

LEOH Trip

June 15, 2018
Galveston

The fun began at the seawall when we boarded a Duck Boat!



Our duck boat captain toured spots of interest on land, then on sea in Offats Bayou, a good spot for pelican sightings



Laffite
Jean Laffite

He has been called "The Corsair," "The Buccaneer," "The Terror of the Gulf," and "The Hero of New Orleans," at three separate times. U.S. presidents have condemned, exonerated and again condemned Jean Laffite's actions.

Laffite hated being called "pirate," for, as he believed himself a "privateer," serving an economic purpose in a new country that needed the inexpensive goods. When he at last sailed away from American shores, he felt betrayed by a country that didn't understand the difference.

Jean Laffite born between 1778-1780, but where or when is lost to history. Some historians believe he was born in the Bordeaux region of France, while still others believe he was born on the Caribbean island that is now the country of Haiti. Laffite seemed to change the story of where he was from each time someone asked, creating and sustaining an air of mystery.


It is said that his temper was ferocious; most accounts support that; a man who could be kind and serene, but turn panther-like when pushed.

But, this need for violence to maintain order was rare. To lead, he depended on and honed his innate flexibility; he knew how to play to the moment — to be the gentleman, the rascal, the radical, the entrepreneur, or the pirate to fit the situation at hand.

Women loved Laffite. That he was aware of his seductive qualities is evidenced in the manner by which he sought — and won — female company. A regular at the formal balls in New Orleans, usually a guest of some rich merchant or landowner, he tantalized the belles in the room with his courtly demeanor and fine-cut figure, which he primed in the finest cloths and silks of the day. He waltzed as well as the high society crowd. However, Laffite played both sides of society, also attending to the ladies called the quadroons, women who were at least in part ladies of color, who were members of their own society in New Orleans.

His life was full of contradictions and it is believed by many that a poem titled "The Corsair" written by Lord Byron was about Laffite.

"He left a Corsair's name to other times, Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes."



PIRATES!
Legends of the Gulf Coast

Following a delicious seafood lunch at BLVD Seafood, we headed over to *Pirates! Legends of the Gulf Coast*. Our tour guide, appropriately dressed in buccaneer garb, gave us lots of insights into the hardships of a life at sea back then. Pirate Jean Laffite spent quite a bit of time in the Galveston area, and apparently was the subject of much pirate "gossip" regarding his conquests on sea as well as land!



Our final stop was next door at the *Haunted Mayfield Manor*. The manor was a home turned into a temporary morgue following the Galveston storm of 1900. It must be said that some LEOH members chose not to take the tour of this haunted house!