer met the acquaintance of a man he referred to as Nicholas "the Greek", never providing a last name in the numerous articles published in the Galveston Daily News. Nicholas *confirmed* LaCassiniers tale, as he was part of the small band and the owner of the Felucca that sailed some 13 miles down the island in 1819. The small contingent of select confidants with a Karankawa guide maneuvered into an inlet from the bay with 3 brass bound kegs of silver "specie", and buried these on a ridge near the location of three small oaks, the only "marker trees" in the vicinity. Nicholas provided a charcoal sketched chart to Dr. Dyer in the early 1880's which was drawn in 1820 shortly after Lafitte and his trusted men sailed away from the island to escape a planned mutiny, the story related by Nicholas.

Lafitte's ships sailed for the Yucatan in May of 1820, where they remained until 1825, when Lafitte died of yellow fever. Stranded on

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the Yucatan until 1842, LaCassinier and Nicholas the Greek returned with Moore's navy back to a Galveston which had little in common to the one departed in 1820. All but a few in Lafitte's commune and those who stayed on to serve under General Long were gone, the shorelines of Galveston disturbed by the hurricanes of 1823 and 1837, the 1823 hurricane wiping out any trace of the three young marker trees, therefore removing any hope of finding the buried cache.

In the early 1880's, Dr. Dyer dug for the Lafitte cache uncovering his own undiscovered treasure, a unique and handsome collection of pottery and other antiquities left behind by the Karankawa Indians, which were donated to the Rosenberg Library in the 1920's and later placed on prominent display, where they remain until this day.

Dr. Dyer was very coy in his published writings in regards to the location of the buried cache, he wished no harm to anyone or the environment, and ensured no specifics were ever *intentionally* published that would guide the eager treasure seekers to the location. He wrote numerous articles about the early history of Galveston including Lafitte and members of the commune, touching on the treasure at various "instances" in which this writer captured and "cataloged" along with the entirety of his 290 published news articles throughout his writing career.

The veracity of any valued treasure story relies on the *integrity of the source*. Dr. Dyer was not only a physician, but a life-long historian, surviving the great fire of 1885, the devastating hurricane of 1900, and direct witness to the ravages of World War I and the toll it took on the local community. He wrote prolifically in the early 1920's to inspire his readers, capturing their attention through a wide variety of articles, some included his prominent family members Isadore Dyer and Joseph Osterman. A plethora of other articles covered almost every subject imaginable from the Civil War, health and disease, religion, Galveston history, to how the Poinsettia was named. He was the islands local anthropologist and archeologist,

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investigating, cataloging, and publishing articles on antiquities and relics found on the island.

Dr. Dyer believed that one should dress everyday like they were in a parade, and was a stickler for details, spending months verifying and corroborating details, he perused diligently every review copy sent by the Galveston Daily News which was typed from his handwritten articles, some of his original handwritten copies are still on file with the Rosenberg Library GTHC.

Romanticizing some stories into a wonderful readers spellbinding tale, Dr. Dyer held the line on true history, his integrity was unquestioned by all. He authorized a series on the Corrected and Epitomized History of Texas, reconciling previous published errors. It has been said that one has truly made it when they make front page news, Dr. Dyers 1925 front page photo and obituary covered pages, the funeral at his home formed a line stretching around the block, and took hours for all to visit and view his open casket. He often addressed his audience as "dear" reader, and he became in fact the same to them.

Months prior to his death, Dr. Dyer became ill, now convalescing in full retirement he began writing a book on Lafitte which he reported would "raise the eyebrows" of the reader, he unfortunately never finished this work. Passing away in 1925 at the age of 71, he left an indelible legacy immortalized in the folds of a repository of newspapers, now to be brought forth again for a modern age of readers to enjoy his ageless tales.

But for young and old, the story sought around the world in every language, is the true tale of a pirates treasure, one that has the "veracity" hence corroborated basis that it actually exists and can be recovered for all to witness.

This writer has endured a 15 year span of research and field investigations to rationalize Dr. Dyers published articles of Lafitte content, including key historical chronologies, topographical effects from of the history of hurricanes, the cataloguing, scaling and

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overlay of historical maps, in depth reviews of published archeological investigations, the entirety of the Dyer holdings at the Rosenberg Galveston & Texas History Center, collective reviews of the publishing's of the Lafitte Society, the detailed related aspects of Galveston history, and a myriad of other subjects and subject matter including the study of *Quercus Virginiana*, the scientific name for Live Oak trees.

But there is an ultimate purpose, hence an ultimate end game for the thousands of hours expended.

Galveston Island has long been referred to romantically in lore and tale as "Treasure Island".

It is high time this became a reality.



August, 2020



The Rights of History

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1.0 Determine the Basis For Plausibility

Achieving the pure truth of anything is a lofty goal, each of four witnesses who report an accident believe they have the pure truth, those who correlate their reports realize that this is not the case as each of the content may and often do differ. They must then determine what is plausible, hence to determine the most probable or accurate account, amalgamating the information.

There are several factors to weigh plausibility in this case:

- That Laffite had three kegs of silver specie in which he chose to send down the island for temporary repository away from the local community of very interested individuals of questionable character, and who lived their life to plunder Spanish ships in the Gulf of Mexico
- Conclusions regarding the burial location

When assessing historical investigations of this type there is a Tiered System, hence Tier Zero are the incumbents, Tier One are those that interface to the incumbents, hence direct witnesses, and Tier Two, everyone else. The closer the engagement with Tier One the better the reporting with the fewer of errors introduced.

The same applies in the matter of the *Twin Sisters Cannon*, and the reporting of Dr. Henry North Graves representing a very rare Tier One incumbent reporting on his (and others) involvement in the rescue and subsequent burial of the cannon in Harrisburg at the end of the Civil War, and one in which this writer has location resolved over a decade to a highly plausible degree.

Dr. Dyer then is a Tier One direct witness who engaged with two separate Tier Zero incumbents, one in 1874, the other in 1881, the second corroborating the first seven years later and through no interaction with the first.

This is rare in history, for a Tier One individual to relate their innermost, covert, and highly privileged involvement in what would

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seem by many as complicit involvement in a caper of "pirated" goods of value. It does not exist in the realms of "oft told tales" for Jesse James, Al Capone, Dutch Schultz, Dillinger and so many other "buried loot" or "treasure cache" stories provided at the hands of *embellished* story tellers.

No, what we have presented by Dr. Dyer is quite unique, a man of integrity who chooses to bring this foreword but treading on the limits of his knowledge such that the story can be told with guided truths, but not to the degree that the specificity will yield harm to others or the environment in an individual's quest to uncover the exact whereabouts of the treasure.

This is a fine line indeed.

What we get "first hand" is the story related in 1922 of the witnessed reports from 1874 and 1881 of an event that occurred in 1819. Today we think of the early 1920's as almost a century ago, but Dyer reported this as *current news*, hence this was not a browned letter discovered in a dusty old trunk up in the attic a hundred years after the fact. This in effect is what Dyer's reporting in 1922 represented from the act occurring in 1819, hence his direct knowledge of the events related by the incumbents from an act occurring one hundred years prior.

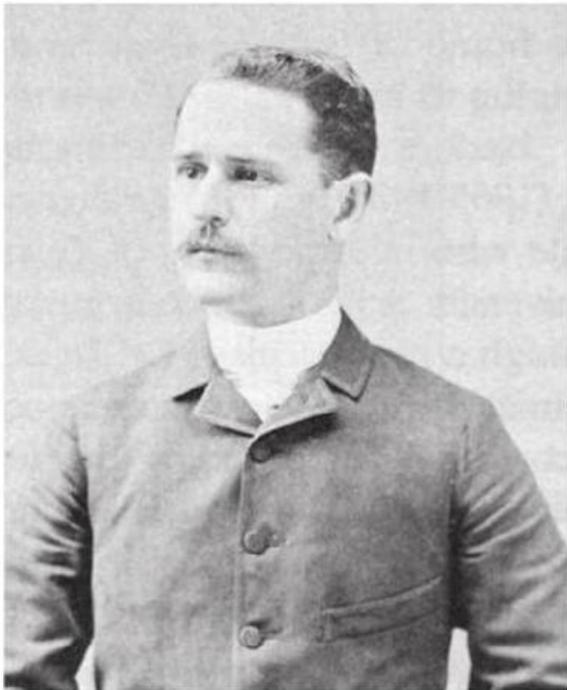
When I say unique, it is incredibly unique, unequalled and separately identifiable from the vast majority of all "treasure tales" originating from around the world, this one stands on its own merit, its own environment, by someone who did not scribe just this singular tale. Dr. Dyer originated hundreds of non-fiction stories which covered the gamut from religion, anthropology, health and medicine, war, family, the origination of customs, the in depth study of Native American cultures, the History of Galveston including separately and specifically the History of the Galveston Artillery Company, to name a few categories. Some of these were published in short book form, of which this writer has several original copies.

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This is the crowning difference with Dr. Dyer in determining plausibility, the plausibility of any story resides on the *integrity of the source*, corroboration of some facts can be extremely difficult otherwise, for most original incumbents are rarely in a position to "tell a tale". Where in the world does a plausible treasure story originate from such a source who directly interviewed two of the "trusted men" who buried the treasure, one of which left him the original crude chart?

Such is the situation we find ourselves when embracing the two main articles published by Dr. Dyer in May and October of 1922 regarding the highly coveted and sought after *Treasure of Lafitte*, published just four years after the Armistice Agreement which ended WWI in 1918, and seven years ahead of the great depression of 1929.

I have added footnotes and comments to the articles for additional clarity and veracity, and have also included historical and location analysis, with several areas redacted for this version.



*Dr. Joseph Osterman Dyer, Galveston physician and historian.
Photo: Pach Bros., New York; courtesy of Richard Torbert.*



*Dr. Dyer photo used for the
Galveston News in the 1920's*

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Laffite A Schemer As Well As an Executive

Story of How He Fooled Mutinous Privateersman of Commune Is Narrated

GDN May 14, 1922

J.O. Dyer M.D.

The little thoughtlessness of life cause sequent happenings, or lead up to entirely different events. A celebrated comedian, when a youth, fell and dished his nose. This accident gave him a somewhat comical expression, which ended his proposed career as a minister of the gospel.¹

The writer in 1874 was a poor but very independent lad, who refused to sponge on his rich relatives in Galveston.² He therefore obtained a job and rented a room from Mr. Wolfe, a marine clerk in the customhouse, who lived in the extreme east end of the city. In this house also roomed an aged Frenchman, a visitor from Quebec. This gentleman spoke but little English and gave his name as **Lacassinier**. The writer having acted on several occasions as interpreter for him gained the old man's confidence, and not only learned his story, but some others.³

Lacassinier came first to Galveston Island on Christmas Day in the year 1818. He was a French Canadian sailor, who having been shipwrecked in the Caribbean Sea, was picked up by a Spanish merchant vessel. When the Spanish ship a few months later was captured by a cruiser of the Laffite commune, the adventurous young Frenchman determined to become a buccaneer and as stated, arrived at the rendezvous camp on Saint Louis (later Galveston) Island.²¹

Participate in Battle.

Lacassinier's first cruise was eventful. He was on a small rakish schooner called the Ragueur (Spitfire). Which on the 5th day of February, 1819, overhauled, about fifty miles from Merida, a port of Yucatan, a vessel about twice her size. It was early morning and a slight mist hung over the water, when the commander of the Ragueur sent a shot over the bow of the Spaniard and ordered the blue pennant to be hoisted (the emblem of the commune).

The noise of the discharge of the cannon had barely died away, when some tarpaulins on the deck of the supposed merchantman fell away. Scores of men were seen along broadsides of shotted guns, and in a few minutes the privateersman staggered as it received a shower of heavy shot.

The Laffite cruiser, however, was not seriously injured, and after returning the fire edged away from the enemy, and was soon out of range. The Spaniard proved to be a corvette of war, and for some reason failed to pursue. Lacassinier was badly wounded by a wood splinter, and one of his legs was crippled as the result of the wound.

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Becomes Camp Supercargo.

The sailor was assigned to land duty as the result of his disability. He was appointed as one of the camp supercargoes, and his duties were to keep records of the merchandise brought in by the cruisers.

He also superintended the cargoes that were entrusted to the captains of the three small trading schooners of the commune that went up the rivers of Texas and of Western Louisiana, to dispose of the merchandise to settlers or to the natives.

Lacassinier in 1874 still had in his possession a document bearing a crude seal of the commune (two crossed anchors impressed on red wax)⁴. In this paper he was mentioned as the “subrecargue negociant,” a position held before the storm of 1818 by Jao de La Porta, a Portuguese Jew (known in camp and later to Brazoria colonists as Blanco⁵).

The crippled Frenchman performed his duties so faithfully that he became one of the camp’s “les sur fideles,” or trusted men. The “sur fideles” were secret service men, and to them the communal officers looked to the safeguarding of the communal treasures.

Whenever specie was sent to New Orleans a strong guard of the trustees accompanied the shipment. Whenever the share of the officers had to be buried in secret places the faithful ones were on hand to keep away the inquisitive, or the covetous adventurers of the camp.

It was the secret service men of the commune that rallied to the aid of the officers early in the month of May, 1820, and enabled them to make a safe getaway, when the camp was sizzling in the heat of mutiny⁶.

Renders Service to History.

Lacassinier rendered a service to history when he influenced the mind of a youth with his tales of the Laffite commune, of the “sauvages cannibals” (man eating savages), and of Indian tribes on the littoral of the Gulf of Mexico. The writer wrote down these stories, and with the superconfidence that youth entertains for seniors, believed in them⁷.

Three years later these stories prompted a second and extended visit to Texas, and six months of research work and travel in the state revealed that the Frenchman was “sur fidele” and truthful.⁸

In 1881, when the writer located in Galveston permanently, there were still a number of Laffite’s men in Galveston and in its vicinity⁹. Also two survived who had married female members of the Karankawai and Cocowai clans, located a century before near Galveston Bay.¹⁰

One of these was an aged Greek sailor (Nicholas)²⁰ who in 1817 joined the Jupiter at Savannah and came with Laffite to Saint Louis Island. He was then 17 years old, remained as

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captain of one of the trading schooners with the Laffite commune until it was dissolved. Captain Nicholas went with Jean Laffite to Yucatan in 1820, and was present when he died in 1826 at Sinal¹¹. In 1842 the Greek returned to Galveston Island, having joined Commodore Moore's naval forces (of the Republic of Texas) in Yucatan waters.²²

For fifty years Captain Nicholas supplied Galveston with fish and charcoal. He owned the charcoal boat Venus, lost in the storm of 1875, and was known as John Bully. The second Venus was sold to a Greek, known also as John Bully, after the first owner retired from business on his 90th birthday. Captain Nicholas was lost in the bay in the 1900 storm, a few days before his reaching the concentration mark.¹²

Confirms Lacassinier's Tales.

The old Greek sailor not only confirmed the tales of Lacassinier, but had added other items of interest. When the crippled Frenchman in 1819 was supervisor of the trading vessels of the commune, the Greek commanded one of the small schooners, called the Arabelle. With his Karankawai wife as interpreter the Greek traded mostly with tribes on the Guadeloupe, Colorado, Brazos and Trinity rivers.

It was learned that in 1819 the Greek and the crippled Frenchman formed part of a company that **buried some specie** down the island at a location known as "trois chenes," or three oaks.

Lacassinier and the Greek had **on a number of occasions** tried to **locate the treasure** by following directions on a **crude chart** owned by the Frenchman, who in 1874 paid the last visit to the island, and left the **chart with the Greek, and it is now in the writer's possession.** The storm of 1823¹⁸ *defaced the landmarks and swept away the three oaks.*²⁴

Nature in order in order to mock greedy fortune seekers, has allowed several successive oaks to spring up in groups of three, and known as the "three trees."

This cache has not been located as far as is known; but three others (two on the island) were recovered, and the fifth also was lost when the 1823 storm swept away the little isle of Campeachy. *When Laffite sailed away with his trusty officers and men, they carried with them the little treasure, or less than one-half of the savings of the officers, hidden in caches.*¹³

A Year of Prosperity.

The year 1819 was a year of remarkable prosperity for the Laffite commune. One would suppose that the mine owners of Mexico, after the severe losses they sustained by the Baratarian cruisers during the four years preceding the battle of New Orleans, would have ceased mining operations. Again, during the years 1816, 1817 and part of 1818 the buccaneer camps of Aury and of Laffite exacted heavy tolls. Yet the cost of mining was comparatively small and the profits very great, so that the mine owners sent out specie despite the large number of vessels that were captured. However, there was a decided change both in the method of shipment and the amount of silver shipped. It was found to be the more expedient to

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use only small fast sailing craft, and the, ratio of captures to the number of vessels employed was lessened.

Whereas formerly argostics of large tonnage carried \$100,000 of specie¹⁹, by the new method five smaller vessels carried the same amount. The losses were thus cut down about 50 per cent or more. A schooner had to have a special strong room built in the center of the vessel, for even \$20,000 in silver was heavy enough to interfere with the proper sailing of a small ship, unless properly stowed. (The weight was about five tons, as silver was much depreciated in Mexico a century ago.)

The buccaneer officers made it a practice to relieve specie vessels of their silver only, and sent them back to Mexican ports so as to keep up the traffic lest there should have been a shortage of ships.

With the success of the Mexican revolutionary movement against Spain, Spanish mine owners closed down. The peons who furnished the cheap labor also joined the ranks of the revolutionists.

Jean Laffite Schemes.

Early in 1820 the astute Laffite recognized that the buccaneer business was nearing its end. The men were getting mutinous, and were closely watching the officers, who were trying to empty their caches so as to get away with their savings. The rank and file of the privateersmen usually gambled away the dividends they received from the communal admiralty court, so that when hard times arrived many were without money.

Students of history have taken it for granted that Laffite surrendered to the United States his camp on Grand Terre Island because of fear and respect of its power. Yet for four years he defied the United States, and only submitted when he felt it to be to his interest to do so.

Spain had diverted her trade to the Pacific; English fleets hovered off the shores of the United States. Laffite had refused to side with England, hence would have had to reckon with British cruisers. Five hundred Haiti refugees had joined the Baratania camp, and were ugly and mutinous. Laffite was ready to quit and undoubtedly made an arrangement with Commodore Patterson.

There were only a few revenue cutters, gunboats and one old war vessel in Southern waters in 1814. The British landed on the southern coasts whenever they pleased, for the United States navy was guarding northern ports.

When Commodore Patterson, with his weak little flotilla, aided ninety soldiers, attacked the Baratarians, did they win by force? The Baratarians numbered several thousand, and had several powerful cruisers, and the camp was protected by the heavy siege guns that a few months later won the battle of New Orleans. Laffite and his men would not have aided General Jackson had force really been used. Laffite schemed and worked himself out of a dilemma.¹⁴

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History Repeats.

When the end was approaching for the buccaneer camp on Saint Louis Island, Laffite made history repeat itself, for he again schemed. Desirous for saving some of his profits, Laffite again appealed to the United States, this time to Collector Chew at New Orleans. Again there must have been some understanding, and again the United States had no war vessels in the gulf except the revenue cutter Lynx and a small brig, the Enterprise, Collector Chew sent the enterprise, and Laffite and his officers made arrangements to evacuate the island.

The privateersmen scoffed at the idea of surrendering to the little Enterprise, and Laffite, despairing of getting sufficient force from the United States to enable him to get away safely, had to do some more scheming.

The commune owned a number of cruisers and much merchandise for which there was no immediate market. He proposed to the men that by the 1st of May, 1820, there should be an equitable division of vessels and other property.

A lucky diversion aided Laffite at this time, General John Young²³, who had desired to establish an empire in Texas, and who had established trading posts on some of the principal rivers, had been defeated by Spanish forces and the survivors of his expedition had fled down the Trinity River and established themselves at Bolivar Peninsula. Many of the dissatisfied buccaneers joined the new camp across the bay.

Laffite had steadily refused to aid General Young, and while the men were deserting and going over to him, the commune had not recognized the deserters, who clamored for their share of the communal property.

In April a small schooner had arrived with a cargo of ammunition and some barrels of rum. The little ship also carried a large number of men, who claimed that they were rescued from an Island on which their ship had been wrecked. As a matter of fact they were sailors who had been hired by Laffite's financial agent and sent at his request. There were forty picked men commanded by Captain Cochran, and these were promised a large bonus if they strictly obeyed orders. That night, after the landing of the new men from New Orleans a feast was tendered to them, as they promised to furnish the liquor.

Most of the buccaneers were dead drunk when, in the early morn of the next day, Captain Cochran, with forty men, and Lieutenant Bequin with some of the officers and a score or more of the "sur fideles" visited each cruiser in the harbor, spiked the guns of all of them excepting the Pride¹⁵ (the most serviceable) and removed the ammunition. All of the ammunition in the ships that in the arsenal and the supply that Captain Cochran bought were all placed into the hold of the flagship, which was also provisioned. Two parties of the secret service also brought on board the *valuable hidden in two of these caches* close to the camp. There were three other caches miles away from the camp.¹⁶ These were to be taken up at a later date, when there would be less danger from mutinous or adventurous men. (Young's men were without food, weapons or clothes.)

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A Surprise.

Next day a surprise awaited the drunken mutineers, for the pride had been worked in close to shore, and commanded the camp with her guns.

For two weeks Laffite superintended the division of merchandise, giving the cowed mutineers their share, as he had promised. The cruisers were dismantled, the arsenal and navy yard were burned, and precautions taken that no piratical establishment could spring up from the leavings of the commune. Laffite had promised to evacuate the camp, and he kept his word. Moreover, he did not trust General Young, whose ambitions warped his judgment, and who likewise was influenced too easily by his men.

When the Pride sailed out of the harbor of Galveston she carried about a hundred men that were loyal to the commune. All of these were landed at Merida and disposed of their shares of merchandise, business, and the Greek sailor, Lacassinier and Lieutenant Beguin remained with him until his death. He paid his debts in Charleston and Savannah, and bought a small vessel that traded with South America, and which foundered on the second trip. A tame ending of an exciting life- peddling merchandise in Yucatan for five years, and succumbing to yellow fever at Sisal in 1826.¹⁷

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Footnotes and References

- 1) A brief glimpse at the man himself and his history, for he rarely wrote about his life. .
- 2) Isadore and Amelia (Lewis) Dyer and Joseph Osterman. By 1874, Isadore Dyer was President of the Union and Marine Fire Insurance Company, past member of the Board of Aldermans, ex Commissioner of the County Court, Director of the Galveston Wharf Company, Director of the National Bank of Texas, and was one of the original Directors of the Galveston, Houston, and Henderson railway, amongst many other successful positions and pursuits. See also Hayes, History of Galveston.
- 3) This interview differentiated Dyer with all other writers of Lafitte history. While interviews with Campbell, Roach, Churchill, Cronea, etc. revealed some “related facts”, none were delivered from those “inside” Lafitte’s trust, or so comprehensive.
- 4) Supposedly part of the missing Dyer Archives. Lacassinier also sketched for Dyer Lafitte’s Mansion/Fort, and drew headshots of Lafitte and 3 of his men (See *Jean Lafitte, Buccaneer, Had Most Colorful Career*, Sept. 19, 1926. (released posthumously). The Sketch of Lafitte’s mansion was noted in the Dyer collection See GDN March 13, 1922, (two months prior to this article) and is also part of the missing archives.
- 5) Dyer owned the original copy for Jao De La Porta designing him as “subrecargo”, and signed by Lafitte, See *Jean Lafitte, Buccaneer, Had Most Colorful Career*, Sept. 19, 1926.
- 6) Dyer’s consistent stand on the true, not lauded, cause for departure of Lafitte.
- 7) Dyer had visited briefly to the island, and returned to complete his medical instruction.
- 8) This would have been 1877-1878. As with every fact, every article, Dyer was a consummate researcher, and validated to the degree required the “facts” he was presented with. This included Debow, Yoakum, etc. That Dyer was able to confirm the activities of Lacassinier was no slight miracle in itself, no doubt aided by his uncle (Isadore), and connections with Geershom Kersheedt in New Orleans, who had documented the stories of Jao De La Porta, who was with Lafitte and played a key role in his operation.
- 9) Charles Cronea (who died at high Island in 1896), and Nicholas the Greek (died in 1900), etc.
- 10) One was Nicholas the Greek, who left with Lafitte in 1820, but could not find his Karankawa wife in 1842 when he returned to Galveston Isle. The Karankawa were virtually wiped out by Stephen F Austin’s Colony in 1825.
- 11) Dyer’s unwavering position, gained directly from interviews with both Lacassinier and Nicholas that Lafitte died in 1826, though not through wounds gained in battle per Campbell’s Interview with Lamar in 1855.
- 12) This writer assumes based on Dyer’s ever inquisitive thirst for knowledge and the dogged pursuit to “get the facts straight”, that several interviews were conducted with Nicholas between 1881 (when Dyer permanently settled in Galveston) to 1895, (when Dyer noted he was last seen on the island) not the least of which was about the buried “Three Trees” cache. (See *The Historic Ridge*, October 22, 1922.
- 13) This article appeared 2 years after the first introduced treasure content (*Lafitte in 1820*, May 9, 1920). He expands upon this in October of the same year in *The Historic Ridge*, including specifics about the treasure. The remaining treasure not referred to is the mainland treasure, of which it appears Lacassinier and Nicholas may have been aware of, but was not part of the cache burial, so specifics were not forthcoming.
- 14) Dyer strongly believed that Laffite had twice before escaped a similar mutinous destiny by negotiating to depart under “apparent” pressure from military forces, yet in reality had a much stronger position of might, and escaped the mutiny in the same manner.
- 15) Noted by this author are numerous references and speculations (by many) that the Pride is buried under soil or sand in every place imaginable along the coast or waterways, including Matagorda, Millers Lake (Chambers County), Clear Lake, Sabine Lake, and Lake Calcasieu.
- 16) Hence, the mainland treasure, the Three Trees cache, and the ones located on the east end.
- 17) It is understood by this writer that two main stories exist describing Lafitte’s activities after departing Galveston up to and including his death. The stories are absolutely divergent to an alarming point; one describing Lafitte’s death in battle at sea, the other establishing a more peaceful trading operation based from Yucatan, and his end by death of yellow fever. Origination of these are:
 - a. Dyers account gained directly from two of the men who confirmed (by witnessing) to Dyer his death, supposedly the grave was also visited by officers of the Texas Navy in 1842. (See *Lafitte’s Camp Ruled By Justice*, GDN Sept 3, 1922)

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- b. Cochrane to Jim Campbell in 1836, documented in the Lamar Papers. It is not known if Cochrane stayed with Lafitte, this writer doubts if such a navigator would have done so, certainly Dyer did not confirm this from his two sources.
- c. Elms, The Pirates Own Book, 1837, no references to the story.

Both Campbell and Elms (oddly enough, in approximately the same year) learned the “death at sea during battle” story, but again, are not coincidental in facts. Lamar recites the following passage (from an interview with Campbell in 1855):

While Lafitte was thus anchored off the Bar, Campbell went on his last cruize, leaving Lafitt(e) behind with the understanding that they were to meet at the Isle of Muger (Mujeres) at a particular day. Lafitt(e) sailed soon after Campbell left. His history after this is known only through the information of his first Lieutenant, Wm Cochran, who gave the information to Campbell in 1836.

Lafitt(e) sailed to the Southard and made the Cape Cartouch, dividing the Honduras and Mexico, met a large ship and made up to her for action. She had 14 guns and made a severe fight. Lafitte was badly wounded in the action and lost several men. He captured her and after holding her 24 hours the supercargo ransomed her for one hundred thousand dollars. her cargo being estimated by the invoice, at three times that sum. Cochran being 1st Lt. , Lafitt(e) put him in command of the captive vessel, as prize master. Lafitt and Cochran now ran to Veracruz, and ran off and on waiting for the ransome which was to be paid in 24 hours. At the expiration of the 24 hours, two men-of-war came out, not with the ransom, but to make fight. A long and bloody engagement followed resulting in the loss of the prize vessel, the death of various of his men, and a sever wound inflicted on Lafitt himself.

Lafitt finally cut the grapples of Spanish vessel, and his escape. The Spanish vessel was too crippled to pursue. - **Lafitte beat up to Venezuela, where he died of his wounds.** His Lieutenant Cochran was captured in the fight; and after being detained as prisoner for sometime, the sudden revolution affected by Iturbide effected; and Cochran being liberated in consequence, remained in the country, and was afterwards made commander of a Mexican man-of-war. In 1836, during the revolt of Texas, he made his appearance at Redish Bar; and invited an interview with his old friend Campbell, who was now a peaceful and loyal Texan. Campbell at first hesitated; but being assured no treachery was meditated , he went; and it (was) during this friendly interview, talking over the past, that Cochran narrated to Campbell the fate of Lafitte. Cochran soon after sailed to Vera Cruz and died of Yellow fever.

In Elm’s story, Lafitte was engaged by a British sloop of war who searched for and found Lafitte’s vessel soon after departure from Galveston, and details the very battle and even Lafitte’s last moves on board to his death.

- 18) This storm was not recorded by NOAA, and confirmed by contact with NOAA. The Texas Gulf Coast Region had few inhabitants to record such an event, yet after several years of research, this storm was confirmed, and drowned inhabitants of San Luis Pass in the fall 1823. This is a key basis for the treasures non recovery since burial. See Chapter 5.
- 19) See also Lamar Papers, Interview with James Campbell, June 1855.

While this was going on, a man named Capt. Marott came from N.O. with a Schooner, which he sold to Lafitte, and afterwards was placed command of it, and he and Campbell sailed together on a cruise about Mantanzas, and after several unsuccessful sallies, succeeded in capturing a vessel with 40 negroes and some goods on board- which they sent into Galveston, while they continued their cruze. They captured 2 other prizes of comparable value consisting of dry goods- plate silver and gold watches, amounting to one **hundred thousand dollars**. With this they made to for Galveston.
- 20) Thought be Nicholas Zerma, a Sicilian who was recorded in Galveston Daily News of 1874 as a fishmonger (one who catches and sells fish for a living in markets)
- 21) Actual name was probably La Casiniere or De La Casiniere, this story and related stories could have only resulted in his personal interview.
- 22) Commodore Moore and the reduced Texas Navy consisting of the Austin, San Antonio and San Bernard left for Sisal in December 1841. Arriving near Sisal, Moore then enetered the bay to collect funds due from Sisal, sent schooners to Isla Mujeres (near Cancun) to collect water, then proceeded south east to merida, capital of Yucatan. He then spent several days in Sisal until January 24, 1842. Moore sent the San Jacinto home Feb. 1 with reports and Yuscatan proclamations. Later Moore received a proclamation of war against Mexico, and was ordered by Hockley to return to Galveston to make preparations, this he did on May 1, 1842.
- 23) General James Long, referred to by some early letters as Young, Dyer chose to use this name here.

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- 24) A major point to be made, as the “Three Trees” or “Three Oaks” were noted in 1837 by Trimble & Lindsey as 3 distinct group of trees. However, this was made note of after the 1823 storm which Dyer noted “*defaced the landmarks and swept away the three oaks*”. It should be realized that Dyer noted separately that these three trees “sprang up” from oaks after the 1810 storm, and that the 1818 hurricane could have also damaged trees to such an effect that they died after the cache burial in 1819. The 1837 storm, occurring shortly after the T&R survey, changed the landscape, especially Lake Como significantly. Since Dyer’s interview with Lacassinier, many storms and hurricanes occurred, thus leaving him with the difficult proposition of determining where the tress and landmarks were in the early 1880’s, a difficult task even with a sketchy chart, as it is today. Dyer could have been clearer if he had wanted, especially after interviewing two of the five men who buried the treasure, especially in regard to “which location” of the three trees was used. Defacing the landmarks is also another key issue, which means that the cache was not buried close to a tree, but depended on landmarks to provide location.

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GALVESTON'S HISTORIC RIDGE

Indian battles and Dances Supplanted by Things More Modern

Written Especially for The News by J. O. Dyer, M. D. October 22, 1922

The city of Galveston is a little over a century old, although it was incorporated in 1839, or twenty-two years after the first settlement.

In this world of horoscopic possibilities who would have foretold at that time that the swampy sand key of an island should become the mother of greatest cotton, grain, sulphur, and petroleum exporting port of our beloved state and country.

The lowliest on earth have some elevating characteristic; and so our sandy, swampy, isle, called early last century Saint Louis Island by the French, and Culebra or Snake Island by the Spanish, had its topographical exaltation in a ridge of shell, thrown up by wave action, sequent to, or caused by overflows from tropical hurricanes.

This ridge was bounded on the north by a lagoon of saltwater connecting with the deeper water of the western part of Galveston Bay. On the east and west, two bayous connecting with the bay, curtailed its longitude growth, and Southward between it and the Gulf of Mexico a stretch of swampy lowland extended. The swamp was by no means as dismal as such a place as usually pictured, especially as it lacked trees. But hundreds of small atolls or raised places furnished a moist and fertile footground for masses of vegetation and shrubs. Marsh grasses of luxuriant growth attracted deer from the mainland, which waded and swam across channels between a chain of islands lying on the northeastward. At least two of these isles have survived, and are known as small and large Deer Island (so named, and appropriately so, by early settlers).

Next to the marsh grasses wild blackberry bushes abounded, and these in spring, covered with berries, attracted bird life. The birds were preyed upon by innumerable rattle snakes which gave name to the island. When the snakes became weary of their diet, the swamp furnished them delicacies wholesale in the way of horned toads and of frogs. Then on the hard, sandy beach on the gulf front there lived millions of tiny fiddler crabs, which in spite of their being able to run away forward or backward, gave lunches for the snakes, seagulls, and visiting bears. There was plenty of food for all bird, animal and reptile life, and all were happy, except those that were gobbled up.

And then, because nature revels in the beautiful, mesquite bushes flowered in yellow feathery topknots and the "wild poinsetta," or fire weed, sported its flaming leaves.

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A Summer Camp

Long before the bearded palefaces came to disturb the equanimity of the phlegmatic Indians, these sons of sunburnt men frequented the isles off the Texas littoral for the purpose of having a good time. For the Karankawai tribesman this meant barbecues of fish flesh and desserts of fresh berries, followed by a dance to aid (or hinder) digestion.

The ridge was located about fifteen miles from the extreme east end of the island, and was approached safely by water. Few men had the hardihood to wade through the swamp land to the south and to encounter the hissing and rattling reptiles. The Karankawai, wise in their day, selected the ridge as their summer camp. The children of nature study their environment, lest the evil things therein should, unless guarded against, endanger their safety. Safety first, then as now, was the slogan of struggling, hopeful humans.

The Cruel Elements

The Karankawai had picked out the shell ridge as the safest camping place, not only because it was not frequented by rattlesnakes, but also because it was the highest point of the island. Hurricanes that traveled from the Caribbean Sea came periodically then, as now. So when the squaws set up house keeping, they first of all prepared a shelter. The most primitive of men appreciate the nakedness, and the Karankawai especially so, for they wore ni covering in summer unless it was a thin smear of fish oil.

A set of four poles was stuck down into the shell bank and on these supports was a spread a cover made of shark skins sewed together, after having undergone a process of tanning which made them pliable, and less offensive as to odor. The skin shelter was rainproof and durable. A hole in the shell bank made an excellent oven, when filled with hot coals obtained by burning chunks of driftwood. The shell walls became red hot, and retained heat for a long time. Fish were cooked in the oven being wrapped in a piece of sharkskin to prevent char.

Rattlesnakes do not like to creep over rough places, hence the shell ridge was more or less free of these unwelcome visitors; but as an extra precaution the ashes and coals from the ovens were spread each night around the shelters. The only utensils employed by the Karankawai were some flint knives, some scrappers made of oyster shells, and a few pots to hold water or fish oil in.

Yes! The Karankawai were happy; no greedy landlords clamored and no grocery men blamed the high cost of living on the railroads. And when a simple mind has not been expanded by inflation or deflation, the toes itch when the bodily wants have been satisfied. That is why the Karankawai danced on the shell ridge. But the tribesmen likewise were industrious, for as fisherman they had little need for "fish stories." As a matter-of-fact their language was rudimentary and guttural and, wise again in their day, they wasted little time on words preferring the sign language to their own. Few words of their ancient tongue have survived, and these are

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composed of two or three letters. The names of which have come down to us are collections of mono-syllabic words such as, Karankawai (Ka-ra-ana-ka-wai), Copano (Co-pa-ana), Manahulia (ma-ana), Anahuac (Ana-hua and Hua). Their religious faith was also simple, and each morn before trusting their bodies to the fickle “ana” (water) they breathed the name of “Hua” (the sun). Incidentally, Anahuac, now bearing the name as a province of Mexico when first discovered by the Spaniards, these applied the same phonation to the Karankawai Ana-hua, located at the mouth of the Trinity River, and meaning the “sun (hut) by the water.” The shaman of the Co-co-waician (Cokes), and offshoot of the Karankawai, had his nun hut or temple at the site of the present Anahuac.

In 1810 the inhabitants of the Louisiana coast west of Lake Charles were visited by a severe hurricane.¹ The newspapers of that period stated that the storm raged for nearly three days, its full force hitting the Texas coast of West Sabine river. The Trinity and Sabine rivers were filled with saltwater for over twenty miles away from their mouths as the tides became so high. Since 1810 no West Indian hurricane has blown from the southeast for so long a period. As a result of this prolonged blow traversing over the gulf, Very high water covered the island of Saint Louis, banking up against the shell ridge and sweeping finally over it. Forty Karankawai were camped on the ridge, and according to records obtained by Colonel Warren D. C. Hall six years later, over thirty of the campers perished². After this calamity the visits were timed after the storm season.

The Indian Battle

Many versions exist of the battle fought on the high ridge of Saint Louis or Galveston Island, all more or less fictitious as to true facts excepting two. Yoakum in his history claims that Laffite in 1820 fought the Karankawai Indians, attacking and routing them, and making use of some cannon. As a matter of fact Laffite never commanded any exhibition by land or sea, and was on excellent terms with the Karankawai tribe members of which constantly frequented the camp. The Lafitte Commune, in order that the men of the camp should not prey upon native women, permitted them to marry squaws, or to consort with a colony of them at Oak Grove Point² (opposite to the present Virginia Point) about seven miles from the camp. Therefore the story of Lafitte’s buccaneers kidnapping three Karankawai women as published in a Philadelphia paper was also wrong. Yoakum probably took his record of the battle from this journal account.

As the topographical location of the ridge (as already described) rendered the use of cannon impossible, this likewise proves how easily historians can err when their knowledge of geography has been neglected as related to the history in hand.

An early issue of De Bow’s Journal stated that the fight lasted fifteen minutes and many Indians were killed. It also properly attributed the battle to General Long’s command, and that he lost three men and had five wounded. It is hardly probable that General Long gave out this information, which varied so much with that of his wife. Both her account and that of Colonel Warren D. C. Hall who was an officer in Long’s command, have been preserved by the writer, and these differ in detail. Colonel Hall stated that General Long surprised the Indians, who were

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feasting, and had no reason for attack by white men. One hundred men surrounded the ridge and poured a gallanting fire into the camp of the savages, huddled around their barbeque pit. Thirty Indians were killed and many wounded, and one woman and child were captured. According to Hall seven of Long's men were wounded.

Mrs. Long stated that five boats loaded with men and accompanied by her husband, left the hulk of one of Laffite's stranded vessels on the bay shore used by Laffite's buccaneers after their leader had left the island. The stranded ship was used as a wharf. Dr. Long was bitterly opposed to his men attacking the Karankawai, whose presence on the island was announced by a hunting party of the camp. A shack had been burned and some of the buccaneers accused the Karankawai of the deed. The men were mutinous, and in bad spirits, and desired diversion and excitement. Possibly also some, incited by the presence of women on the island (and these squaws were good looking), became active in inducing their comrades to disobey their leader. Dr. Long, known better as General John Long, went with his bloodthirsty cutthroats hoping to avoid bloodshed, or to aid those wounded. The men fired three volleys and killed ten Indians, wounding others. One woman and a child and some of the wounded were captured. The Indians, after the first surprise, bravely rallied and, shooting their arrows at the attackers (wounding three of them) retreated to the "tis" or skin boats.

Indians are Nursed.

The buccaneers' blood thirst having been satisfied, General Long induced them to carry the prisoners in the boats after he had given them first aid. Several Indians were bitten by rattlesnakes when they, panic-stricken, fled into the swamps.

Mrs. Long not only nursed the wounded buccaneers, but also the wounded Karankawai. Those that recovered, and also the woman and child, were returned in due course to their tribe. The Karankawai remembered the kindness and services rendered them by Mrs. Long, for a year later, when she was deserted by her companions and left with her two children, and a negro girl alone in a fort on Point Bolivar, the savages made no attempt to molest her, or seek revenge.

The most seriously wounded of Long's men was George Early, an arrow piercing his thigh. Dr. Long made a counter incision, and pushed the arrow point through the muscles and out. This arrow head was presented in 1859 to a member of the writer's family, and was for several years in his exhibit at the Rosenberg Library, and still remains in his collection. John Henry Brown in his history stated that the Karankawai had captured a vessel loaded with wine and were drinking when attacked by Long's men, who killed thirty-two and captured two boys one of whom was killed accidentally. Long lost three killed and many were wounded. The battle was fought in February 1821 and Mrs. Long's account should be accepted by lovers of true history, for the writer is indebted to her wonderful memory for much material. Mrs. Jane Long lived for many years after the civil war in Richmond Texas.

Treasure Seekers

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The high shell ridge with its history of calamity and of carnage had yet to become famous as a treasure trove. The buccaneer camp founded on Saint Louis or Galveston Island in September, 1816 was followed in 1817 by a third camp when Jean Laffite amalgamated with the second camp of Derieux.

Believing that a communal government would give increased efficiency on the part of the officers and men of the camp, these perceived regular salaries and a percentage of the profits of the establishment. Other privateering camps gave their men a share of the prize money realized by captures of Spanish vessels (or of other vessels than Spanish, when the buccaneers also became pirates). The profit sharing idea has now become popular in certain other business and manufacturing enterprises. Laffite's commune committed no piracy, but made its profits by legitimized privateering and by barter with the natives.

The men of the camp gambled away their salaries and profits, their being several gambling dens in the camp. The officers of the camp and of the cruisers, also some of the trusty men, called "sur-fideles" saved their silver. There were then no banks, and men then had to carry money belts, or bank as the dogs do when they cash their bones.

The hole in the ground or tree has ever been the custodian of man's fetishes and valuables. **Five caches** held the profits of the saving men of the commune and it was not Laffite's treasure as stated so often by those ignorant of the history of the camp. Laffite, to guard against loss, **divided his private savings among three caches** on the plan of not having too many eggs and one nest.³

One of the caches was made near three oak trees which had sprung up on the shell ridge since the storm of 1810, nine years previously. **Thirty thousand dollars in Mexican specie (Spanish) was buried, in three brass bound oaken kegs. Five men buried this treasure in 1819, and two of them were alive in 1874 when the writer got acquainted with them**⁴. In the cache was also placed the body of the Indian boatman who accompanied the party as guide, and who was knocked on the head on the principle that "deadmen tell no tales."

In 1820 the men of the camp had mutinied, and only two of the caches were emptied and taken onboard of the *Pride*, which carried away the officers of the commune. **In 1823 a storm swept away the three trees, thus destroying the landmarks by which the cache could be located.**⁵

In 1821 General John Long's men held the island and in 1822 some of the mutineers of the Laffite commune were in possession of owning some small piratical craft. No attempt therefore was made in these years to empty the cache, but in 1823 a party of twenty odd men, headed by one Dr. Parnell, landed near the ridge and encountered a band of Karankawai encamped there. Undoubtedly one of the five men who had buried the treasure must have accompanied this expedition unless they had a copy of the chart made at the time of burial, several of which were still in existence when Galveston was incorporated in 1839, and one the writer acquired.⁶ Accounts vary as to what happened on the shell ridge in 1823, a condition to which much of early Texas history has been subjected to.

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Second Battle on the Ridge

Historians have it that Parnell's party attacked the Indians, who were drunk, having captured a French vessel with a cargo of wine. The Indians repulsed the treasure seekers, inflicting a scalp wound on Dr. Parnell the shell ridge, located on the island, was separated by a treacherous swamp from the Gulf of Mexico and vessels that were wrecked on the beach of the island where many miles away from the site of the Indian camp.

The transportation of the wine to the shell ridge was as problematical that of the cannons which historians claimed that Laffite used in the first battle of the ridge. Possibly men were able then to carry pipes of wine or cannons on their backs through swamps or lagoons with a quicksand bottom.

The story of Parnell's adventure as related a year or two later in Austin's colony, was that the treasure seekers were encamped on the ridge, and that the Karankawai coming to their former camp, surprised the whites and routed them in revenge for the assault made on them by Long's men. Parnell's party put up no fight and several of them carried away arrows in their anatomy.

A few months later the storm of 1823 destroyed the three trees, and all though the ridge has been dug over hundreds of times, it is doubtful if the treasure was recovered because the cache was very deep. A hoodoo tale is connected with the three trees for successive crops of three trees have come up on the ridge.⁷ After the storm of 1915 some oaks again had grown up, and a resident of the locality lost his life then.⁸

In the early 80's of last century the writer was digging for the treasure on the ridge, when unearthed only a flint workshop of the Indians. Huddled up in a subterranean pile were big chunks of flint (brought all the way from the upper Colorado river). Also there were completed and partially completed knives and arrowheads and the heavy mineralized stones used as hammers, and the resultant chips or flakes flaked from the flint core. Close to this find some relics were discovered that belong to the shaman- ochre sticks, asbestos splits, perforated pottery and soap stone tablets with records of fishing expeditions graven in crude picture language.⁹

Many of these survived the storm of 1900 but a skull that was uncovered at the site of the Indian camp was lost.

This skull was so friable that liquid paraffin was poured into it to keep it together. The short anteroposterior measurement of this skull indicated a high cephalic index, and it was of such large size, as would be expected of a caput to match the huge frame of the extinct Karankawai.

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As It Is Now

The ridge as it is now is no longer a ridge¹⁰ but elevated ground about twelve feet above the sea level, with rich soil covering what once was shell. The swamps have disappeared but the bayous still exist in a modified form.¹¹ The lagoon to the north is solid land and the bay shore is much further removed instead of the shelter tents of the Indians several substantial houses cover the tract known some years ago as the Mott place.¹² Colonel Warren D. C. Hall lived on a section of the ridge, and when this famous figure of early Texas history passed into the beyond, his widow deeded the property of her husband to Colonel M. F. Mott, a prominent citizen of Galveston. The consideration paid was that Mrs. Hall should be cared for the balance of her life, a stipulation that was faithfully carried out.

John Egert, county commissioner, owns now a part of the ridge and only a few days ago the writer visited the historic spot on the occasion of a jubilee sequent to the marriage of Mr. Egert's daughter.¹³

The changes the one century have brought! Close by a derrick¹⁴ marks the site of digging not for treasure of silver but for oil – more valuable than your precious medals. Yes! There was dancing and feasting on the ridge, not on the bare ground but in a dance hall: and the feet that kept time with a Victrola were encased in war – priced shoes. Gone forever the pattering, naked, calloused pedals that served Karankawai braves and beauties, as they responded rhythmically to the thump of a huge rattle in the hands of the shaman. Gone also the delicacies of the past, toasted shark liver and barbequed alligator flippers, to be supplanted by metworst and mayonnaise salads, and brick cheese and rye bread. Also that towering pyramid of sugar – encased angel food – the wedding cake, the taste of which gave the old bachelor dreams of marital bless and of a barge load of kiddies.¹³

Then if the historians were partly correct and the Karankawai managed to get some real wine and rum, and if that helped them dance – dear reader. forgive them that sin; for there will not be anymore boisterous dancing on the old ridge, for make believe beer and red, circus lemonade and a cut glass punch bowl do not go further than the stomach, and exempt the feet.

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Footnotes and References

- 1) Dyer is one of the few who noted this hurricane, and is consistent in its impact. It is questioned on how he knew the trees had fallen and roots sprang up from the fallen trees, only someone who observed then up close would have known, and no one had reason to be down the island up close, unless to bury treasure. Obviously smaller trees could have existed that were not noticed in 1819, but by the time Trimble and Lindsey surveyed the island in 1837, the trees then could have ranged from 18-27 years old, fairly large for live oaks to be considered in their count.
- 2) Assumed to be Eagle's Grove, noted on the map of 1850.
- 3) Dyer appears to refer to a single cache as Lafitte's, rather he split his up among several locations.
- 4) Nicholas the Greek and Lacassinier. (See Laffite a Schemer as Well as an Executive)
- 5) Same premise made in "Laffite a Schemer", etc.
- 6) Lacassinier had the chart, who passed this on to the Greek, who gave this to Dyer in 1881. The Parnell story was noted by Yoakum, who may have gained knowledge from someone in Brazoria County at the time.
- 7) Dyer has made mention several times on how deep the cache was. And that the men toiled very hard through oyster shell to reach this depth. Therefore, this would make locating the cache extremely difficult if landmarks were washed away by the hurricane of 1823.
- 8) The 1915 storm was known to have killed the "three trees" located at Lafitte's Grove just south Stewarts road located near the Ostermeyer property near where the marker is today, GDN carried photos of the trees up until 1942 showing there decaying condition. M. A. Barr, who owned the land in 1915, perished in the storm.
- 9) There is a reason Dyer uncovered the items, which aides in determining a general location for where he dug even though he evaded specifics. Several of the relics are in the Rosenberg library on display.
- 10) Dyer from Hall, his uncles, older people of the time, and the two involved in the cache burial must have gained knowledge that the ridge was narrower and steeper than it was in 1920's, certainly he was there in 1880;s, but by this time the ridge was probably similar in shape to the 1920's.
- 11) The swamps were between the ridge and the gulf, the island "appears" to have elevated somewhat as well as potentially soil/sand added from hurricanes. The bayous were modified from the hurricanes, especially Lake Como, which changed after the storm of 1837, the storm of 1823 potentially filled in the northern lagoon that connected with west bay. The other longitudinal bayou was Eckert Bayou (modified from Egerts Bayou) which was changed from the previous Tuckers bayou)
- 12) This is a very interesting observation Dyer makes, noting that the camp site was on the Hall place (now Stewarts Mansion), when the Karankawas were known to stay to the high ground, Ricklis noted in excavations prior to George Mitchells invasion of the historic ridge area that no Karankawa remains were found below 8 ft elevation. No Karankawa relics to note have been found on the Hall place, 41GV70 was excavated nearby with no relics of merit found.
- 13) Annie Egert marriage, October 15, 1922. Dyer was asked to attend and present a historic perspective of the spot
- 14) The only Derrick was on the far west end at the Johnson farm.

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JEAN LAFFITE IN 1820

BY J.O. DYER, M.D.

GDN May 9, 1920

At the special request if readers in Texas and Louisiana, some of the events that transpired in this locality just a century ago will be briefly chronicled. It s difficult at all times to ascertain certain historical facts, but those relating to the period named have been embellished rather by imagination, and such as have been recorded are the product of those desiring to serve redhot stuff. Possibly no man’s history (excepting that if the Roman Emperor Nero) has been falsified as that of Jean Laffite, that so-called “pirate-patriot”; even as to the spelling of his name has there been error. Jean Laffite admitted to a number of persons whilst a resident on San Louis Island (later Galveston Island) that the name Laffite was an assumed name, and that he was born in the department of Haute Pyrenees, France, the only child of a noble father and mother. (Among these persons were Warren C.D. Hall, Mrs. J. Campbell, Mrs. James Long, Henri Beguin, Randall Jones and some others.) It was also well known that at no time during the residence if Jean Laffite on San Louis (Galveston) Island did he ever leave the camp during his stay of the three years, except to inspect vessels in the harbor; and it was no secret that Jean was not a sailor, for he was subject to seasickness.

The more truthful histories of the Baratavia establishment (the camp established by Laffite on Grand Terre Island, Louisiana) give not a single instance of Laffite being in command at any time of any one of the privateers or cruisers; nor was a single case of piracy ever proven to have been the work of the Laffite vessels, which under special letter of marque obtained from countries at war with Spain. The Baratavia camp, however, was notorious as a rendezvous for smugglers and dealers in the illicit slave trade, which attributes could not be charged against the Galveston Island camp, which was purely and simply a trading buccaneer and privateering establishment. James Dunwody Brownson de Bow was born the year that Laffite left Galveston (the year of this sketch), and that newspaper man in his paper, called the Review, started in 1851 to publish Laffite sketches of sensational character¹, as did Philadelphia and Baltimore journals of that period. We can not undertake to recapitulate here the various birthplaces assigned as those of Laffite (St. Malo, Bordeaux, Marseilles, etc.), nor the exploits and stunts attributed to him when he trod the deck of ‘his warrior steed of the ocean’ and made war on English East Indiamen, capturing the Queen and the Pagoda; and later operated among the West Indians Islands, when, according to Laffite’s own statement, he was then a peaceful sugar planter in one of said islands before he found his way to New Orleans in 1809 or somewhat earlier. Lord Byron, as misinformed as others, sings of Lafitte’s exploits from the rock-girt island stronghold (islands on the coast of Mexico are all sand-girt) and proclaimed:

*“A corsairs name to other times,
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.”*

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Were Considered Lightly

As a matter of fact, Lafitte's crimes if they can be called such for a hundred years they were considered lightly, consisted of privateering, smuggling, and buying runaway or stolen slaves. His virtues centered in his private character, culminated when he supported the United States against British invasion, although officers of said United States, without authority wrongfully disposed him of his Louisiana properties. Laffite will be known through the ages as a patriot, as the man who formed the first communal association of white men in the United States; as the man who by his genius and forceful character for three years defied the naval power of Spain in the Gulf, and by sweeping Spain's commerce from the Mexican coast and West Indian Islands gratified his revenge and avenged the death of his girl bride. But that is another story² and in 1820 Laffite was ready to quit privateering because of circumstances beyond his control forced him to that conclusion.

The camp on San Louis Island in 1819 had recovered its prosperity after the setback produced by the July storm of 1818³ which destroyed the camp's buildings, nearly all of the vessels in port, and exacted a toll of several hundred lives. The admiralty court on the island had declared dividends for the men of the camp and crews of the cruisers, sometimes reaching \$400 per quarter⁴, not including their regular wages. Then came the period when Spanish shipowners diverted their trade from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, and prize ship captures were few and far between⁵. The officials of the commune encouraged trade with the natives and equipped some of the cruisers as whalers, but the revenues of the camp declined and the dividends dwindled. Men deserted and left on the British Jamaican traders, which occasionally put into port.

Mutiny Was Rife.

In 1820 mutiny was rife, and the men, of whom but 400 remained, not only grumbled, but clamored for permission to become pirates. It was then that Laffite again showed his masterful way of handling rough men. There were still about forty men who could be trusted and these **secretly buried the private treasures of Laffite**⁶ and his partner shipowners as well as those of some of the officials. Three places were selected on the island and one on the mainland, and the chief articles of value, plate, jewels and bullion, were duly buried.

Laffite next removed the heavy cannon from the vessels in port and placed them on the best ship, "the pride," which he and his trusty men then occupied as place of residence, abandoning the hull of the old Salamanca. The men were served with extra liquor for several days while this was accomplished, and the ordnance aboard of the other vessels was temporarily disabled. Most of the contents of the arsenal were disposed of to two Jamaica trading schooners. Laffite weeks previously had informed the United States collector of revenue at New Orleans of the probability that the men in the camp would mutiny and take up piracy.

It was probably a present sent to the collector at New Orleans which saved the lives of Laffite and of his officials, for a revenue cutter was sent to San Louis Island, and while written

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history has it that Laffite was coerced into evacuating the island the hitherto unpublished history contained material gathered by the writer⁷ would indicated not only willingness on the part of the Laffite officials, but a desire for United States intervention to save their faces and enable them to get away from their turbulent and mutinous forces.⁸

Somehow the men learned of the buried treasures, and such was their watchfulness that only two of the caches were emptied⁹ and their contents placed on board of the *Pride*. In spite of the shotted¹⁰ guns of the *Pride*, the men would have attacked the vessel but for fear of the United States cutter which hovered within call in the waters of Galveston Bay.

To Turn Over Camp

Laffite had promised the commander of the American cruiser to turn over camp to General John Young¹¹, then at or near Bolivar, who had made Galveston “a port of entry” on the 9th of October, 1819 in the name of the Republic of Texas, but when the time arrived and General Young camped on Bolivar Peninsula, a great number of the men of the Laffite commune had deserted and joined Young’s force.

Laffite it seems did not like General Long who exacted large sum for the letters of Marque of the Texas Republic, which had lately been used by the operating cruisers of the camp. General Long was well acquainted with Laffite having met him at the battle of New Orleans in 1815 when Long served as one of the surgeons. It is possible that Laffite feared that Long might yield to his men and form a pirate camp on the island. Some months before Long had sent General Gaines to urge Laffite to aid him in his enterprises, but Laffite, in a letter (still in existence)¹² wrote that before he could take action he would have to consult his brother, Pierre (which was a subterfuge, as the Pierre Laffite who assisted Jean when he landed first in New Orleans and whose name he adopted was never heard from after 1815 and certainly did not figure in any way with the San Louis Island commune). Colonel Warren D.C. Hall¹³ on learning from Jean Laffite that he intended to burn the camp before his departure obtained some lumber and small houses to make Mrs. General Young¹⁴ comfortable on Bolivar.

Laffite was by no means fond of shedding blood. Notwithstanding the numerous sanguinary acts attributed to him on various legends. Thus his entire conduct of affairs at Baratavia was marked by his pacific methods, and the final attack of commodore Patterson on the Grande Terre establishment could have easily been repulsed had Laffite so willed¹⁵. In no case at any period of the Galveston Island cruiser’s activities were any persons captured on prizes subjected to injury or mistreatment, and they were landed at various points with ample provisions, or placed in smaller vessels which were liberated. So when the final hour of Laffite’s departure arrived early in the morning of May 5, 1820¹⁶ the *Pride* stole out of the harbor with a favorable wind after several of Laffites trusted men had fired the arsenal, the storehouse and some of the larger wooden buildings while the guns of the *Pride* were trained upon the camp. However, there was no bloodshed, the men preferring to fight the flames rather than Laffite on his flagship. Several days before Laffite had, however, pacified the mutinous men by turning over to them four vessels of large size and smaller craft, also much merchandise and stores in

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

abundance. These men did not join general Young, but under Captains Pitts. Black and Williamson left the harbor shortly after and then Young occupied such huts as were not destroyed by the fire and fortified the camp.¹⁷

Other Ships Pirates

Laffite's ill name as a Pirate probably originated from the acts of the cruisers he left behind, who, still flying Laffite's blue flag, undoubtedly committed several acts of piracy. Only one of these vessels returned to Galveston Bay's anchorage the next year, 1821, according to Mrs. Jane Long. Two were captured by United States cruisers, one was lost in a storm off Padre Island.

Lieutenant Pitts, who later spent some years in the young city of Galveston, declared that he operated under letters of marque obtained from General John Young, and on his revisiting the port furnished Mrs. Long with provisions and offered to take her away from Bolivar, which offer was declined. The *Pride*, when she sailed, was under the command of Captain Cochrane¹⁸, and not of Laffite, as several accounts have it, nor had the vessel any commission as a privateer from Columbia or any other state. The *Pride* did not meet with a British warsloop in the Gulf, and the *Pride* was not boarded by British marines, and Laffite did not fall in single combat with the chief of the boarders, nor did the *Pride* pursue a piratical course¹⁹, but sailed straight for Yucatan, where the vessel and her cargo were sold and the proceeds were divided, and where Laffite departed from his friends excepting two²⁰, who cast their fortunes with him, and remained his business associates as traders until his death from yellow fever at a small place fifteen miles from Merida, and these associates probably²¹ were cognizant of the Laffite treasures buried down the island and on the mainland, and possibly one recovered one of these treasures²². However, that is again another story, and as both were present at his deathbed, and whereas one of them lived in Galveston County later, from 1842 to 1900 (attaining the age of a centenarian), and whereas certain officers of the navy of the Republic of Texas saw the tombstone of Laffite inscribed with his name in 1841, the readers of history may conclude that Laffite did not die as a pirate.²³

—(Copyright by Dr. J.O. Dyer, Galveston, Tex., 1920.)

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

Footnotes and References

- 1) Debow's Review, November 1851.
- 2) Reference Lafitte complete early story
- 3) Hurricane of 1818 which hit Galveston is confirmed by many reports, and is also listed on the NOAA site.
- 4) The estimated crews on the island (per Dyer, et al) averaged 400-500 men, at 500 men per quarter this is a take of a minimum of \$200,000, if 70-90% were distributed to the men, then the haul was app \$100,000 per month, typical cargo of silver for a large transport ship from Mexico to Spain.
- 5) As Spain became aware of the losses, they diversified the silver cargo amongst multiple ships and land, thus carrying amounts closer to \$20,000 per ship. This lower take by the men of the commune led to disgruntlement, fueling anger and repeated requests by the men to strike out after all nations, but when Lafitte refused, mutiny was imminent. (Similar theme repeated in many especially *Laffite A Schemer As Well As An Executive*, GDN May 14, 1922.
- 6) The first reference in print by Dyer of the Lafitte caches, very important, as Dyer first became aware of the caches through direct interview with Lacassinier in 1874, and confirmed by Nicholas. It was Lacassinier's last visit to the island to find the treasure, Nicholas returned in 1842 from Yucatan and died in the Galveston storm of 1900, nearly 100 years old.
- 7) This is one of the very few references to Dyers source material, the other main one is noted in the GDN article of May 21, 1922.
- 8) All other story references cite that Kearney and the Enterprise contacted Lafitte and arranged (negotiated) for his departure from the Island, mostly due to the Brown incident. Dyer is the only writer to discover the information produced here, that it was staged as a prerequisite cover for he and his close men to plan escape from mutiny.
- 9) These were located nearby on the east end of the Island. See also *Laffite A Schemer As Well As An Executive* GDN May 14, 1922 and *The Historic Ridge*, GDN October 22, 1922.
- 10) Hence filled with shot and ready to fire.
- 11) Per copies of original letters, Lafitte was not an ally of General James Long, and sometimes referred to him a Young. Dyer uses both.
- 12) Lafitte to General James Long-Letter (Rosenberg)
- 13) Warren D C Hall. See character sketch by Dyer December 12, 1919
- 14) Mrs. Jane Long, Mother of Texas.
- 15) Similar to his departure from Baratavia, Laffite departing although with superior forces. See appendix copy-letter from Gilbert to Freeman December 1814, includes description of Lafitte's force at Cat Island of 500-600 men, this at the time when Lafitte offered services to Jackson, and Jackson finally acquiescing.
- 16) The year referenced by Debow, Yokum, and almost all following books or articles is May 1821, an error that Dyer corrects repeatedly.
- 17) For continuation of the story of Black and Pitts and the commune after the departure of Lafitte, see also XXX.
- 18) Agreed upon by most accounts, and referenced in other Dyer articles.

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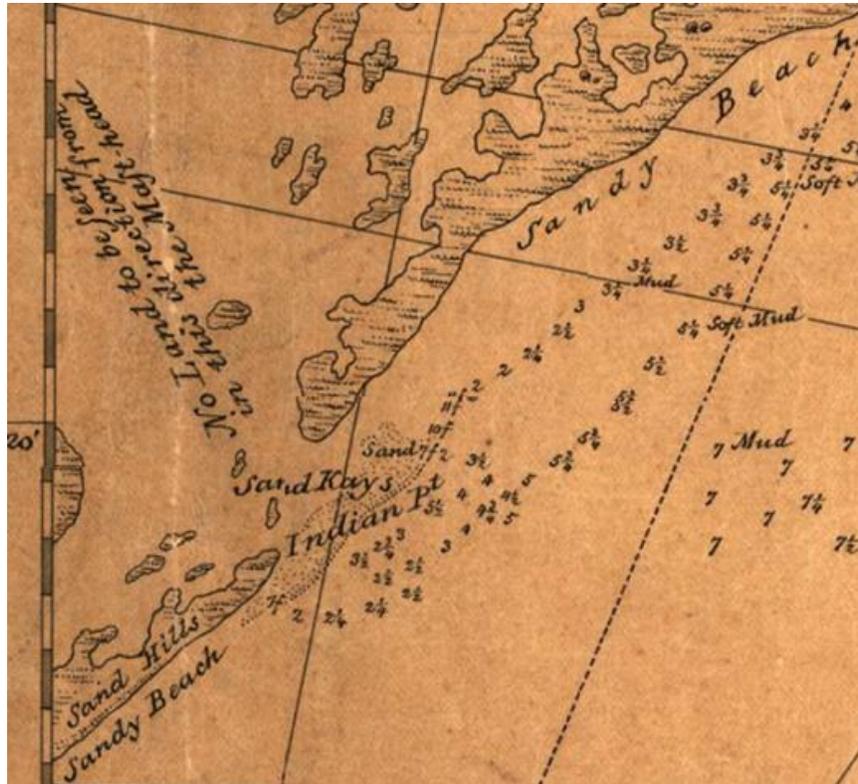
- 19) This is the other story ending, still referenced by many, first written by George Elms in The Pirates Own Book (1837). I have elaborated further in content on this matter in footnotes 17 of *Laffite A Schemer As Well As An Executive*, GDN May 14, 1922.
- 20) Lacassinier and Nicholas the Greek, both of whom Dyer interviewed, Lacassinier in 1874, and the Greek in 1881, the Greek lived on the Island until the storm of 1900, where he was near 100 years old.
- 21) It is not known why Dyer uses the term "probably was cognizant" unless in his first article he was not ready to let go with his own personal relations, which he later did in 1922. He never discussed the mainland treasure.
- 22) Again this is not clear, as Lacassinier returned to Galveston Island from Canada in 1874 to make a last visit to find the Three Trees treasure, he may have been unsure about the mainland treasure, or the two may have not been clear with him.
- 23) Nicholas returned from Yucatan with the US Navy in 1842, and so witnessed the story from the Navy directly, Dyer noted he was with Lafitte at the time of his death in *Laffite A Schemer As Well As An Executive*, GDN May 14, 1922. He also noted three were with him at the time of his death in this article

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5.0 When the Three Trees are not the "Three Trees"

Galveston Island-Early Reports & Maps

Galveston in its very early days was just a mere sand bar covered in grasses, vines, and small shrubs, and was a haven for snakes, especially rattlesnakes, garnishing the name of "Culebra" or Snake Island.



A Plan of the Coast of Part of West Florida & Louisiana

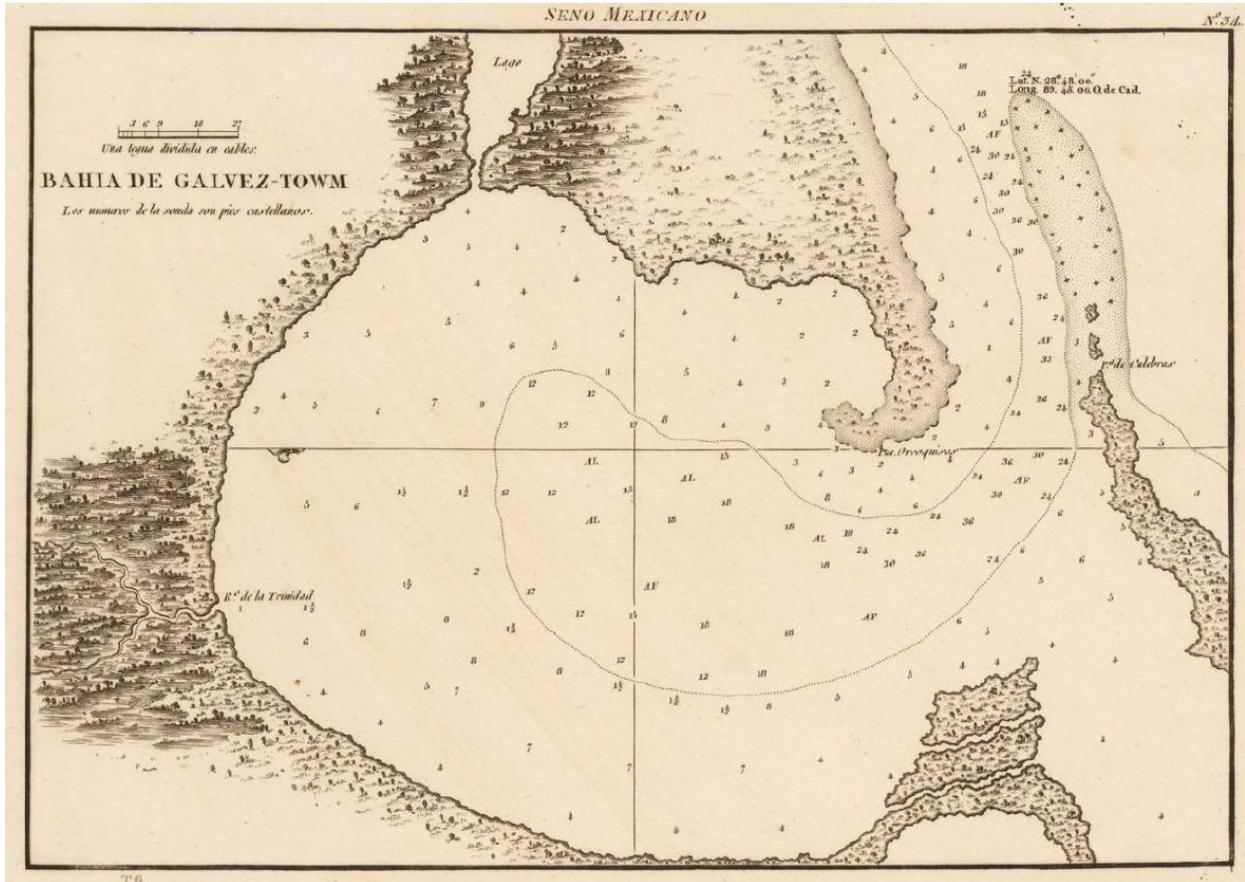
Surveyed by George Gauld M.A.
1778

The Islands potential importance was noted by Don Jose de Evia, the commander of a Spanish surveying expedition, as he sailed south from New Orleans, charged with mapping present day Texas & Louisiana coastlines. Approaching Galveston Island, Evia observed that the currents of the surrounding bay appeared to make a natural harbor behind the barren island. Perhaps sensing the future importance of the

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island and its potential harbor, Evia named the island in honor of the viceroy of Mexico, Bernardo de Galvez.

BAHIA DE GALVEZ-TOWN (Evia – 1785)



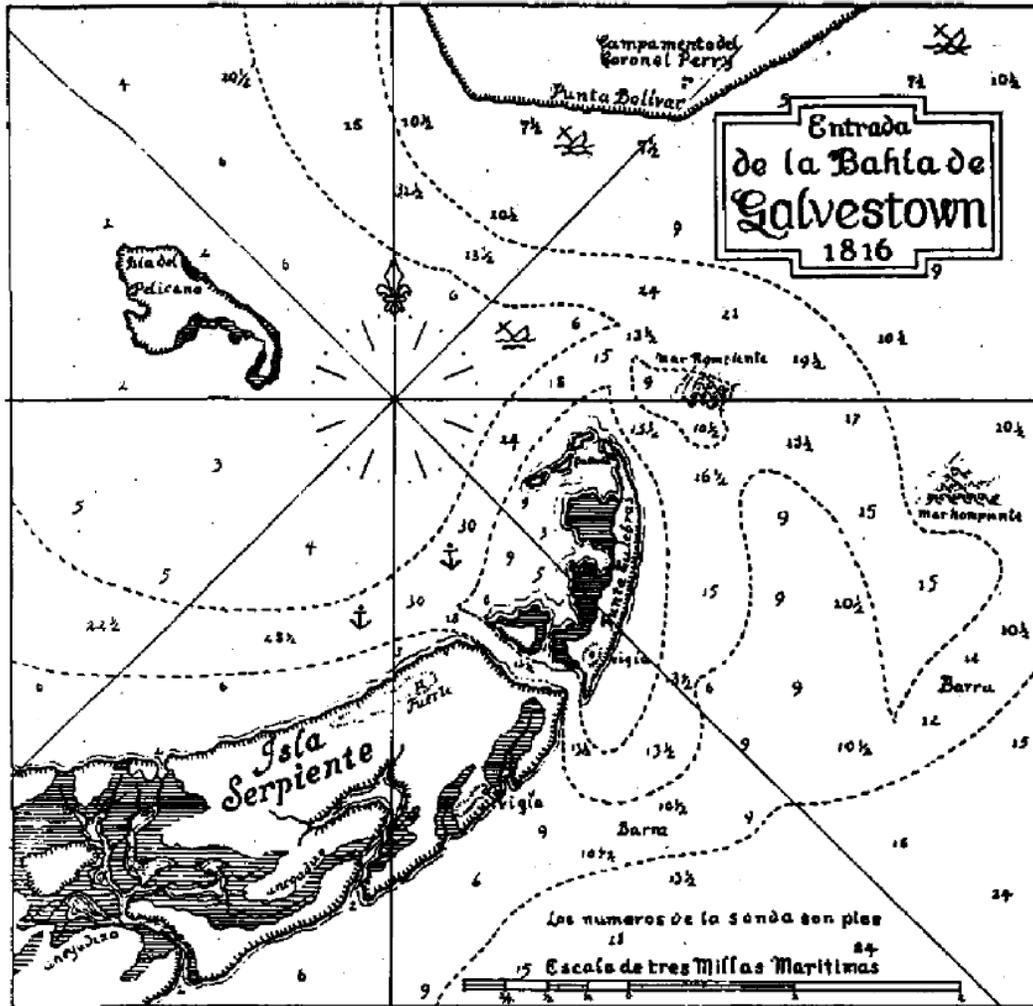
(Note that north is to the left, which shows Rio de la Trinidad, or Trinity River.)

The item labeled on the far right is *de Culebra*, or "Snake" point, hence this is the eastern most point of Galveston Island.

Compare this to the survey map of Colonel Perry of the east end of Galveston Island, just 30 years later. Perry labeled this section of the island "Serpentine Isle", and renamed the point the same as Evia, hence "Punta Culebra", with Bolivar peninsula named "Punta Bolivar".

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

Entrance to The Bay of Galvestown - Perry- 1816

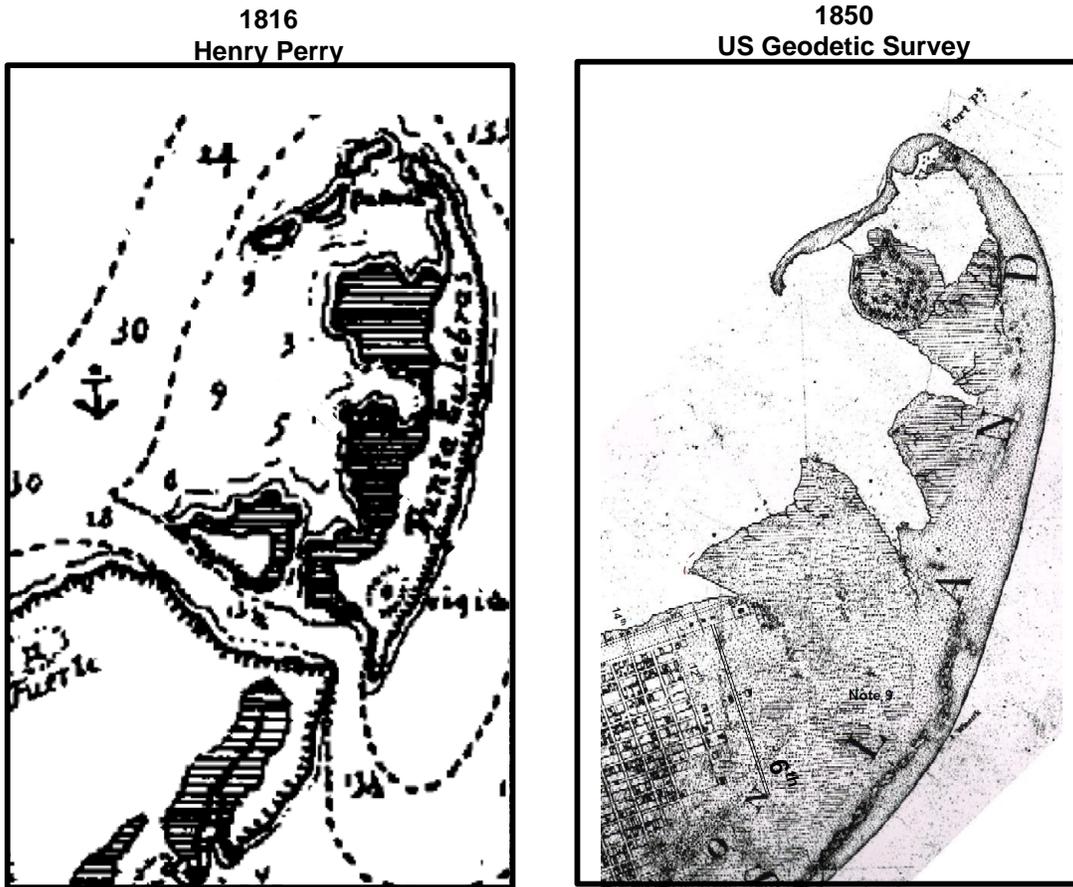


Perry did a magnificent job in depicting his survey. Some 35 years later the US Geodetic Team surveyed the east end Galveston Island in 1850 with far more sophisticated technology and trained manpower than Perry, but the similarities of the end of the island are remarkable, this after the impacts of the 1818, 1823, and 1837 hurricanes.

The east end of the island became a particular study period when publishing articles on the East End History of Galveston in 2014 & 2015. The resilience of the sand pit end of the island was quite evident and retained its shape up until the introduction of the jetties in the early 1890, there to change the shape of the end of the island forever.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

Comparison of Perry's 1816 Map with the US Geodetic Map of 1850.



A detailed picture of the very site where the City of Galveston grew up is given by Ashbel Smith, M.D. ex Surgeon General of the Texan Army, in his discussion of yellow fever wrote, "It (the island) is but little elevated above the surrounding water, quite level, destitute of trees, & presents altogether the general appearance of a prairie..."

Dr. Ferdinand Roemer likewise wrote in 1849 that "Save for a sand dune eight to ten feet high, which extends along the island on the gulf side, it is entirely flat."

But these are sight perspectives from those who visited only *the east end*, or city end of the island, rare was a glimpse taken at close hand from down the island itself. The full island observations were from mariners, or travelers who passed the island.

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One anonymous writer of 1831 stated that, "On the following day we passed Galveston Island; which differs in nothing from the land just mentioned, except that in one spot, viz. near the western extremity are three low trees growing near the water, are visible from a great distance on account of their loneliness, and serve as a convenient landmark in clear weather."

Likewise in 1837 another anonymous writer reported, "The whole island presents a dreary and forbidding prospect, with nothing to relieve the eye or diversify the prospect except three lone trees upon its south eastern side, about midway, and which stands as the only beacon to the mariner along this solitary and monotonous portion of the Gulf of Mexico."

In 1839 William Kennedy added more detail though. He wrote, "The Island is destitute of timber, with the exception of three large live oaks near its center, that serve as land-marks to the mariner." The very next year Francis Moore Jr. repeated the very essence by Kennedy, though adding, "...being apparently one mile apart."

Lastly in 1842, Bollaert adds something entirely new, writing, "Leaving the town of Galveston, and along the shore some 15 miles, the *Three Trees* are arrived at, which forms a good landmark. What is known as the *Three Trees* is composed of a clump of some 20 trees, then a small grove, and lastly, three trees."

This means that Bollaert was on land, and visited the trees, probably on horseback, which gave the first actual sighting from a traveler that the *Three Trees* were indeed three mottes, or groups of trees, that at a distance, appeared as three large trees. The description was however, exactly as Trimble & Lindsey documented such in 1837.

So Bolleart did not present the first definitive close up witness of the trees, this came from the surveyors Trimble and Lindsey in the June-August months of 1837, who because of their importance, documented the quantity and location of the trees, and listed this information near the title block of the 1837 Map.

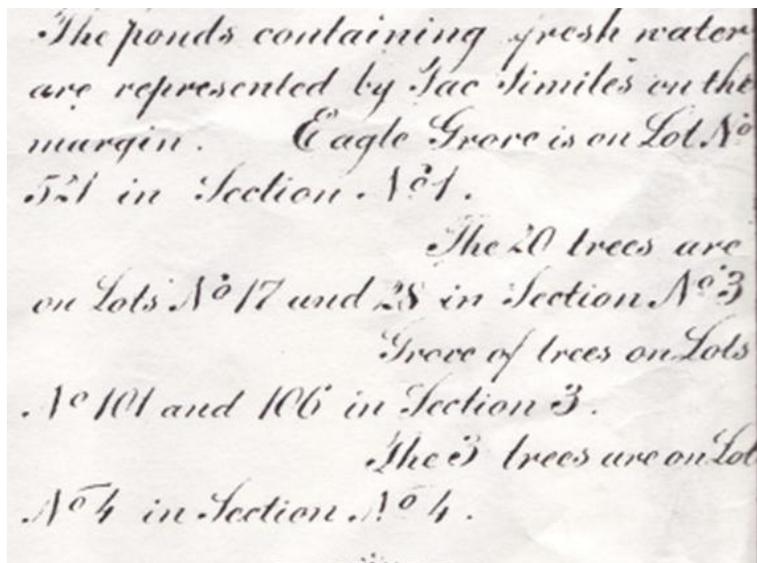
The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

The description per the handwritten revised map of 1890 which was engineered to replace the original decaying 1837 colored map is as follows:

- ***The 20 trees are on Lots 17 & 28 in Section No. 3***
- ***Grove of trees on Lots 101 and 106 in Section 3***
- ***The 3 trees are on Lot No. 4 in Section No. 4***

This places the "20 trees" in Pirates Cove Section 6 (also known as Lafitte's Cove), the "grove of trees" is on the lots where Stewarts Mansion is located, and the "3 trees" were on the southwest end of Oak Bayou in the (now) confines of Galveston Island State Park.

Section from the 1890 Revised Trimble & Lindsey Survey Map of 1837



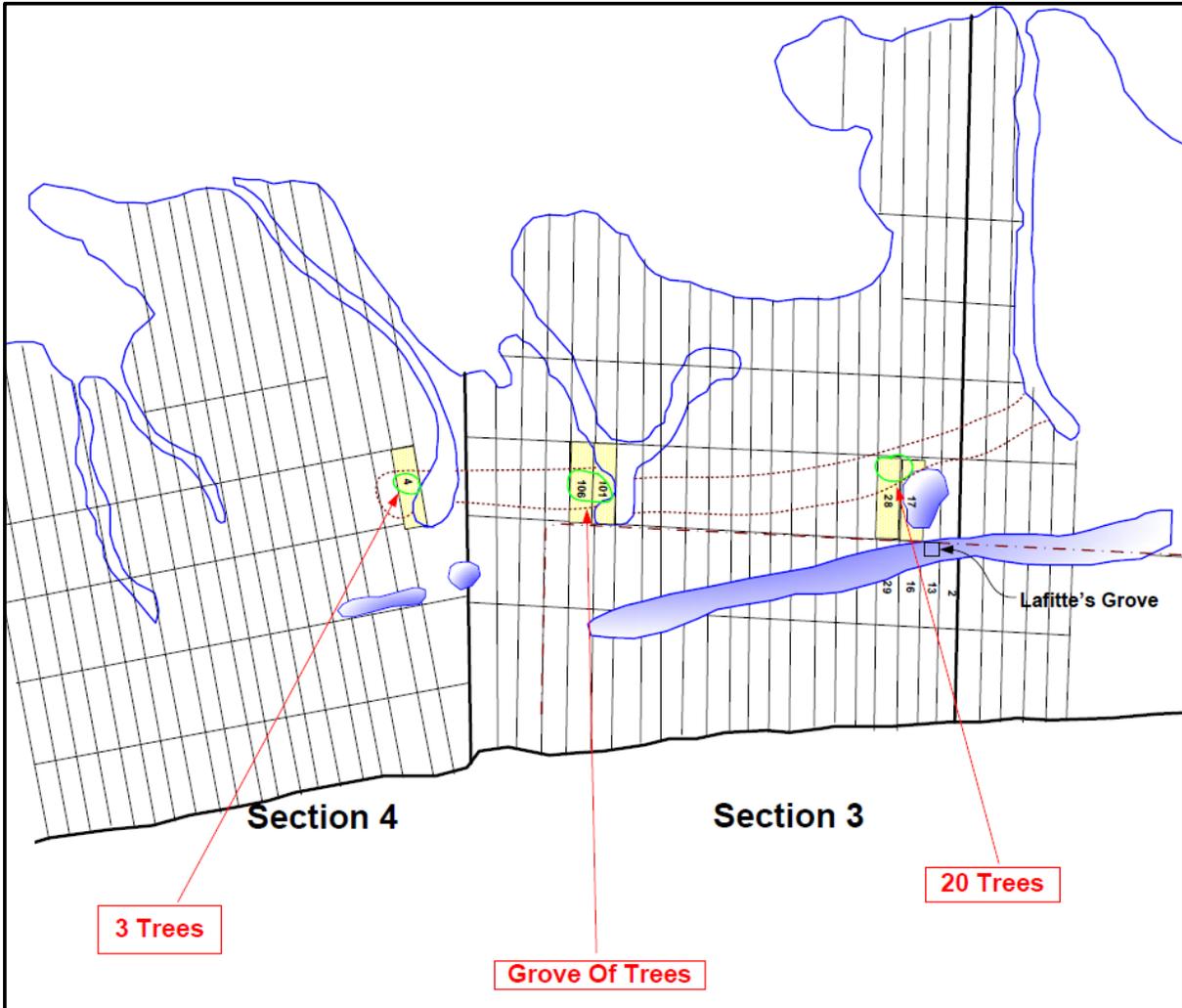
The ponds containing fresh water are represented by Lac Similes on the margin. Eagle Grove is on Lot N^o 521 in Section N^o 4.

The 20 trees are on Lots N^o 17 and 28 in Section N^o 3

Grove of trees on Lots N^o 101 and 106 in Section 3.

The 3 trees are on Lot N^o 4 in Section N^o 4.

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3 Trees		
1837-2008 Alignment		
K. Clark	Feb 2008	Rev. 0

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

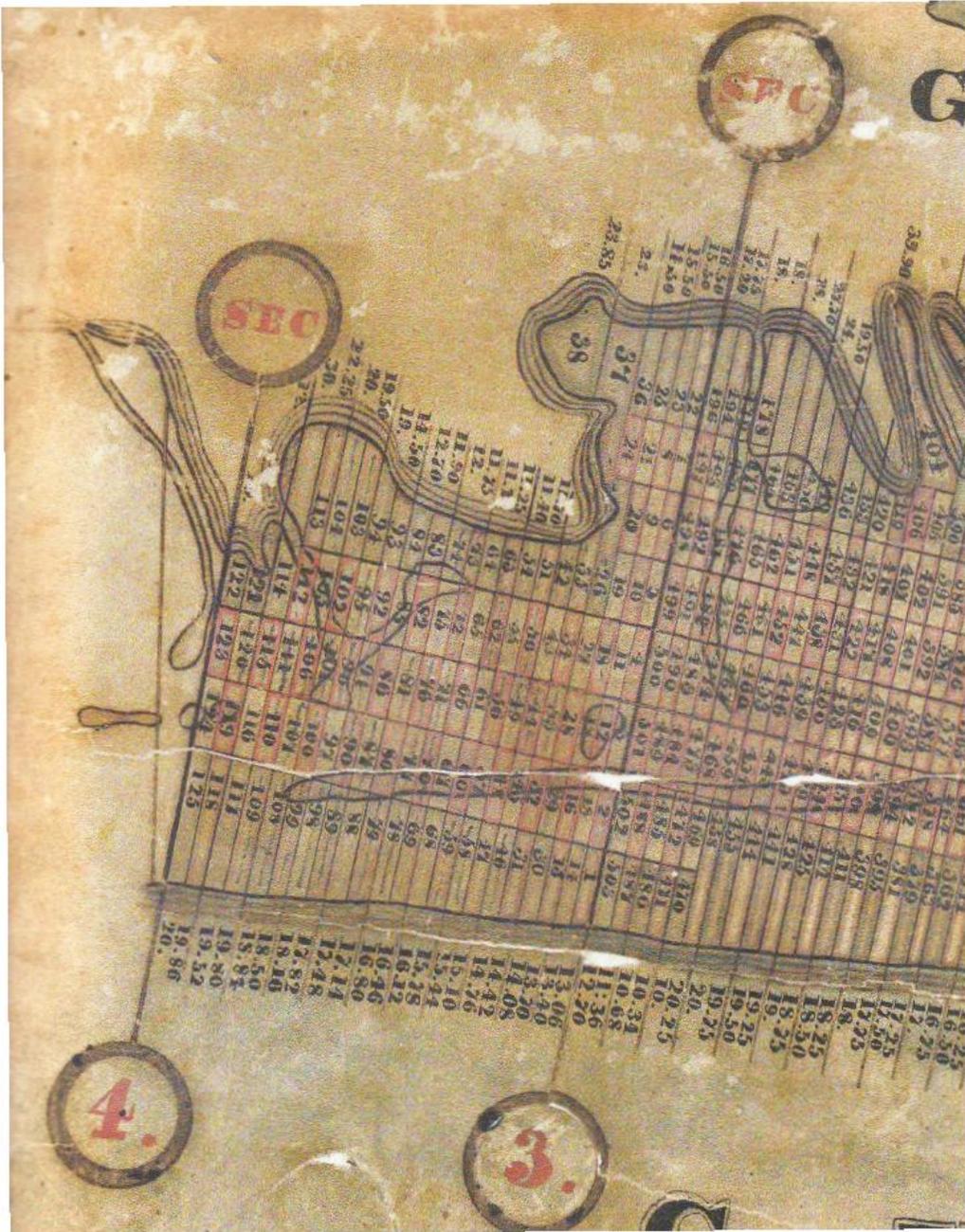


Original 1837 Trimble & Lindsey Survey Map showing decayed condition



2008 Photo taken just prior to Hurricane Ike by this author
Magnificent Oaks on the Wern Cemetery Lot-The 3rd Motte Descendent
Trees

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Section 3 of the 1837
Galveston Island Trimble &
Lindsey Survey

All lots were surveyed and marked at 10 acres,
except for coastal lots, with acreage as shown

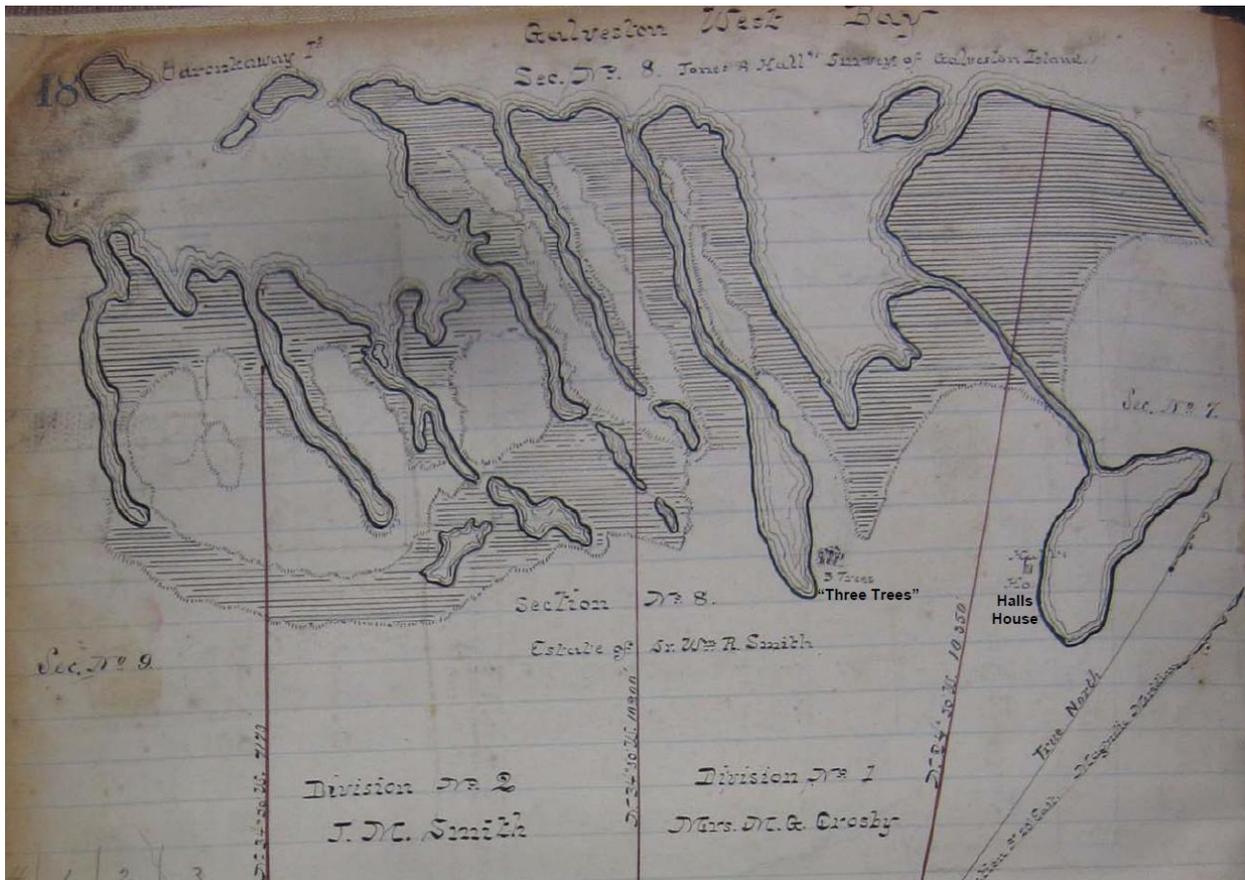
The inlet "lake" to the east of the Section 4 break line is present day Lake Como, the inlet to the east of the Section 3 break line is present day Eckert's Bayou.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

As Dyer noted, there were a succession of "Three Trees" to mock the greedy treasure seekers, such was noted on the 1874 Surveyors Book B in the County Engineers office. This location for the "Three Trees" is on the southeastern side of Oak Bayou.

Warren D. C. Hall's old home is shown on the western side of Lake Como, near where Stewarts Mansion now resides.

Jones & Hall Section 8 Survey - 1874



2012 Photograph by the author

So we now have the 1837 "Three Trees" located on Section 4, Lot 4, which is essentially just on the other (west) side of the inlet; the above 1874 "Three Trees", The Three Trees which formed the core part of Lafitte's Grove, and the "Three Trees" which sprang up on the ridge after the 1810 hurricane, as described by Dr. Dyer.

And none describe the same "Three Trees".

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

So now we must create a critical timeline to "interpolate" the probable situational of 1819.

The Interpolation and Critical Timeline of 1819

Excerpts from Dr. Dyer previously noted except for the 1837 Three Trees description

The Hurricane of 1810

In 1810 the inhabitants of the Louisiana coast west of Lake Charles were visited by a severe hurricane. The newspapers of that period stated that the storm raged for nearly three days, its full force hitting the Texas coast of West Sabine river. The Trinity and Sabine rivers were filled with saltwater for over twenty miles away from their mouths as the tides became so high. Since 1810 no West Indian hurricane has blown from the southeast for so long a period. As a result of this prolonged blow traversing over the gulf, Very high water covered the island of Saint Louis, banking up against the shell ridge and sweeping finally over it. Forty Karankawai were camped on the ridge, and according to records obtained by Colonel Warren D. C. Hall six years later, over thirty of the campers had perished.

Burial of the Cache in 1819

One of the caches was made *near three oak trees which had sprung up on the shell ridge since the storm of 1810*, nine years previously. Thirty thousand dollars in Mexican specie (Spanish) was buried, in three brass bound oaken kegs. Five men buried this treasure in 1819, and two of them were alive in 1874 when the writer got acquainted with them. In the cache was also placed the body of the Indian boatman who accompanied the party as guide, and who was knocked on the head on the principle that "dead men tell no tales."

Mutiny of the Camp in 1820

In 1820 the men of the camp had mutinied, and only two of the caches were emptied and taken onboard of the *Pride*, which carried away the officers of the commune.

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1821-1822 Period

In 1821 General John Long's men held the island and in 1822 some of the mutineers of the Laffite commune were in possession of owning some small piratical craft. No attempt therefore was made in these years to empty the cache,

1823-Dr. Parnell, Search for the Treasure, Assault by the Karankawa

In 1823 a party of twenty odd men, headed by one Dr. Parnell, landed near the ridge and encountered a band of Karankawai encamped there. Undoubtedly one of the five men who had buried the treasure must have accompanied this expedition unless they had a copy of the chart made at the time of burial, several of which were still in existence when Galveston was incorporated in 1839, and one the writer acquired.⁶ Accounts vary as to what happened on the shell ridge in 1823, a condition to which much of early Texas history has been subjected to.

The story of Parnell's adventure as related a year or two later in Austin's colony, was that the treasure seekers were encamped on the ridge, and that the Karankawai coming to their former camp, surprised the whites and routed them in revenge for the assault made on them by Long's men. Parnell's party put up no fight and several of them carried away arrows in their anatomy.

The Storm of 1823

In 1823 a storm swept away the three trees, thus destroying the landmarks by which the cache could be located

1837 Trimble & Lindsey Survey

- *The 20 trees are on Lots 17 & 28 in Section No. 3*
- *-Grove of trees on Lots 101 and 106 in Section 3*
- *The 3 trees are on Lot No. 4 in Section No. 4*

ANALYSIS

While Trimble & Lindsey provide no description of size or age of the trees, clearly the quantity and counts suggest that these trees are of

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

a "notable" age meaning of size and age to be considered worth noting and counting. To be sure, these existed 18 years earlier in 1819.

Dr. Dyer describes the burial location Three Trees as having "sprung up" on the ridge since the hurricane of 1810, meaning either he had expected that storm to have cleared the ridge of any noticeable sized trees. "Sprung up" used here does not mean necessarily from seed, it could mean rootlets from a damaged tree, or smaller infant trees. This writer examined the Wern Cemetery lot in Pirates Cove just prior to and after Hurricane Ike in 2008, and the surrounding area. The larger trees were impacted by the salt water overrun and intrusion, the smaller trees, hence shrub size, especially 6-10 feet or less (1-5 years), seemed to have no real effect. It appears that its roots were shallow enough, and the fresh rain water that followed after diluted or rinsed the upper level soil such that these small trees suffered minimally.

But the salt water seemed to have penetrated deeper into the darker humus like sand, affecting the much older trees, resulting in the loss of many, the same had occurred after the 1915 hurricane.

(See below for the Post Ike effects of salt water intrusion on the Live Oaks at Wern Cemetery)

Thus the trees in 1819 per Dyers description could have been in the 10-15 year range, thus large enough to stand out on a ridge (in 1819) that is 10-14 feet in height, with an additional 10-15 feet of tree height. Those that witnessed the trees from the 1830's indicate that the Three "Mottes" of trees could be seen from a distance in the gulf, thus confirming a taller and broader set of tree line.

The felucca carrying Nicholas the Greek, LaCassinier, and others constituting the burial party, would only need a visible sighting of trees at less than 1 ½ miles to see trees on the ridge.

The survivability of live oaks during a hurricane depends on its ability to "grip" the soil. They are one of the hardest storm trees

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

due to the strength and flexibility of the limbs and trunk. Therefore smaller stature trees not deeply rooted in the soil or rooted in loose sandy soil may not survive the onslaught of wave action, this may have impacted the younger trees throughout the ridge and any trees not securely rooted.

By 1823, the "three burial marker" trees would have been in the 14-19 year range, large enough for overrunning wave impact and high velocity winds, small enough to not have deep and broad penetration of roots.

What we do know is that by 1837, 14 years after the 1823 storm, there are only three locations of trees, hence 20 in one location, a group in another, a 3 trees in the final motte. These are the *remnants* of the 1823 storm, the survivors of salt water intrusion, wind driven water, and wind fury, and now 14 years older.

Dr. Dyer does not clarify how he knew the three trees had been swept away by the hurricane of 1823, the inference is, that these three smaller trees may have been isolated from the others. However, the answer is simple indeed. Armed with the knowledge from the chart provided by Nicholas in the 1880's, and with the information gained by Nicholas and LaCassinier, he knew the relative location of the smaller three trees, and that this location was not represented on the 1837 map. This the crux of the matter explained in terms of the three burial trees which "sprung up on the ridge after the hurricane of 1810".

Dr. Dyer published an article in January of 1920 which noted that Nicholas the Greek (Nikolai) married a Karankawa named Orta, and that upon the relatively sudden departure of Lafitte in May of 1820, she remained on the island. Afterwards, Orta joined a colony of women who had settled near Eagles Grove on the island opposite Virginia Pt. These women remained even after Long's men had gone, the women and children perishing in the great storm of 1823.

Nikolai was stranded on the Yucatan peninsula where, in 1840, he joined a vessel of Commodore Moore's fleet (of the Texas Navy) and

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

returned to Galveston in 1842. He found the Karankawa tribe extinct, and although he spent several months in search of his wife, his efforts were in vain. He was last seen in Galveston in 1895.

2008 Pre and 2011 Post Ike Photos of the Live Oaks at Wern Cemetery



Showing Salt Water Soil Intrusion Impacts from Ike

Water level on the peak of the ridge reached 3 feet deep

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

6 Battle of the Three Trees & Dr. Parnell

The post Laffite departure period after May 1820 concerning *The Battle of the Three Trees* has "differences of opinion" rooted in published history, certain facts which pertain to long ago occurrences are difficult to corroborate.

This published history includes The Papers of Mirabeau B. Lamar, De Bows Reviews in 1853, Henderson Yoakum's 1855 *History of Texas*, Homer S. Thrall's 1879 *Pictorial History of Texas*, Charles W. Hayes, The Island and the City of Galveston (1879), and Dr. Dyers own (1916,1922) personnel & direct account due to his relationship with Jane Long, the wife of General James Long.

The recounting of General James Long activities are not important unto itself, it does however lends itself to a critical timeline of possible interlaced events. The mysterious Dr. Parnell however is of great interest, as within his exploits lay the only real threat of the discovery and removal buried cache since 1819.

See General James Long and Dr. Parnell Accounts-Appendix)

Dr. Dyer's Version of the Battle of Three Trees

From The Early History of Galveston, by Dr. J. O. Dyer. 1916

The year 1821 brought Long trouble with his men. They were impatient and had a difficulty with the Carancahuas. Long was forced by his men to attack them on February 20, 1821, at the Three Trees, on the high shell ridge, near the bay shore on Galveston Island. Many accounts have been written of this battle, mostly fictitious. The battle has been erroneously attributed to Lafitte, who with two cannons and two hundred men attacked the Indians. The locality where the battle took place was surrounded by swamps and cannons could not have been used.

The Indian Battle

Long's account, given in an early issue of DeBow, states that the fight lasted fifteen minutes; that many Indians were killed; that Long

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lost one killed and seven wounded, two of whom died; that Long had but thirty men. It is hardly probable that Long gave out this account. Colonel Hall's account said that Long had one hundred men, surprised the Indians, killing thirty and taking one woman and child prisoner. Long had seven wounded.

Mrs. Long's account said the battle lasted a few minutes, the men firing three volleys. Ten Indians were killed and many wounded. One woman and her children were captured. Several were bitten by rattlesnakes in the swamps. Long had but three wounded. George Early received an arrow which pierced his thigh; Dr. Long removed it, and Mrs. Long nursed the wounded. (The arrow head that wounded George Early was presented by Mrs. Long to the author's family, and is in the Texas exhibit at the Rosenberg Library.) General Long returned the wounded and captives to the Indians and made peace with them. They never bothered his wife when left alone at the fort in Bolivar during the winter of 1821-1822.

-Yoakum says that Lafitte fought the tribe the year before.

-John Henry Brown gave the old story of the Indians capturing a vessel loaded with wine, were drunk and dancing, that Long attacked them with thirty men, killed thirty- two Indians and captured two boys, one of whom was accidentally killed.

Long lost three killed and a number wounded.

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The Dr. Parnell Accounts-Longs Historical Accounts Included

I now include Dr. Dyers Parnell account, and then have provided the chronological sequence (annotated) of Long's Battle of the Three Trees accounts as well as the Parnell accounts in the Appendix Section so that the cumulative "varied" chronological history can be understood.

The Early History of Galveston (1916)

After Long's exit Galveston was given up in 1822 to smugglers, Indians, pirates and treasurer-seekers. One of Lafitte's former vessels under Roach made the island its headquarters. Another one had been seized by the Lynx after Lafitte left, in the summer of 1820.

It hardly seems possible that Lafitte's fame should have become so exaggerated in such a short time, but in 1822 it was claimed a party of twenty treasure-seekers (the second one) under Dr. Parnell, fought the Indians. Parnell received a scalp wound.

After 1824 the Indians failed to come to Galveston. The white men on the mainland had driven them toward the San Antonio river.

Galveston's Historic Ridge, October 22, 1922

In 1821 General John Long's men held the island and in 1822 some of the mutineers of the Laffite commune were in possession of owning some small piratical craft.

No attempt therefore was made in these years to empty the cache, but in 1823 a party of twenty odd men, headed by one Dr. Parnell, landed near the ridge and encountered a band of Karankawai encamped there.

Undoubtedly one of the five men who had buried the treasure must have accompanied this expedition unless they had a copy of the chart made at the time of burial, several of which were still in existence when Galveston was incorporated in 1839, and one the writer acquired. Accounts vary as to what happened on the shell ridge in 1823, a condition to which much of early Texas history has been subjected to.

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Second Battle on the Ridge

Historians have it that Parnell's party attacked the Indians, who were drunk, having captured a French vessel with a cargo of wine. The Indians repulsed the treasure seekers, inflicting a scalp wound on Dr. Parnell the shell ridge, located on the island, was separated by a treacherous swamp from the Gulf of Mexico and vessels that were wrecked on the beach of the island where many miles away from the site of the Indian camp.

.....

The story of Parnell's adventure as related a year or two later in Austin's colony, was that the treasure seekers were encamped on the ridge, and that the Karankawai coming to their former camp, surprised the whites and routed them in revenge for the assault made on them by Long's men. Parnell's party put up no fight and several of them carried away arrows in their anatomy.

A few months later the storm of 1823 destroyed the three trees, and all though the ridge has been dug over hundreds of times, it is doubtful if the treasure was recovered because the cache was very deep.

So it appears Dyer struggles with the sensible basis for Parnell, and has changed the year to 1823, gaining the story somehow from its origination in Austin's colony** as it was known in 1824 or 1825.

****The Evolution of Austin's Colony**

The settlement of Austin's colony from 1821 to 1836 has been called the most successful colonization movement in American history. Fort Bend County was one of the most heavily populated areas of the colony. The area of Austin's Colony included land that is now contained in 19 Texas counties. Settlers began arriving during 1821 and 1822, transforming this area from an unsettled wilderness into a sparsely settled rural community. These colonists receiving the first three hundred land grants came to be called the Old Three Hundred, and over 57 of them received land in what is now Fort Bend County. One of these "Old 300" was Henry Jones, who located his league along the Brazos River south of the "Old Fort" or Fort Bend--now Richmond. Jones' league (4,428 acres) was adjoined by his brother John's quarter league. The George Ranch Historical Park is located on the John Jones Quarter League.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

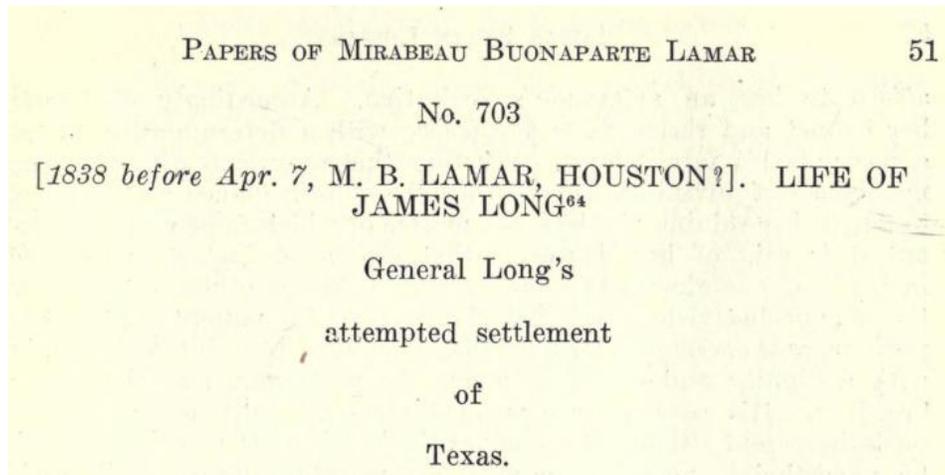
Introducing Dr. John G. Purnell.

Spelling matters, and understandably, it comes down sometimes to a matter of annunciation when scribing records, such as is the case with Dr. Parnell, who is actually Dr. John G. Purnell.

Mirabeau B. Lamar spent considerable time and effort in collecting material for a life of James Long. The results of these exertions are in his papers is a large quantity of notes and in seven folios of what appears to be the final form of a biography. Lamar never completed the latter part of Long's life, but from to other folios of notes the editor of his papers made this attempt.*

** Papers of Mirabeau B. Lamar, Vol. II, page 53, Sect. 701. Edited from the original papers in the Texas State Library by Charles Gulick, Jr. Austin. 1922*

To retype the essence of the Lamar papers covering the Battle of the Three Trees and Purnell's involvement with the James Long campaign would be highly inefficient as to the purpose, which is to convey the necessary basis content. The section 703 frontispiece is noted below, hence a collection of information captured and written prior to April 7th, 1838.



The editor notes that the first part of the folios was printed in H. S. Foote's "Texas and the Texans", Vol. 1, page 198 (*through page 217, my note*), published in 1841. Foote and Lamar have correspondence in 1838 covering multiple subjects. Foote also truncates with brevity

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

the last of Long's campaign and life, probably because Lamar had not completed this to a reasonable degree by that time.

But realize what is happening here, this is not some ancient Roman history that Lamar is capturing; it is current and contemporary with his life but prior to his arrival in Texas. The analogy is wrapping up on a subject in 2018, with a Long's life and career ending in 2002, the battle of the Three Trees occurring in 2000, but all of this previous to when the writer (Lamar) arrived in the State of Texas in 2015.

This is the situation at hand. I have noted a brief outline of Lamar below from his Volume II Papers.

Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar-Brief Chronology

1798	Aug. 16	Born at Louisville, Georgia.
1835	August	Trip to Texas; declaration of intention to become a citizen.
1836	Apr. 21	Battle of San Jacinto; Lamar commander of the cavalry.
1836	April[?]	Attorney General in President's Burnet's Cabinet.
1836	May	Secretary of War in Burnet's Cabinet.
1836	May 12	Letter to the President and Cabinet regarding the Mexican prisoners.
1836	May 26	Resignation as secretary of war.
1836	June 25	Commission as major general and commander-in-chief of the Army of Texas.
1836	Oct. 22	Inauguration as Vice-President of Texas.
1836	Dec. 10	Inauguration as President of Texas.
1839		Expulsion of the Cherokees from Texas.
1841	June	Santa Fé expedition.
1842-6		In retirement.
1846-8		Commander of the Laredo garrison.
1857	July	Appointment as minister to Argentina.
1857	Dec. 23	Commission as minister to Nicaragua.
1858	Jan. 20	Commissions as minister resident to Nicaragua and minister to Costa Rica.
1859	July	Return to the United States.
1859	Dec. 19	Death at Richmond, Texas.

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General Long, after his arrival on the Bolivar Peninsula in 1820, re-established a Supreme Council as he had done in Nacogdoches previously. Here we obtain the first brief introduction of Purnell:

Order, prudence and general propriety were now indispensable to success. Without these, there could be no public credit nor individual confidence.—General Long was aware of this, and accordingly, lost no time in reorganizing and establishing Civil government.— A “*Supreme Council*” was convened, as had been done at Nacogdoches. It met on the fourth day of June 1820. The members present on the occasion as far as known were, Long, Biglow,

Cook, Walker, Barker, Martin, Taylor, Purnell, Procello, Gutierrez and Rodrigues. Johnson returned and joined them on the first of August. After their organization, the first thing they did was to appoint a Committee to examine the record of 1819, and report on the question, whether the *present* shall be considered a new Government or a continuation of the one commenced at Nacogdoches.

Later in the time sequence of the story, hence July, Lamar engages in the narrative of the Karankaway fight:

A full and connected account of the transactions at Bolivar Point, it is now possible to give. It is forbid by the lapse of time, the loss of documents and the death of almost all the actors in the scene. If such a sketch were practicable, it would form a very vivid and interesting picture, full of life, animation and character; and could not fail to present our hero in a variety of pleasing and very favorable aspects. Enough, however, has been preserved to manifest the general character of his administration, and the formidable obstacles which he had to encounter.—To present in chronological order the occurrences which are still of record, together with such minor details as have been snatched from the hand of oblivion is all that we can now do. In the performance of this duty, we aspire to nothing but simplicity and accuracy.—Our materials are too desultory to be woven into a regular story, and we have no disposition to wander in the forbidden regions of fiction for dramatic effect. Leaving the reader to his own estimate of our homely commodities, we shall resume our narrative with the Karankaway fight.—

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The Karankaway Indians of Texas, have been generally regarded as the most brutal and disgusting of all the savage races. They are believed by many to be cannibals; and we are told by tradition, that the numerous human skulls which, it is said, were found at an early period upon Galveston, where those of unfortunate mariners, who had been lured to the Island, murdered and banqueted upon by these foul and loathsome monsters. They were once a strong and war-like tribe, occupying the coast, and subsisting chiefly by fishing. They are now reduced to a mere hand-ful; and in few years there will be no further traces of them. At the period, however, of which we are writing, they were sufficiently numerous and formidable to be troublesome to the occupants of Bolivar Point. The disposition to molest was never wanting. Indeed, it is impossible for a savage and civilized people to occupy the same country in peace and harmony. Wars must inevitably ensue; and nothing short of extermination will bring tranquility or safety. General Long very early perceived the impossibility of avoiding a collision with these Indians; and after receiving many unequivocal indications of their hostility, he resolved to anticipate their movements against him, by a prompt, vigorous and unexpected attack upon them. An opportunity of doing so, occurred very soon; and a blow was accordingly dealt them from which they did not speedily recover.—

On the 30th of July the Karankaways, about one hundred strong made their appearance upon Galveston. They were holding their war-dance.—General Long crossed over to the Island with twenty-

five men, and reached the encampment of the Indians about twelve o'clock at night. Dividing his small force into two equal parties, and placing Major Milam at the head of one of them, he advanced upon the enemy silently and cautiously without being perceived. At a concerted signal, a simultaneous charge at two different points was made upon the savages in the midst of their amusements. Being taken by surprise, the Indians suffered much from the sudden onslaught; but soon recovering from the shock, they seized their weapons and gave battle with becoming energy. At the beginning of the fight General Long slew four of the Chiefs, when by the breaking of his sword, he was exposed to imminent danger, from which he was rescued by Major Milam.—The battle now raged fiercely. The combatants fought hand to hand. It was a contest in close quarters between the Bow and the bayonet. The Indians, instead of being intimidated, were rendered more furious by their sever losses, and fought with increasing desperation. But their valor availed them nothing. Nor could their superior numbers ensure them victory. After a bloody and protracted resistance, they were forced to fly. They fled with the loss of forty of their best warriors lying dead on the field.—At dawn of day the triumphant party, returned to Bolivar Point, and received the thanks of their gallant commander for their good conduct and wonderful success.

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As a matter of mere curiosity, we cannot resist the temptation of laying before the good-natured reader a circumstantial statement of the killed and wounded, as we gather it from the official account rendered by Doctor James G. Purnell, who appends to his signature the dignatorial characters of S. G. R. A. T. which we interpret to mean Surgeon General of the Republican Army of Texas. Two Americans were killed, one of them a private by the name of Martin, who expired on the ground, and the other, Captain Kendall Davis, who died afterwards of his wounds. Among the wounded were two Lieutenants, McFall and Jones, the one being shot in the leg, and the other in the hand; and three privates, Minklin, Ellis and Early. Early had his liver transpierced by an arrow, and to the astonishment of all recovered without any serious detriment after having had a bandanna handkerchief inserted in the wound to arrest hemmorage. So at least we have heard, without vouching for the truth of the statement. The commissary McIntosh received a severe injury in the spine, while the S. G. R. A. T. himself had his cap pinned to his scalp a little over his right eye. The arrow was extricated from the scalp, *secundum artum*, by General Long with his broken sword, before the worthy surgeon could render assistance to his suffering companions. To crown the whole Sergeant Bryant was cut on the foot with an oyster shell, and Mr. Edington was stung by a Stingaree. Thus of the Americans there were in all nine wounded and two killed. The loss on the part of the Indians as we have just stated were forty killed, and the balance, we presume to have been all more or less damaged.

** *The above accounts from pages 86 & 87*

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Compare this with Henderson Yoakum's History of Texas account published in 1855, pages 221-223.

The chief trouble of the colonists, however, for the first three or four years, was with the Carankawae Indians.‡ This tribe, occupying the coast opposite the colony, had been greatly exasperated against the whites by the conduct of the Lafitte men. Again, in 1821, after the pirate-chief had left Galveston, some twenty persons, under the direction of Dr. Purnell, visited the island in search of supposed buried treasures. The company, failing to discover the treasure, found that a hundred of the Carankawae Indians were at the "Three Trees." It appears that a fine schooner had been run into the bay by pirates, and there abandoned. The party of whites ascertained that the Indians had visited the schooner, and had taken away the sails and stretched them as an awning at the Three Trees. They therefore concluded to attack them. Having made the necessary preparations, they set out in time to reach a bayou, running into the pass, just at dark. They landed, and found the Indians under the live oaks, dancing and singing. The company was divided into two platoons, and thus, marching up to within forty yards of the Indians, opened the fire by platoon. At the first discharge, the savages flew to their weapons, strung their bows, and sent a shower of arrows in the direction of the enemy. They soon, however, retreated into a swamp of high grass, carrying off their dead and wounded. The Americans, succeeded in killing nineteen out of twenty-one in the camp. The Indians were so completely surprised, that they did not return the fire.*

*** Statement of L. M. Choate, MS.**

The "ledger of accounts" for wounded and dead varies, but that is not the issue here, who really counts how many Karankawai were on the ridge at night prior to the attack, and renders an audit afterwards...

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Lamar continues the Long narrative describing the bleak situation on Bolivar for the men where supplies and funding is dwindling and there is an emphasized hope that Trespalacios can carry the day in New Orleans, but fails, and that General Drennon then conspires against him.

The provisions at Bolivar Point being nearly exhausted, it became necessary for Trespalacios to repair to New Orleans for fresh supplies. Previous to his first debarkation from this City he addressed a communication to some of his Revolutionary compatriots of Mexico, appealing to them for pecuniary aid for the prosecution of his purposes; and it was with the expectation of receiving from that quarter the assistance solicited, that he now sails for New Orleans. On his arrival, however, to his great discomfort and confusion he finds that his friends had not responded to his communication; and as his chief reliance was upon them, for the necessary means to supply the wants at Bolivar, as well as to meet his own daily, individual expenses, he soon found himself entangled in a labyrinth of difficulties from which it was no easy matter to extricate himself.—And now it was, amidst his present embarrassments, that the *Treasury Notes* which he had issued to the garrison were brought up in judgment against him.—He writes to General Long that his life is conspired against, and that he is forced to shelter himself in the domicil of an old friend; but the truth of the case is this. Some fifty of the persons attached to the enterprise, had accompanied him to New-Orleans, for the purpose, probably of rioting upon their *Treasury Notes*; and finding on their arrival that Trespalacios possessed neither credit nor resources, and that the Scrip which he had issued to them, was valueless and worthless, they took no pains to conceal their dissatisfaction nor hesitated to conspire against him. Drennon was at the head of the conspiracy. After much consultation among themselves they finally drew up a document of which the following is a copy
1821 dated 24th May 1824. “We the undersigned Officers, soldiers and citizens of the Republic of Mexico make choice of and do resolve to support as our Commanding General, James Drennan. To this we bind ourselves to each other by the honor of soldiers and swear to support it at risk of our lives, liberty and fortunes.”—To this was appended fifty names, the most of them of persons whose habits precluded them from being either useful or ornamental to any under-

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taking. John Hewitt and John G. Purnell were deputed to communicate these proceedings to the deposed chieftain; which they did in a letter of wonderful impudence, telling Trespelacios that they were willing to retain him and Genl. Long as members of the *Supreme Council*, and that suitable provisions should also be made for his Mexican friends; but that the garrison and all its stores as well as whatever funds he might have in his possession belonging to the enterprise, should be turned over to Col. Drennon, whom he would regard for the future as his Commanding Officer. The letter was delivered by Hugh Crawford, who had but a short time previously, been cashiered by a Court-Martial, and very soon after the present occurrence died drunk in the streets of New Orleans. Drennon now writes a most social and affectionate letter to Major Milam at Bolivar Point, and Purnell addresses another to Genl. Long saying to him that he will doubtless be greatly surprised at their proceedings, but hopes he will give to them a cheerful acquiescence, and winds up with the following language — “please permit my respects to Mrs. Long and accept my best wishes for the prosperity and happiness of your family.” Drennon however, did not return to Texas to enjoy his honors; things at Bolivar Point remained “*in statu quo*”; and we know nothing further of our pseudo commander than what we gather from a single sentence in a letter from Almonte to General Long. The writer says — “It appears that Drennon began to look out. He says that he is going to Canada; but God knows whether his Excellency will be able to clear out without first going to goal.” — And so ends the matter.

While Trespelacios was thus harrassed by Drennon and others in New-Orleans, General Long at Bolivar Point was equally annoyed by the Col. Santiago Modella, whose mutinous conduct, however, had a more tragical termination, as will be seen in the next Chapter.—

After Long's death in 1822, Dr. Purnell moved to Mexico, and made an attempt at becoming an Empresario as Stephen F. Austin had successfully done. Dr. John G. Purnell and Benjamin Drake Lovell, who were living in Monterey at the time, petitioned for a grant and received it on October 22nd, 1825 for 200 families, but the contract was never fulfilled.

In summary, Yoakum took the more romantic view that Dr. Purnell was on the island with Long's men to search for the buried treasure, and then found the Karankawa's stirred up after the pillaging of the schooner. Lamar positions that Long's men under a duress of dwindling supplies, found out about the wrecked schooner and attacked at night the

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Karankawa's, Dr. Purnell came along as he was Surgeon General of the Texian Army.

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Lafitte's Grove-An Island History

- It would be entirely remiss and inappropriate to present the Lafitte treasure basis without including a history of Lafitte's Grove. Laffite's grove was a popular excursion by the "Little Suzie" railroad 12 miles down the island in the 1880's and 1890's. The Nottingham Lace Factory (1891-1892) and City of South Galveston (1892) brought additional visitors. Complete with pavilion, horse racing, bandstand, and ball field, the 1900's hurricane destroyed most of the installations. The "Grove" was indeed a grove of oaks approximately 450-500 feet square, which existed on original Trimble and Lindsey Lots 16 and 29. Adjacent to this was the land grant in 1932 by Maco Stewart to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Sidney Sherman Chapter, who in 1964 confirmed their 300ft X 300ft section of land to be the northwest corner of Lot 13, which bordered to east of Lot 16. The crowing location was a group 3-4 aged oaks (by 1890's, app 40-50 years old labeled the "Three Oaks" or "Three Trees" thereby confusing the old original use of the term "The Three Trees" which marked the battle of Long's Men in 1821 on the elevated ridge to the north. Noted pen and ink and watercolor artist Emil Bunjes (1902-1972) made hundreds of drawings of the architectural heritage of old Galveston over a 40 year period. along with watercolors of Galveston history. He started working as a book binder for Clark and Courts in Galveston in 1923, several of his sketches included Lafitte's Grove.

Below: Excerpts from the Brian Spinks article, "Laffite's Grove Has Long History". Galveston Daily News, April 24, 1932.

Here once no embattled farmer stood, but a buccaneer who plied his trade on the Spanish Main and preyed on gold-laden galleons of old Spain returning home from Mexico.

The spot some 12 miles down the island is an important one in the history of Galveston.

This ground is soon to be converted into a park by the Sidney Sherman Chapter, Daughters of the Republic of Texas; the 100 ft square area was recently given to the Chapter by Maco Stewart.

The site is known variously as Lafitte's Grove and as the Three Trees. It was a particularly outstanding spot and attracted considerable notice during earlier history of the island because the three giant oaks were the only trees on the island except mesquite and salt cedars. This gave credence that Lafitte used the Grove as a landmark during his sojourn here.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

In 1915 the oaks died and today only their fast decaying trunks remain. But new trees have sprung from roots, and in time this progeny will assume the same proportions as their parents.

The origin of the trees has long been subject to speculation. Of all the theories, none is more plausible than that of Henry Ostermeyer, lifelong resident of Galveston Island, who for 69 years had lived within a stone's throw of the grove.

In an interview recently he called attention to the series of ridges on the lower end of the island. The grove is located on one of these ridges, and it is his belief that an oak log washed down one of the rivers that empty into the gulf or bay, and washed up on the sandy beach of the ridge and buried, from thus sprang the trees.

Mr. Ostermeyer and his father have lived on the lower end of the island for the past 90 years or more. He recalls vividly when the trees were in their prime and when the grove was a popular picnic spot.

Hundred of Galvestonians formerly flocked to the spot on Sundays to spend the day and to eat their lunches in the shade of the three oaks. This led to the establishment of a dance pavilion and amusement park there. This was just about everything needed to have a good time, including a shooting gallery and 5c beer.

In the days when the grove was a popular outing spot transportation to and from the city was furnished by a short railroad. It was known as "Little Suzie" and it consisted of a wheezing, puffing little locomotive and a few cars.

In 1900, the amusement center along with practically everything was swept away by the hurricane. But the oaks weathered it and were all unharmed.

It was not until 15 years later that they died. Mr. Ostermeyer noted the fresh water ponds surrounding the grove were dry preceding the 1915 storm, and that they filled with salt water after, the thirsty roots drank too much, killing the trees.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Sketch of the three oaks by Emil Bunjes in 1936
Remnants from the 1915 Hurricane salt water intrusion

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

Laffite's Grove Excursion Advertisements

1883-1894

1883

ANNUAL PICNIC AND EXCURSION

OF THE

GALVESTON ARTILLERY CO.

Will take place at

LAFITTE GROVE

(On line of Texas-Mexican Railway)

APRIL 21.

Trains leave 9th and Market at 8.50, 11.50, 2.50
Center and N. at 9.00, 12.00, 3.00
Returning trains leave Lafitte Grove at 10.30 a. m.,
1.30, 4.30 and 7 p. m.

GRAND PICNIC,

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 1883,

AT LAFITTE GROVE.

(On Texas-Mexican Railroad.)

Trains leave—

Winnie and Ninth at 9 a. m., 12 m. and 3 p. m.
Center and N. at 9.15 a. m., 12.15 and 3.15 p. m.
Barton Vorstin at 9.30 a. m., 12.30 and 3.30 p. m.
Thirty-fifth and N. at 9.45 a. m., 12.45 and 3.45 p. m.

**Prizes for Dancing, Fat Man's Race,
Etc., Etc.**

BRASS AND STRING MUSIC IN ATTENDANCE.

Tickets, 50 cents; children half price.
Tickets for sale at ticket office, Center street
and N. **W. J. HOULAHAN, Manager.**

1885

TO-DAY,

S. O. M. PICNIC

AT

LAFITTE GROVE.

TIGHT-ROPE WALKING.

Base Ball—Island City vs. Gulf City.

Five Mile Go-as-you-please Race;

Lucas, Kelly, Bruce, Alberti, Lisdall, Unknown.

Trains from Ninth and Market and Center and N
at 9 a. m., 1, 3, 5:30 and 9 p. m.
Returning, last train at 9 p. m.

TICKETS, ... 25 CENTS.

1889

EXCURSION

TO

Lafitte's Grove.

THE GALVESTON AND WESTERN RAILWAY will run Excursion Trains to and from Lafitte's Grove To-Day as follows:

Leave Mechanic and 8th st. at 10.15 a. m., 2 and 5 p. m., stopping at 16th, 21st, 31st and 36th sts.
Returning leave the Grove at 12 m., 3.45 and 8 p. m.

MUSIC AT THE GROVE.

Tickets for sale at Mechanic and 9th, N and 16th, N and 21st, and N and 31st.
Fare, round trip, 25 cents. Children, 15 cents.

The Galveston Daily News 5-16-1891

SUNDAY EXCURSIONS

TO

LAFITTE GROVE

OVER THE

GALVESTON & WESTERN RY.

Three Trains Each Way.

Leave Ninth and Winnie streets at 10 a. m.
Leave Ninth and Winnie streets at 3 p. m.
Leave Ninth and Winnie streets at 5 p. m.

Trains will stop at Fourteenth, Twenty-first and Thirty-first streets and at the Conventories.
Round trip made in two hours. Costs 25 cents.
Music and refreshments on grounds.

June 14, 1891

Lafitte's Grove.

The visiting excursionists from New Orleans, among whom are many of the descendants of the buccaneer chief, out of tribute to whose memory the owner named this beautiful resort, are making arrangements to have a right royal time there next week. The owner is having a life sized painting made of the hero of Chalmette to be displayed on the occasion. He is also engaged in writing a history of Jean Lafitte and his times, whom he styles Lafayette the Second.

An additional train will leave the city at 12.30 o'clock to-day with the music and those who desire to attend the races. There will be a classified race for a fine set of buggy harness, either silver or black rubber mounted, and also a scrub race for inland ponies only, for a \$10 gold plate. The last train will leave the grove at 7.30 p. m.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

January 25, 1894

PLEASURE AT LAFITTE'S GROVE.

An elegant society affair came off last Tuesday at Lafitte's grove. Miss Clara May Shannon, complimentary to some of her young lady friends who are visiting the island, took about fifty couples down to that beautiful outing place and entertained them royally. There was a fine oyster roast and lunch prepared and served up by the colored attendants.

Mesdames Colonel Shannon, J. G. Goldthwaite, I. C. Fisher, J. A. Robertson, J. C. McDonald, Celsus Willis, J. A. Hill and Mr. A. M. Shannon, Jr., chaperoned the party. A full string band discoursed delightful dancing music, which the young ladies and their escorts fully enjoyed, and all returned to the city before dark highly pleased. The return trip was made in thirty-five minutes, which is the shortest time on record.

Skull and Crossbones Lafitte's Grove Map- 1935



This map shows Galveston Island and the skull and crossbones mark the site of Lafitte's grove, where the pirate placed his curse which has held for more than a century

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Lafitte's Grove - A Popular Excursion Destination

Photo was taken facing north

Property was owned by M. A. Barr in the late 1880's

Galveston Evening Tribune August 12,
1885

**—M. A. Barr will take charge of Lafitte
grove and make it what it should be—a
popular resort.**

Galveston Daily News October 4, 1888

CAPITAL CULLINGS.

LAFITTE GROVE.

WASHINGTON, October 3.—[Special]—Mr.
M. A. Barr has been appointed postmas-
ter at Lafitte Grove, Galveston county, Tex.

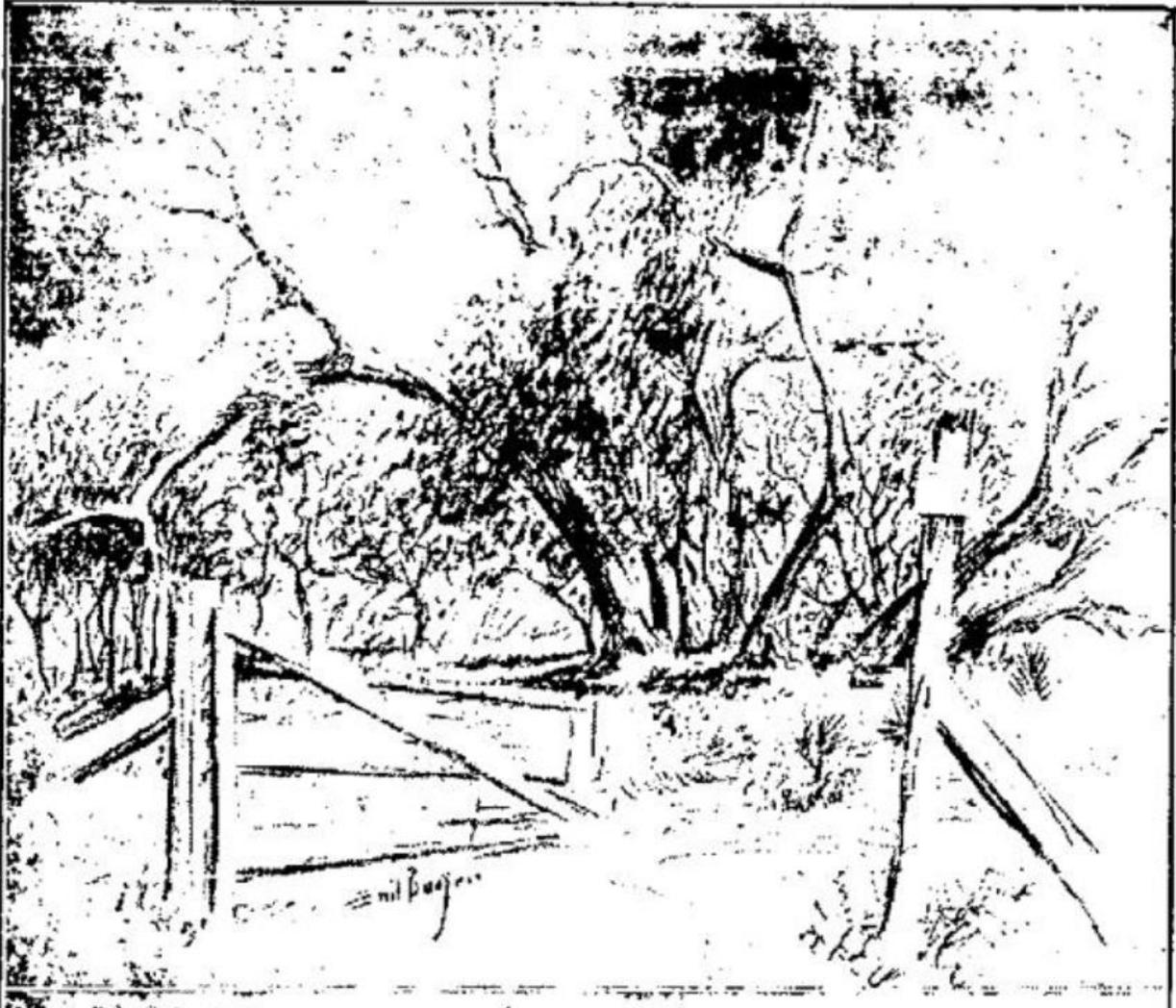
The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



HISTORIC THREE TREES.

1932 Photo-Remnants of the Lafitte Grove "Three Trees" after the 1915 hurricane salt water incursion.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



1935 Emil Bunjes Sketch of the Remnants of the Lafitte's Grove "Three Trees". Sketch perspective from "S" Road through the Ostermeyer gate looking south.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



1936 Emil Bunjes Sketch of the Remnants of the Lafitte's Grove "Three Trees". Sketch perspective looking north. Compare to the image below.



The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



(UPPER) Henry Ostermeyer on horseback at the Lafitte's Grove decaying Three Trees in 1932

(LOWER) Adjacent home of Henry Ostermeyer -From noted artist Emil Bunjes in 1935

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

Section of Civil Engineer Willet's Rare 1891 Survey Map
-Showing Laffite's Grove Area Access and Turnaround Track-

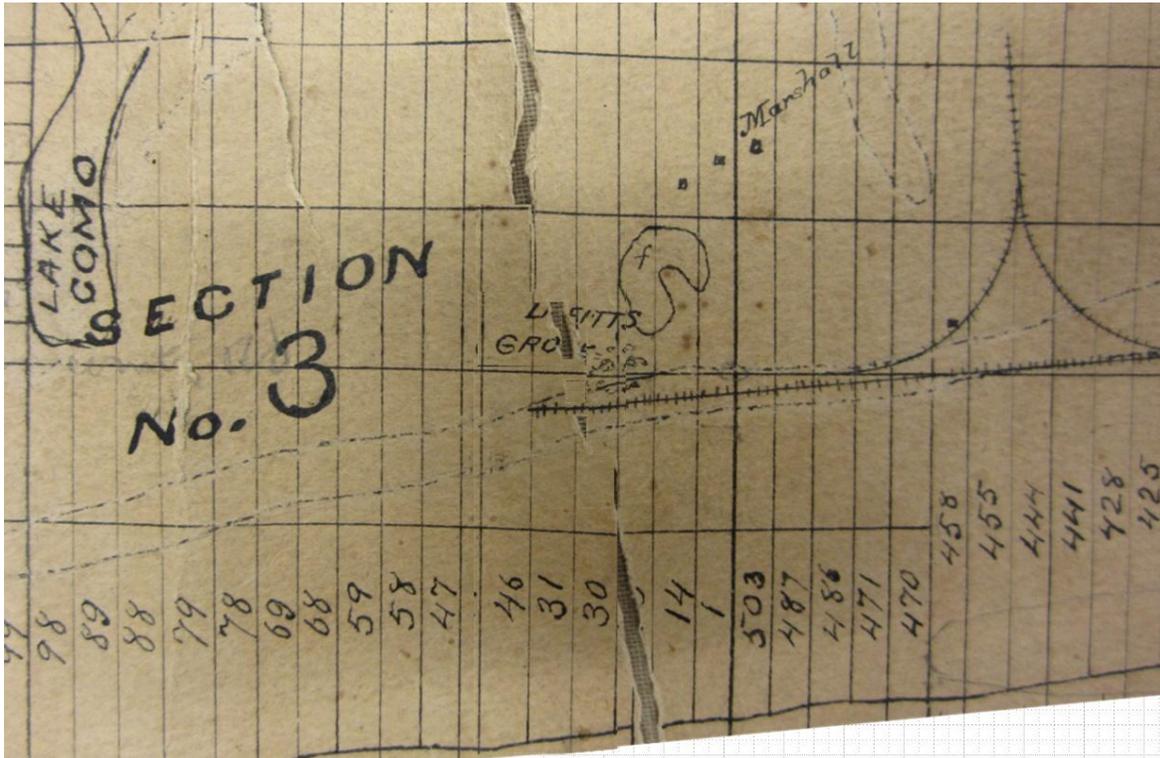
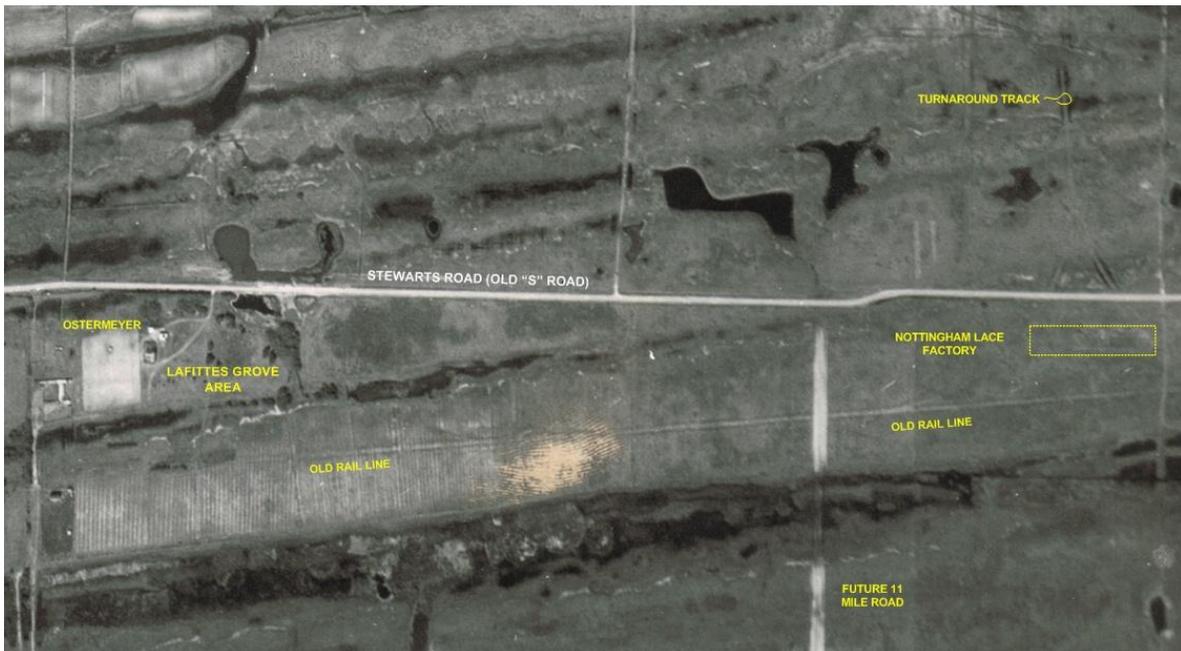


Photo by the writer, from a Map in the County Engineers Office

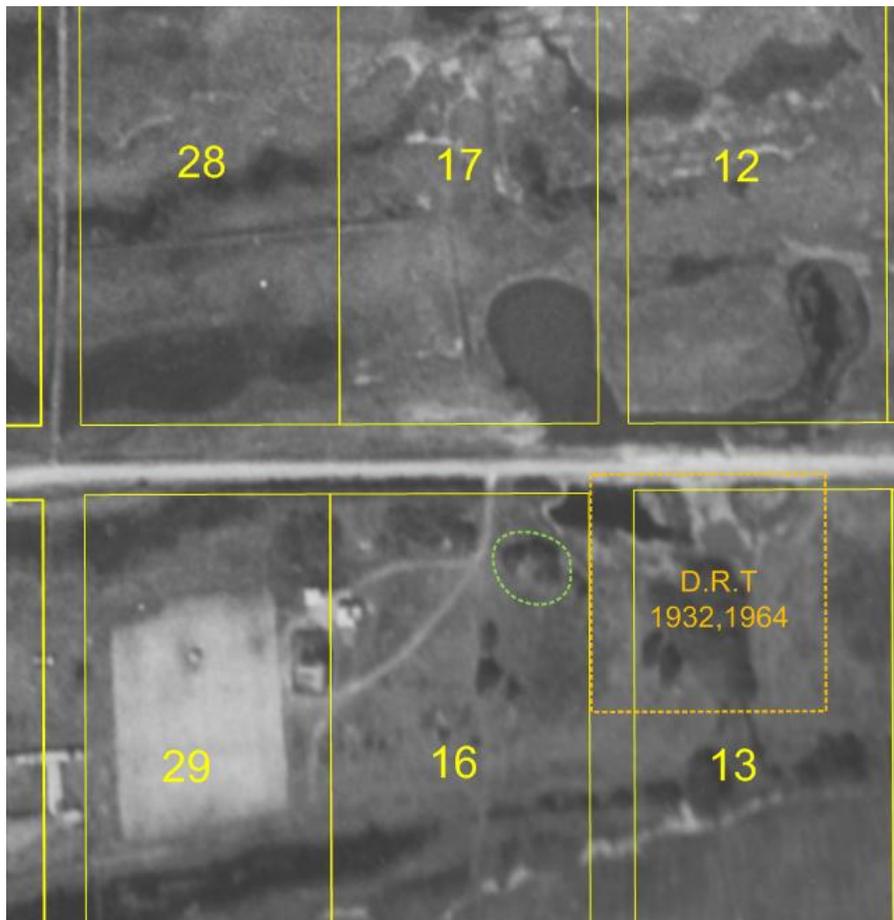
Tobin 1930 Aerial - Laffite's Grove Section



Labeled section of Tobin Aerial Photograph owned by the writer

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

1930 Tobin Aerial



Showing Location of the Lafitte's Grove "Three Trees" Remnants

Lots are from original 1837 Trimble and Lindsey Island Survey

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Lafitte Grove Marker

**August 22, 2009 Panoramic
Photos**

**Showing effects of salt water intrusion on oak trees
-Taken by writer after clean up post hurricane IKE-**



**Lafitte's Grove Marker on Stewart Road July 9, 2009
Taken prior to post IKE cleanup**

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Remnants of Lafitte's Grove Live Oaks impacted by the salt water intrusion from Hurricane Ike in 2008

These Live Oaks are descendent trees from the original Lafitte's Grove Live Oaks

History repeats itself almost a century after the 1915 hurricane

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island



Old Willie Ostermeyer Residence just west of Lafitte's Grove
Prior to destruction after hurricane Ike (my photo August 22, 2009)



The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

7 The Storm of 1823

Three hurricanes are noted by Dyer prior to the 1837 "Racers Storm" which devastated the Island and tracked across the United States, the 1837 hurricane recognized by NOAA. These were the storm of 1810, hurricane of 1818, and the hurricane of 1823.

Early 1800's storms, especially in the south where sparse inhabitants lived and where newspapers were few and far between, did not get coverage or manifest their history in records. These were captured and spread by word of mouth, diaries, and through interviews with the "old population", and an inveterate interest in capturing history

Such is the case of the 1823 hurricane, which per Dr. Dyer struck San Luis Pass and the Galveston Island area in September of 1823, where it defaced the landmarks and swept away the Three Trees. The individual investigative historical efforts by Flora Humphries, who penned her earlier articles under her husband's name, hence Mrs. T. A. Humphries, dug out the effects of the 1823 hurricane through the course of many other historical findings.

Born Canadian in 1892 she migrated to the United States in 1894, Mrs. Humphries enjoyed a career in dressmaking and participated in civic organizations of Freeport and Alvin in the 1920's. Starting in May of 1931 she provided a steady stream of local and southern Texas historical articles in the *Freeport Facts* Newspaper, which also included the "Early History of San Luis Pass" published in the *Frontier Times* September 1931 edition.

In 1936 she published her first book, "Tales of the Coast Country." As research, Mrs. Humphries visited old plantations and interviewed many of the older community who yielded their stories. She researched court proceedings that went back to the Mexican Land Grants including old deeds and wills. Great events in Texas were included from the early days of Indians and Spanish conquistadores through the days of the Republic, and revealed the characters of the people who came here with Stephen F. Austin.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

The "Early History of San Luis Pass", *Frontier Times*. September 1931.

Mrs. T. A. Humphries.

At the southeastern tip of Brazoria county, and almost surrounded by the waters of West Bay, San Luis Pass and the Gulf there lies a lonely peninsula which apparently is a spot accursed; a locality where, to one of an impressionable nature, there comes a feeling of insecurity, while the air seems filled the hovering of a brooding, ominous presence. The history of this locality, as well as the west end of Galveston Island, consists almost entirely of a successful narrative of physical suffering and thwarted ambitions. With distressing frequency its shore has been raked by the relentless fury of tropical hurricanes. Many times has its coast been lined with the pitiful remains of the victims of the Gulf.

*One of the earliest tragedies connected with the neighborhood of the San Luis peninsula **occurred in 1823**, when a number of settlers arrived on Galveston Island from Illinois. They brought household goods and many fine cattle and enthusiastically set about establishing their homes, **but in the fall of the same year, a storm swept across the island, drowning settlers and all of their stock.***

Vanished as completely as the fabled Atlantis is the once thriving City of San Luis, of which there exists today not a trace and scarcely a memory.

She also published a series of historical articles in the 1950's as well. The Alvin Citizen Newspaper was first published in February 1950; the announcement on February 4th confirmed that Mrs. Flora Humphries was the news editor. She was an officer in the Asa Underwood Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and the Lamar Fountains Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). Succumbing to a brief illness in December of 1957, she was buried in the Confederate cemetery in Alvin under the direction of the Froberg funeral home.

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

While Dr. Dyer did not reveal his source for the storm, his uncles first arrived on Galveston Island in the 1840's, his father Leon Dyer came over as part of the New Orleans Grays to aide in the struggle of the Texas Revolution, arriving just after the Battle of San Jacinto in April 1836. Traveling afterward throughout Brazoria County, it would have not been difficult to pick up this type up information from the planters along the coast, just 13 years after the storms impact. Warren D. C. Hall, an early Brazoria County planter who retired on Galveston Island residing where the present Stewarts Mansion is located, could have also been the source. (See also *Foreword, Early History of Galveston, 1916.*)

SAN LUIS PENINSULA - 1853



Early History Of San Luis Pass

By Mrs. T. A. Humphries



THE southeastern tip of Brazoria county, and almost surrounded by the waters of West Bay, San Luis Pass and the Gulf there lies a lonely peninsula which apparently is a spot accursed; a locality where, to one of an impressionable nature, there comes a feeling of insecurity, while the air seems filled with the heaving of a brooding, ominous presence. The history of this locality, as well as the west end of Galveston Island, consists almost entirely of a successive narrative of physical suffering and thwarted ambitions. With distressing frequency its shore has been raked by the relentless fury of tropical hurricanes. Many times has its coast been lined with the pitiful remains of the victims of the Gulf.

One of the earliest tragedies connected with the neighborhood of the San Luis peninsula occurred in 1823, when a number of settlers arrived on Galveston Island from Illinois. They brought household goods and many fine cattle and enthusiastically set about establishing their homes, but in the fall of the same year, a storm swept across the island, drowning the settlers and all of their stock.

Vanished as completely as the fabled Atlantis, is the once thriving City of San Luis, of which there exists today not a trace and scarcely a memory. In 1838 a company of Philadelphia land speculators sold lots on the west end of Galveston Island and on the mainland across San Luis Pass, at a spot which is only a sand spit, but where, with the proverbial enthusiasm of their kind, they proposed to build a port which should rival New Orleans. They planned to connect this city with the rich plantations of Brazoria and Matagorda counties by means

of a railroad and a canal. They had found a fairly good natural channel but failed to take into consideration the changes that could be made by tides and storms.

People flocked to the new harbor, many from the United States and many from Europe, backed by foreign capital. The town attained a mushroom growth, and at the end of five or six years, boasted of a population of 2,000 souls, a wharf 1,000 feet long, a number of warehouses, several hotels and two newspapers, the San Luis Advocate and the Times.

Shipping news reported as many as eight or ten ships in the harbor at one time. The vessels bound for foreign ports took loads of cotton, while the small and coastwise boats carried freight or passengers between San Luis and Galveston. There were vessels from Liverpool, London and Hamburg, though the majority were from the United States.

The first cotton compress in Texas was set up on the wharf at San Luis by a Mr. Brown. It was equipped with a huge wooden screw and operated by mule power.

The most authentic information concerning this vanished city may be obtained from twenty-two copies of the Advocate which are preserved in the Texas University Library. The life of this popular newspaper was coincident with that of the town. It was printed by Mr. S. J. Durnett, at the corner of Market and Liberty streets, in San Luis. He used a Washington press and made a specialty of job printing.

To this remote coastal city came many professional men of eminence. In the issue dated Oct., 20, 1840, there is an advertisement to the effect that

INTERESTING HISTOR OF BRAZORIA COUNTY AND BRAZOS RIVER AS WRITTEN BY FREEPORT WOMAN

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the first of a series of articles by Mrs. T. A. Humphries, of Freeport, written on the history of Brazoria County and various places and things of interest within the county.)

By MRS. T. A. HUMPHRIES

Into the past, present and future of the state of Texas is woven the story of the Brazos River. The mighty stream has given its name to that earliest division of colonization, known as, "The Department of the Brazos," to the "Municipality of Brazoria," and finally to that territory of boundless possibilities, in which we feel such pardonable pride, our own Brazoria County.

Although there are many legends concerning the naming of the river, the one which seems more nearly substantiated by history, tells of the crew of a Spanish ship, perishing with thirst in the gulf. Notic-

ing that the blue of the salt water was crossed by streamers of muddy current, they followed it to the mouth of a wide river which was on a great rise. After renewing their water supply, they expressed thankfulness by naming the river "Los Brazos De Dios," the arms of God. In the archives at Madrid, is an account written by Cabeza de Vaca, of a visit to the Texas coast in 1528, in which he tells of passing the mouth of a great river where they "Took fresh water from the sea."

Across the ever widening panorama of the years, there moves toward the mouth of the Brazos a strange procession; a procession as irresistible in its advance as the current of the mighty river. First we see the Indians, who held undisputed dominion of the gulf coast for many centuries, coming here for their game, fish and oysters.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN)

First in a Series of Brazoria County Historical Articles by Mrs. Humphries -1931

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

FREEPORT, TEXAS, THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1931.

San Luis Pass In Year 1883 Boasted A Population of 2000, Two Newspapers, 1000-Foot Wharf, Warehouses and Hotels; First Cotton Compress and Steamboat In Texas Constructed Here

(Editor's Note: The following is the fourth of a series of articles by Mrs. T. A. Humphries, of Freeport, written on the history of Brazoria County and various places and things of interest within the county.)

By MRS. T. A. HUMPHRIES

VANISHED as completely as the fabled Atlantis, is the once thriving city of San Luis; of which there exists today not a trace and scarcely a memory. In 1883 a company of Philadelphia land speculators sold lots on the west end of Galveston Island and across San Luis Pass on the mainland. At this spot, which was merely a sand spit, these men proposed to build a port which should rival New Orleans. They found a fairly good natural channel but failed to take into consideration the changes which could be made by tides and storms. They planned to connect this port with the rich plantations of Brazoria and Matagorda counties by means of a railroad and a canal.

People flocked to the new harbor, most of them from Europe and backed by foreign capital. The town attained a mushroom growth, and at the end of five or six years, it boasted of a population of 2000 souls, a wharf 1000 feet long, a number of warehouses, several hotels and two newspapers, the San Luis Advocate and the Times.

Shipping news reported as many as eight or ten ships in the harbor at one time. The vessels bound for foreign ports took loads of cotton, while the small and coastwise boats carried freight or passengers between San Luis and Galveston.

There were vessels from Liverpool, London and Hamburg, though the majority were from the United States.

On the wharf at San Luis, a Mr. Brown set up the first cotton compress in Texas. It was equipped with a huge wooden screw and operated by mill power.

The people of this town depended on cisterns for their water supply, and for many years after the buildings had disappeared there remained one giant cistern about sixty feet across. At one time it had been surrounded by water sheds

and used as a town reservoir. It was built of brick brought from Philadelphia in sailing vessels.

The most authentic information concerning this vanished city may be obtained from twenty-two copies of the Advocate which are preserved in the State University Library. The life of this popular newspaper was coincident with that of the town. It was printed at the corner of Market and Liberty Streets in San Luis. In the issue, dated Oct. 20, 1840, there is an advertisement to the effect that Drs. Richardson and Smith propose to edit a journal to be published quarterly, and to present in a condensed form, not only the improvements in the science, but of a faithful portrait of the principle "Endemics of Texas, their treatment and medical topography." These doctors evidently stood high in their profession; for editorial comment states that Dr. Smith wrote in Paris, France, in 1832, a work on the Cholera Spasmodica, and that Dr. Richardson was one of the most eminent and successful surgeons of whom the country could boast.

The owner of the Advocate, Mr. Darnett, sold his press to Mr. B. F. Neal of the Galveston News, while that paper was in the first stages of its existence. During the transfer, the boat overturned and the press dumped into the waters of the bay, but it was rescued and is still in use in the job office of the Galveston News.

In 1844 the people were discouraged and the majority had moved away; many going to Galveston and others to Indianola. In two or three more years the town was abandoned.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE)

Concrete Would Be A Good Investment

SINCE the state and county is going to make a large investment in providing an 18-foot concrete slab for the center of Second Street, it seems that it would be the part of good business for the city and property owners on the street to come forward and finish the job by providing the necessary curb and gutter and additional paving to make a complete paved street of Second street from the west edge of town to Pine street.

One concrete paved street would make a permanent paved thoroughfare through town, which would provide a durable foundation upon which to build the street system of the city.

No town in beginning a permanent paving program can include the entire street system of the city. A start must be made and added to

Further Study Regarding History of San Luis Pass

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

The Freeport Facts (Freeport, Texas) • 16 Jan 1936, Thu • Page 3

Former Freeport Club Woman Is The Author Of Historical Book

Mrs. T. A. Humphries, of Alvin, president of the Alvin Garden Club, and former president of the Freeport Woman's Club, in Freeport, has recently completed her first book-length publication, "Tales of the Coast Country." The author, who made her home here for a number of years, has made numerous contributions to this paper as well as to Houston and Galveston papers. Her chief interest is in Texas history and historical adventures in the state.

For material for this timely book Mrs. Humphries has various sources. She has visited many old plantations in search of relics. She has also made visits to old people who had stories to tell, old records have yielded their share of stories. Such rec-

ords include court proceedings that go back to the time of Mexican land grants and old deeds and wills found in Brazoria county's files.

Great events in Texas from the time it was occupied by the Indians and Spanish conquistadores, through the days of the Republic are presented in these stories. It also reveals the characters of the people who came here with Stephen F. Austin.

Mrs. Humphries is also working on a second book, also a historical, which will be completed soon.

Mrs. T. A. Humphries of Alvin, president of the Alvin Garden Club, and former president of Freeport Woman's Club in Freeport, has recently completed her first book-length publication "Tales of the Coast Country."

Mrs. Humphries Publishing First Book, "Tales of the Coast Country" in 1936

The Treasure of Lafitte on Galveston Island

The Galveston Daily News (Galveston, Texas) · 21 Dec 1957, Sat · Page 2

Mrs. Flora Humphries

Services for Mrs. Flora Lillian Humphries, 66, a resident of Alvin for 62 years, will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday at Grace Episcopal Church in Alvin, the Rev. I. F. A. Krzcke officiating.

Burial will be in Confederate cemetery, Alvin, under the direction of Fruberg funeral home.

Mrs. Humphries, who died Friday, was active in numerous civic and social organizations.

She is survived by a sister,

Mrs. Gladys Steffen of Alvin, two nieces, Mrs. Adeline Jackson of San Antonio and Mrs. Charlotte Daniel of Alvin, and a nephew, W. E. (Bill) Steele of Fort Worth,

The Brazosport Facts (Freeport, Texas) · 26 Dec 1957, Thu · Page 8

Mrs. Lena Steel Serves As Hostess For Asa Underwood Chapter Meeting

Mrs. Lena Steel of Alvin was hostess for a regular meeting of the Asa Underwood Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, recently, due to illness of Miss Flora Humphries who was scheduled to entertain at that time. Co-hostesses were Mrs. W. B. Killebrew and Mrs. Fred Much.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" an entertaining seasonal poem by Dr. Seuss was read by Mrs. H. E. Lawrence of Alvin.

Flowers and a DAR marker have been placed on the grave of Mrs. Kittie Nash Groce, a member who died recently, and those present at the meeting observed a moment of silent prayer in her honor.

Blue was used as the color theme for Christmas decoration in the Steel home, and cedar boughs were used throughout the house. The refreshments carried out the Christmas theme with ice cream moldes topped with miniature lighted candles, fruit cake nuts, mints, and spiced tea. There were 21 members and two guests.

Mrs. Steel and Mrs. Christine Brown of Houston, in attendance

Mrs. L. L. McMurrey will be hostess at the next Chapter meeting, at her home in Wax Columbia, on Friday, Jan. 17. The program for that meeting will be given by Mrs. J. W. Condry of Angleton, who will speak about Phillmont Ranch.

Death of Mrs. Humphries in December 1957, she was also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution