Editor's note: this is Part I of a two-part series which analyzes various purported likenesses of Jean Laffite. Part I contains an introduction, an overview of the analytical process, and a description of two of the nine images analyzed. Part II of the series contains a description of the remaining seven images analyzed, the results of the analysis, and a reference section, and will be published in the next issue of The Laffite Society Chronicles.

Introduction
Various drawings, paintings, and daguerreotypes purporting to depict the facial appearance of Jean Laffite have appeared in articles, books, and as part of the contested collection of Laffite material housed at the Sam Houston Regional Library in Liberty, Texas. Little consensus of opinion exists concerning the validity of any of these representations.

This paper describes an investigation which measures the facial features of several of these representations and makes comparisons among them. Several purposes exist as motivation for the present research. First, the authors seek to determine if any of these images are of the same individual. Second, evidence is evaluated to determine if any one or more of the graphics may be inferred to be accurate representations of the facial features of Jean Laffite. Third, comparisons among early drawings and later daguerreotypes at Liberty are analyzed to provide additional evidence either for or against the legitimacy of the library's Laffite collection and, hence, of The Laffite Journals.

The Analytical Process
Image analysis is currently an expanding science, being used in fields such as criminology, medicine, engineering, and anthropology. Employment of the computer as a tool for image analysis has been reported in a study by Lillian Schwartz, a pioneer in computer graphics and consultant to A.T.&T. Bell Labs.

A recent paper has reported the "discovery" of a previously unknown portrait of Abraham Lincoln (the "Kaplan Lincoln"), and compared it with known portraits of the president. The author of the work is a medical doctor associated with the American Hospital of Paris at Neuilly, France (Frechette, 1994). Dr. Frechette, whose academic background does not appear to include forensic anthropology, has employed what is referred to as the "canon of the vertical Golden Proportions", which concludes that "facial proportions can be determined mathematically". The methods employed by Dr. Frechette use overlays and anthropomorphic analysis based upon anatomical features such as "lateral commissure", "malar prominence", "nasal bridge", "alar cartilage", etc. Although Dr. Frechette has concluded that the Kaplan Lincoln is indeed the portrait of a young Abraham Lincoln, the findings are disputed by others. Authentication of the Kaplan Lincoln would carry significant economic concomitants.

The current study employed a different method, essentially "invented" by the authors. Each graphic representation was read via high resolution scanner into a Macintosh computer, with the resulting images clarified. All equipment employed is in the laboratory of Olson Photo Associates of Anaheim, California, owned by Mr. Ken Olson. Mr. Richard Cordero, computer specialist with Olson Photo, has executed much of the computer work.

Since the images were analyzed using the computer screen "pixel" as the unit of measure, the reduction and/or enlargement of the likenesses to a common size was not necessary. The distance between the center line of the eyes and the corner of the mouth was held comparable for all subject images.

Approximately twenty-five different measurements of the facial structure have been made. Each measurement has been compared to the aforementioned constant, resulting in a ratio. Each picture then has its own unique set of ratios which may be compared with those of other images.

[Editor's note: in some of the following paragraphs of this section, reference is made to several of the subject likenesses; the likenesses are described more fully in the portion of this article titled "The Images".]

As an example of the measurement analysis, consider the Laffite by Little. The distance between the center line of the lips and the center line of the eyes is 252 pixels, and the distance between the center line of the eyes and the bottom of the left ear is 159 pixels. This provides a ratio of 0.630 (159 divided by 252).
Not all measurements were possible on all pictures. The Laffite by Jarvis, for example, is a three-quarters view of the privateer seemingly speaking or singing and thus with the mouth contorted. Measurements involving his left ear are, due to certain poses, not possible, as in the case of the Telfer Laffite, where this organ is not represented.

Measurements involving areas covered by hair were estimated when the researchers were confident of accuracy. If doubt existed, the measurement was omitted.

Statistical analyses were conducted in which standard "t tests for related measures" were derived using the set of ratios from each picture. Inferential statistics was used to measure the probability that observed results are accidental and, as a result, suggest which sets of results may be attributed either to chance or to some systematic mechanism. Results which are due to chance are said to be "non-significant". If, however, the results indicate a low probability that they are a product of chance, the relationship is called "significant".

The probability that a relationship is accidental, or one of chance, is expressed, for example, as "p .01". This means that the probability of these results occurring by chance is smaller than .01, or less than one in one hundred. Many behavioral scientists have adopted p = .05 as a 'cut-off' point between statistical significance and non-significance. For purposes of this paper, the lower the probability of chance, the greater the probability that any two given images are of the same person, based upon the facial measurements employed.

Several caveats are worthy of mention in the analysis of the raw data. First, this work only considers certain two-dimensional measurements. Numerous features, such as the shape of the nose, are not a part of this study.

Second, high probabilities would be expected in the analysis of any two human faces. Comparison of a human face with that of an animal would produce probabilities of a much smaller order. A subsequent study could include comparisons of known non-related individuals and comparisons of a single individual at different ages. This process would assist in the establishment of standards, or norms, against which the findings of this paper could be compared. Photographs of well-known and often photographed individuals could be analyzed at the same ages as the Laffites of the images in this study. Age-related changes could then be more accurately evaluated and, again, used to establish possible norms against which the Laffite images could be compared.

Third, alternative techniques in facial feature analysis are available, other than the statistics-based method employed here. The authors were, during the progress of this study, in communication with a forensic police artist who is skilled in visual, holistic comparisons, but was not familiar with statistics-based evaluation.

Finally, neither of the current authors are trained forensic anthropologists, the field in which this research most appropriately resides.

Also under investigation in the current study is a likeness of Dominique You in the Jarvis painting and a later drawing of You which is part of the collection at the library at Liberty. The likeness in the Jarvis work is, unfortunately, not of sufficient quality to permit detailed analysis.

Only two of the pictures in the study are actual photographic reproductions, the Liberty Laffites #1 and #2. The other images are artists' representations and will vary, particularly as a function of the skill of the artist. The Laffite by Gros, if indeed authentic, was painted by a highly respected and known French artist, whereas the Laffite by Little was painted by Jean Laffite's granddaughter, and is representative of a lesser skilled artist.

Other likenesses purported to be of Laffite exist which were not included in this study. A painting by C.M. Forteza possibly depicts Laffite with others, " ...gambling for high stakes" (Wiesendanger, 1971). No artist named Forteza has been associated with the locales of Laffite, and the authenticity of this being a likeness of Laffite is not established. The general, holistic, appearance of the presumed Laffite is, however, very similar to the image by Jarvis, and the settings compatible. The Forteza work is part of the collection of W.E. Groves.

Dr. Reginald Wilson, Laffite Society member of Dayton, Texas, has supplied the authors with several additional images he has located during his extensive research at the library at Liberty. These were received after this study update was completed.

The Images

Nine different graphic likenesses of Laffite were analyzed and compared, and are discussed below in approximate chronological order of production.

1) Laffite by Gros - This is a full-length painting by the French artist, Gros, dated 1804,
showing Jean aboard a ship, holding a sword. If one accepts that Laffite might have been born in the year 1780, he would have been twenty-four years old at the time of this portrait.

Baron Antoine Jean Gros was born in Paris in 1771 and died at Bas-Meudon in 1835. He was a pupil of David and was a major influence on both Gericault and Delacroix, and held an important position in the development of the romantic movement in France. "His highest achievements were three paintings of Napoleon, 'The Bridge at Arcole' (1796), 'Napoleon Visiting the Victims of the Plague at Jaffa' (1804), and 'The Battle of Eylau' (1808). He departed from the conventions of Neoclassical historical painting by combining a colouristic bravura with dramatically crowded compositions, both derived from his study of Rubens and the Venetians -- an example that Gericault and Delacroix were to follow.

"The large-scale realistic depiction of contemporary events was also a departure from Neoclassical convention, while his heroic, almost godlike treatment of Napoleon is strongly Romantic in spirit.

"The son of a miniaturist, he entered David's studio in 1785, and left for Italy (1793) with David's help; in Genoa he attracted the interest of Josephine, who presented him to Napoleon. He followed the army to Arcole, which led to his first Napoleonic epic, 'The Bridge at Arcole'. In 1801 he returned to Paris, where his work was highly regarded, and he received many portrait commissions; he was a chevalier of the Legion of Honour (1808) and an officer (1828), and was a member of the Institut (1815).

"The exiled David bequeathed his studio to him, and a commission to decorate the Pantheon cupola occupied him intermittently between 1811 and 1824. Under the Restoration he executed some fine portraits (Mme. Recamier in Old Age, 'Girl with a Jet Necklace'), but, mindful of David's criticism of his colouristic experiments, he turned back to mythological painting in a colder, more conventional, Neoclassical study."

Gros was created Baron by Charles X, but his work was derided by younger artists; for this and more personal reasons he committed suicide.

There are major works of his in the Louvre and Versailles; he is also represented in many French provincial museums, and in Boston (Fogg); in Cleveland and Detroit; in Moscow (Puskin); and in Washington (NG). (Lit. J. Tripier Le France: Histoire de la Vie et de la Mort du Baron Gros (1880); R. Escholier: Gros, Ses Amis et Ses Eleves (1936); G. Delestre: A.J. Gros (1951) (Norman, 1977).

The Gros Laffite was allegedly an original part of a large collection of purported Laffite memorabilia currently located at the Sam Houston Regional Library in Liberty, Texas. This painting, however, has been reported to have been destroyed during a fire while in the possession of John A. Laffite (aka Laffin).
2) *Laffite by Jarvis* - This painting, executed on a mahogany board, is housed within the Cabildo at New Orleans, and has long been attributed to artist John Wesley Jarvis. Jarvis was born in South Shields, England, in 1780, and died in New York in 1840. Attempts to accurately date the Jarvis painting produce their own set of difficulties. According to *Early Artists of New Orleans, 1718-1918*, he was an active artist in New Orleans from 1821 to 1835. Per Lyle Saxon, who unfortunately presents no documentation, the Jarvis *Laffite* was painted in 1812. This time frame is, however, inconsistent with other datings of the painting and a general chronology of events surrounding the life of Laffite. Another source, perhaps more reliable, but again devoid of documentation, is Glenk's guidebook to the Cabildo, which dates the painting to 1805, one year after the *Laffite* by Gros.

A review of Jarvis's whereabouts during the period casts doubt on these estimates. According to the informative *Early Artists of New Orleans, 1718-1918*, Jarvis began his career in Baltimore in 1785 when he was apprenticed to Philadelphia engraver Edward Savage. He moved with Savage to New York City in 1801, and continued on his own in New York until he returned to Baltimore in 1810. After three years he returned to New York, where he remained as the foremost portrait painter of that city for the next twenty years.

An assumption may be made that the *Laffite* painting was not executed in New York City, in that no evidence exists to place the subjects, Jean and Pierre Laffite and Renato Beluche, in that city. Therefore, the work might have been painted elsewhere, perhaps in New Orleans. Indeed, Jarvis did travel to New Orleans during five winters, 1820-21, 1821-22, 1828-29, 1829-1830, and 1833-34. These dates have been established through journals of others (e.g. that of Edward Fenno, a merchant from Philadelphia who settled in New Orleans in 1819), and advertisements in local papers by Jarvis (e.g. *The Gazette*, December 20, 1821).

The present authors are unaware of any documentation which places Jarvis in New Orleans earlier than 1820. It has, however, often been asserted that Jarvis spent most winters in New Orleans between 1816 and 1834 while maintaining his permanent studio in New York. Contemporary sources do not, however, confirm these earlier dates (*Early Artists of New Orleans, 1718-1918*).

Jarvis was commissioned to paint portraits of the heroes of the War of 1812 for the New York City Hall, and engaged Henry Inman as an assistant. Because of a portrait of Andrew Jackson that is a member of this series, previous sources have placed Jarvis in New Orleans in January, 1815. Current sources contradict both the site of creation and the date of the Jackson portrait, claiming that it was executed in New
York City in 1819.

Solely via reference to documented sources, the Laffite painting could date only as early as the winter of 1820, a time period during which Jean would have been in residence at Galveston. Even accepting the general date of Jarvis’s earlier tenure in New Orleans, the painting could date only to the winter of 1816, i.e. just months prior to, or possibly concurrent with, Laffite’s departure for Galveston.

Jean Jarvis suffered a stroke in New Orleans early in 1834, became partially paralyzed, and returned to New York City, where he spent the remainder of his life, never returning to New Orleans. He died in New York on January 12, 1840.

Where was the Jarvis work created? Although no definitive answer is available, several places might logically be discounted, including the Maison Rouge in Galveston and its counterpart in Grande Terre, Louisiana. Even though the dates of Jarvis’s documented presence in New Orleans overlap those of Laffite in Galveston, it is unlikely that Jarvis visited the Island City. He was, however, a social acquaintance of the Laffites and was given to a flamboyant lifestyle and heavy drinking, conditions which would not completely preclude a social visit to Galveston.

The destruction of the Laffite commune on Grande Terre in September, 1814, preceded most estimates of Jarvis’s arrival in New Orleans. Charles Tenny Jackson, his fictional Captain Sazarac, has written, "... and in the one picture that I cared about, done down at Lafitte's red fort before the Americans plundered it, I had the bad taste to paint them in with my captain [a reference to Dominique You and Renato Beluche]." Although the Jackson novel contains much that is accurate, this item is probably not. Likewise, Jackson has Jarvis stating, "My new assistant is very clever at painting birds -- Monsieur Audubon is crazy to paint birds". Although John James Audubon did apply to Jarvis as an assistant in January, 1821, he was not accepted (Early Artists of New Orleans, 1718-1918).

Based solely upon Early Artists in New Orleans, 1718-1918, speculation suggests that this famous painting was executed following Laffite’s destruction of Galveston, a rather unlikely occurrence.

The Jarvis Laffite shows Jean Laffite with his brother Pierre, Dominique You, and possibly Renato Beluche, sitting on a short stool during what appears to be an evening of smoking and drinking. Jean’s countenance is drawn in the three-quarters view with his mouth open, presumably in the act of singing. Pierre is standing and filling a small clay pipe. Dominique is sitting next to Jean on a short stool smoking a pipe and holding a jug. The remaining figure, thought to be Beluche, sits on a stool at the right side of Jean. As suggested by Saxon, Jarvis may well have engaged in parties and drinking bouts with the Laffites. His convivial habits led to periods of deterioration and poverty. This behavior was in stark contrast to that of his Uncle, John Wesley Jarvis, the founder of Methodism.

[To be continued.]