AN EARLY GALVESTON PISTOL
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Legends of artifacts possibly dating from the days of Jean Laffite on Galveston Island abound. Rarely, however, are these accounts verified, and even more rarely are they accompanied by the actual artifact.

An early pistol found in Galveston over thirty years ago is an exception. According to documents residing at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty, Texas, a rare pistol was uncovered in the early 1960s under the thoroughfare now known as University Boulevard, on Galveston Island's East End. The pistol was excavated by a worker repairing either a sewer or water line and reportedly sold to Mr. William Simpson of Simpson Galleries in Houston.

The firearm was loaned by Mr. Simpson to the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, and later, via a letter dated July 30, 1977, donated to the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center.

Mr. Simpson wrote, “Please deliver old, rusty pistol which you have on loan from me to the Texas Library and Historical Commission for the Jean Laffite [sic] Collection at the Sam Houston Centre at Liberty as I have donated it to that institution.”

Documents from the Sam Houston Library refer to the pistol as follows: “Flintlock pistol with wooden stock and brass mountings, c. early 19th century (?). Iron lockplate. 5 x 16-1/2” (12.7 x 41.9 cm). Excavated from site of Jean Laffite’s camp on Galveston Island, TX.”

The precise location on University Boulevard where the pistol was found is unrecorded. General intelligence holds that the area near the northern area of University Boulevard, where the University of Texas Medical Branch now stands, was probably at least partially occupied by Laffite's settlement of Campeachy. Later, approximately in the late 1830s, the settlement of Saccarap occupied much of the same site. Thus, the pistol might be a remnant of either Campeachy or Saccarap.