only building left standing. According to diaries of refugees of General Lallemand's expedition, who were at Galveston at the time, five of Laffite's ships anchored in the bay were sunk. Laffite went to New Orleans to get financing from his agent, Joseph Sauvinet, and the New Orleans Associates. This implies that the $800,000 was also swept into Galveston Bay.

The following story is from Ray Miller's *Galveston* (Austin, 1983):

Confederate soldiers discovered some old coins in the sand while they were building breastworks on the beach at Galveston during the last year of the war. The account in the "Tri-Weekly" described the coins as Spanish doubloons. The paper said there were several thousand of them. Everybody supposed they were part of Lafitte's loot.

The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion contains the report of a Confederate cavalry troop on patrol near Matagorda in 1864 who bivouaced on the beach in a heavy rain storm. Next morning, when the wind and rain had subsided, the troopers discovered a pile of nearly a thousand doubloons just fifty yards from their camp, which had been uncovered by the wind. The coins had apparently been in a chest, which had rotted away. The officer in charge mentioned the find in his report of the reconnaissance, noting that the coins were divided among the troopers.

THE HOUMA INDIANS AND JEAN LAFFITE'S TREASURE
by Janel Curry

The Houma Indians have inhabited the coastal marshes of the Mississippi River Delta since about 1800. Their occupation of this area, which ranges from Bayou Dularge in Terrebonne Parish to as far east as St. Bernard Parish, accounts for a great deal of the tribe's oral history and folklore about Jean Laffite. In fact, the Barataria region is at the center of Houma territory and until recently was a major hunting, fishing, and trapping ground for the tribe.

According to the Houma oral history, two of Laffite's men married into the tribe in the early 1800's. The first of these, named Solet, accounts for the present-day Houma family of the same name. The other, Jean Naquin, was said to have arrived at Isle de Jean Charles (the most isolated Houma settlement), "from the south, up through the swamp," implying a connection with Laffite's Baratarians.

The Houma folklore about Laffite that has survived to the present day includes treasure stories. These treasure stories are very typical and are of a genre that is by no means peculiar to coastal Louisiana. They contain two almost universally repeated elements. The first is that the person who volunteers to guard a
treasure is killed and buried with it. The second is that while a treasure is being dug up, silence cannot be broken or the treasure will sink back into the ground. Whitney Billiot related the following story concerning the first practice to me in a 1978 interview:

They buried money like that. When they came to bury money, they asked who wanted to take care of the money. Whoever said they wanted to take care of the money, they'd kill him and bury him with it. They would bury him there. That's why they say "a spirit has money" -- I don't know. That person knew that he was going to be killed, I guess. Laffite and his gang: it was them who buried the money. They stole and buried, is what I heard.

Many of the Houma claim to have participated in treasure hunts, almost all of which ended with the silence broken and the treasure returning to the earth. In one such instance, several people used a divining rod to locate a treasure. As they started to dig, they heard and felt a spirit move toward them through the tall grass as the wind fell silent. Soon their shovels struck something hard -- but fear overtook one of the party, who broke the silence, whereupon the treasure sank back into the ground and the spirit dissipated. They continued to dig several feet deeper, but found nothing.

These are but a sampling of the many kinds of Laffite treasure stories that are preserved in the folklore of the Houma, some of which are typical of the Gulf region and others with a unique Houma flavor.

COMMENT ON LAFFITE IN SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
AND A RESPONSE TO JOHN HOWELLS
by Karin and Roger Kwiatkowski

On November 27th, the same day we received the Fall issue of the LSG newsletter, we talked with Mike LeBleu of Houston. Mike is a direct descendant of Arsene LeBleu of Lake Charles, one of the subjects of Robert Vogel's article about Laffite and Southwest Louisiana published in the Fall issue.

He said that he had been researching his family's oral history, but in the last year or so had stumbled over two seemingly illogical aspects of his family's tradition. These two stubborn traditions had frustrated him to the point of ignoring them altogether when he could not make sense out of them.

First, he could not explain why, if Arsene LeBleu had been so closely associated with Jean Laffite, there was no record of any LeBleus in New Orleans or among the Baratarians. Secondly, and most bizarre of all, he said, he could not comprehend his family's 170-year tradition that there had been two Laffites.