

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEAN LAFFITE

December, 1977

Number 3



*Reynato Luche*

The Laffite Study Group

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## THE LAFFITE STUDY GROUP

The Laffite Study Group was founded in 1975 for the express purpose of uniting individuals who share an interest in Jean Laffite's role in American history, folklore, and literature. Members and associates receive the Life and Times of Jean Laffite, a bulletin containing short articles, research notes, documents, commentaries, and news of current research.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEAN LAFFITE

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The Laffite Study Group

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### Renato Beluche (1780-1860)

Renato Beluche, born in New Orleans on December 15, 1780, was the fourth child born to the merchant René Beluche of Tours, France, and Rosa Laporte, a native of Orleans Parish. The names of their first three children were recorded in the St. Louis Cathedral Archives, New Orleans, as Rose Emilie Beluge, Jacques Beluche (he may have been named for his grandfather) and Maria Belouche.

Renato was seven years old when his father died, leaving a pregnant wife, five children (Francisco Basilio was born in 1786); and, as far as property was concerned, one heavily mortgaged plantation with several slaves. Selina, Renato's youngest sister, was born five months later.

Carefree childhood was over for Renato. He went to sea, and during 1801-1802 he learned the art of naval warfare on Governor Casa Calvo's flagship Catalina. New Orleans Customs Records for 1804 list Beluche as a citizen of the United States and, from 1805 to 1809, as master of sailing ships for Bartholomé Basque, then for Etienne DeBon, John Michael Fortier, and Archibald Gracie. All of these were merchants of New Orleans.

In 1809 Beluche bought the pilot-boat schooner Camillus and hired Joseph Duro and a crew of seven to sail it to Havana. The Camillus sailed on June 18, and on its return to New Orleans, Captain Duro sued Beluche for wages at \$80 per month--and a padded expense account. Benedict Fabregos testified that Beluche not only had no money, but "on several occasions borrowed money from the captain for his own private use." The court ordered Beluche to pay Captain Duro \$365.44; \$249 less than the bill presented by Captain Duro.

This episode taught Beluche a lesson. Three months later he sailed the Camillus to Pensacola and sold it there. This was easy to do since Beluche's sister Rose Emilie was married to the popular merchant Vicente Ordozgoity who, in 1812, was mayor of Pensacola. When Beluche returned to New Orleans he had eight seamen certify on the back of the Crew List "that he paid our passage home to New Orleans at his own expense, and that we have been satisfied by said Master, of all demands against the said Schooner Camillus and her Officers."

Beluche's career as ship captain continued without any unusual interruption until his second voyage to Bordeaux in the Jenny (Peter Lauve, owner). The Jenny was detained at Plymouth the month before the United States declared war on England. This experience must have galled the volatile mariner from Louisiana. When he returned to New Orleans he accepted command of the schooner Spy (Etienne De Bon, owner), the only successful United States privateer of the six commissioned at New Orleans during the War of 1812. On November 17, 1812, the Spy captured the English ship Jane, carrying a rich cargo of mahogany and logwood from Honduras. Beluche sent his prize to New Orleans and on January 11, 1813, his agent, John B. Laporte, filed libel. Less than a month later (February 1) the court ordered the Jane and her cargo sold and the proceeds turned over to Beluche.

Meanwhile, Beluche had sailed to Cartagena on the north coast of New Granada (Venezuela), and offered himself, his ship, and crew for service in Cartagena's navy (Cartagena had declared herself an independent republic in 1811). Beluche's service record (see "Notes and Documents") states that within nine months he became the owner of three privateers: La Popa, the Piñeras, and the General Bolívar. Not only did he sail under Cartagenan letters-of-marque, but many of Jean Laffite's privateers sailed under such commissions which Beluche brought in large bundles to Barataria Bay.

During the next two years Beluche scuttled more than a million dollars worth of Spanish shipping in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. He was back in New Orleans in time to become one of the star gunners in the Battle of New Orleans (December 23, 1814 to January 8, 1815). Then he returned to Cartagena, where the Spaniards were beseiging that port by land and sea. Beluche slipped into the harbor in spite of the blockade, then out again, and sailed to Jamaica in La Popa, said to be the fastest sailing vessel in the Gulf or the Caribbean.

On December 19, 1815, with Simón Bolívar on board, Beluche sailed from Kingston to the port of Les Cayes, in southern Haiti, and there helped to organize a squadron of seven vessels which was to spearhead the liberation of half a continent. Beluche defeated a royalist fleet in a naval battle off the eastern coast of the island of Margarita on May 2, 1816, and soon Bolívar was able to land in Venezuela. The war for independence continued for eight more years, and Beluche's role in those wars was fabulous.

His voyages on the sea of matrimony are also worthy of note. The Journal of the Louisiana Senate shows that his first wife, Marie Magdaleine Victoire Milleret, native of Port-au-Prince, petitioned the senate for a divorce; the Bill was put through the Senate on February 27, 1822, and again on March 5, 1822. That day the Bill was amended and read for a third time, and then it was sent to the Assembly. However, Marie Magdaleine died on March 14, 1822, aged 40. She may have been barren and petitioned for divorce because Beluche already had two children by "María Merced Boudri" of New Orleans. When Beluche married his "Mezelle" in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, (November 17, 1824) "all the necessary dispensations were proclaimed to make legitimate two children previously born to the couple: the first, María Reneta, born six years before on an island; and the second, Ana Colombia, four years of age." A son, Diego, was born in 1828.

Meanwhile, Beluche was active in the navy of Bolívar's Colombia. This state, in existence from 1819 to 1830, included Ecuador, New Granada (the present Colombia) and Venezuela. Beluche was promoted to Brigadier General on May 12, 1827. There were no more admirals in the Colombian Navy after Luis Brion and José Padilla; perhaps admirals were expected to fight on land as well as on the sea. In 1828 Beluche was appointed commanding officer of the First Marine Department, with headquarters at Puerto Cabello.

At this time the Peruvian Navy was threatening Ecuador, and Bolívar sent letters to José Antonio Páez, Governor of Venezuela, urging

him to send Beluche to the Pacific. Bolívar preferred General Beluche above all the other navel officers to head the Pacific Squadron of Colombia "because of his ability and enthusiasm."

Beluche left Puerto Cabello, August 25, 1829, in the 60-gun frigate Colombia; 161 days later, having made only one stop--for 14 days in Rio de Janeiro--he dropped anchor off Puná, the island at the mouth of the Rio Guayas on which Guayaquil is located. The date was February 1, 1830. Ecuador was already breaking loose from Colombia, as Venezuela had done the year before under Páez; and in April Bolívar resigned his power. In that month Beluche left Guayaquil for Panama. It was summer and he was forty-nine. On the island of Taboga in Panama harbor he established a home with Candelaria Esquivel. Subsequently he became involved in a revolution in Panama; his side lost, and after he was expelled from Panama a son, Blas Beluche, was born to Candelaria (February 3, 1832).

Beluche returned to his home in Puerto Cabello and started ship service between that port and La Guayra. In 1835 Beluche was on the losing side of another revolution--this time against the government of Páez. General Beluche lost his rank and privileges and was exiled, but after a few years he returned to Puerto Cabello, and Congress reinstated him in his titles.

Beluche's wife, Mezelle, died in 1840 while he was in exile. On February 7, 1846 the Caracas newspaper El Liberal listed commodities on the American brig Columbia, which had arrived at La Guaira from Baltimore after a passage of twelve days. Among the items destined for Puerto Cabello were "1 marble monument and 2 boxes of iron grill-work for Señor R. Beluche." The monument was in the form of a little tower. On it Beluche had inscribed "A la memoria de María Mezelle Beaudri de Beluche. Fallecio a la edad de 49 años el 13 de Sept. de 1840."

Beluche had the burial plot neatly paved before planting the monument, and then the whole was inclosed with the iron grill-work fence. When Beluche died he was buried beside Mezelle. A small slab in the paving was inscribed:

General Renato Beluche  
Octubre 4, 1860  
79 años

On Friday, July 19, 1963, the remains of Beluche--a few small bones and a little dust--were exhumed and placed in a sarcophagus. During the ceremony bugles played a prayer. Then a naval and military escort took the sarcophagus to the Naval Base Chapel where another ceremony ended with an oration by Isidro Beluche of Panamá, descendant to Blas Beluche. A round-the-clock honor guard of four sailors was maintained until Monday, July 22, when, at 8 A.M., the sarcophagus was put on board a destroyer and taken to La Guaira. A funeral cortege took the sarcophagus to the Panteón in Caracas where the remains of Renato Beluche were interred in company with those of Bolívar and the other immortals of Venezuela.

## "Selections from the Lafitte Book"

Edited by Robert C. Vogel

### Introduction

The Lafitte Book is a 202-page typescript compiled during November-December, 1942, at New Orleans, La., by employees of the Federal Writers Project, Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.). The bulk of the material in the typescript consists of articles culled from New Orleans newspapers (1802-1939) and J. D. B. De Bow's Review of the Southern and Western States (1851-52). Some court records and other public documents were also copied.

To the best of our knowledge, there is only one extant copy of the 1942 typescript. This writer located it, quite by accident, in the holdings of the Special Collections Division, Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana at Natchitoches. At that time (January, 1975) the Lafitte Book was not listed in any catalogue of the library's manuscript or rare book collections--it was, in fact, discovered at the bottom of a box filled with bundles of old newspapers and photograph albums. A photocopy of the complete typescript was made by John Milton Price, Director of the Special Collections Division, and has been making the rounds of Lafitte aficionados for about two years. A search of other Louisiana historical repositories in Baton Rouge and New Orleans failed to turn up any additional Lafitte Book typescripts--incidentally, the N.S.U. copy is a carbon, bound in an old ring binder.

The following selections are from roughly the first half of the Lafitte Book, which consists mostly of articles copied out of De Bow's Review and early nineteenth century newspapers. Several items have been deleted, e.g., the civil court records for Pierre La Fitte vs Jean Maria and John Nixon (suit number 687, 19 May, 1815) and Dr. Kilpatrick's lengthy article on the Bowie brothers, which appeared in De Bow's Review in 1852. An abridgement of the remainder of the typescript will be published in the next issue of the Life and Times of Jean Laffite.

### The Lafitte Book

Moniteur de la Louisiane, No. 309, Saturday September 18., 1802,  
Hearico & Lafitte, Forgerons & Taillandiers

Nouvellement arrivés en cette ville, ont l'honneur d'offrir leurs services au Public pour tout ce qui concerns ces deux états, & notamment pour les moulins a sucre, a planches, &c, &c. Ils rempliront avec toute l'exactitude possible les ordres qui leur seront donnés, & travailleront au plus juste prix. Leur demèure est auprès de l'église au coin de la place d'armes.

Source: Cabildo, New Orleans

Robert-Translator, Bull-Copyist, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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Monitor of Louisiana. No. 309. Saturday. September 18th., 1802.

Hearico & Lafitte,\* Blacksmiths and toolmakers

Newly arrived in this city have the honor to offer their services to the public for all that which pertains to these two crafts and especially for sugar and lumber mills, etc, etc. They will fill with all the possible exactitude the orders which may be given them and will work for the most just price. Their residence is near the church at the corner of the Place d'Armes.

Source: Cabildo, New Orleans

Robert-Translator, Bull-Copyist, R.St.A. (D.C.)

\*Le Premier Directory de la Nouvelle Orleans mentioned on cover sheet does not list any person by the name of Lafitte.

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Courrier de la Louisiane\*-Lundi 4 Mai, 1812-Page 2, Column 5

Portefeuille Perdu - Il a été perdu hier entre midi et 4 heures, un Portefeuille de maroquin noir renfermant divers petits comptes, et un billet de \$500, tiré par Jn. Lafite et endossé par Pre. Lafite - Le payement des susdits billets a été arrêté. La personne qui aura trouvé le dit Portefeuille est priée de vouloir bien le remettre au bureau de cette feuille.

\*Imprimé par Thierry, Imprimeur des Lois du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis et du Territoire d'Orléans, Rue de Chartres No. 37.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Bull, Translator: Robert, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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Courrier of Louisiana\*, Monday, May 4, 1812, Page 2, Column 5

POCKETBOOK LOST----There was lost yesterday, between noon and four o'clock a black Morocco Pocketbook enclosing divers small accounts and a \$500.00 note drawn by Jn. Lafitte and endorsed by Pre. Lafitte - Payment of the aforesaid notes has been stopped. The person who may have found the said pocketbook, is requested to kindly return it to the office of this paper.

\*Printed by Thierry, Printer of the Laws of the Government of the United States and of the territory of Orleans, #37 Chartres St.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Bull, Translator: Robert, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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Courrier of Louisiana-March 17, 1813-Page 3, Column 1

By William C. C. Claiborne, Governor of the State of Louisiana and  
Commander in Chief of the Militia thereof.

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas I have received information that upon or near the shores of lake Barataria, within the limits and jurisdiction of this state, a considerable banditti composed of individuals of different nations, have armed and equipped [sic] several vessels for the avowed purpose of cruising on the high seas, and committing depredations and piracies on the vessels of nations in peace with the United States, and carrying on an illicit trade in goods, wares, and merchandise with the inhabitants of this state, in opposition to the laws of the United States, and to the great injury of the fair trader, and of the public revenue; And whereas there is reasonable ground to fear, that the parties thus waging lawless war, will cease to respect the persons and property of the good citizens of this state; I have thought proper to issue this my proclamation hereby commanding the persons engaged as aforesaid, in such unlawful acts to cease therefrom, and forthwith to disperse and separate; and I do charge and require all officers civil and military in this state, each within his respective district, to be vigilant and active in apprehending and securing every individual engaged as aforesaid in the violation of the laws; and I do caution the people of this state, against holding any kind of intercourse, or being in any manner concerned with such high offenders; and I do also earnestly exhort each and every good citizen to afford, help, protection and support to the officers in suppressing a combination so destructive to the interests of the United States and of this state in particular, and to rescue Louisiana from the foul reproach which would attach to its character, should her shores afford an asylum, or her citizens countenance, to an association of individuals, whose practices are so subversive of all laws human and divine, and whose ill begotten treasure, no man can partake, without being for ever dishonored, and exposing himself to the severest punishment.

L.S.

Given under my hand and seal of the state,  
at New Orleans, on the 15th day of March,  
in the year eighteen hundred and thirteen  
and in the thirty-seventh year of the  
Independence of the U. States.

By the Governor W. C. C. Claiborne, L. B. Macarty, Secretary of State.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Michinard, D.C. - D.B. - (D.C.)

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The Courrier of Louisiana, February 6, 1818, Page 3, Column 1

To Mr. Beverly Chew Collector of the Custom-House.

Sir,

It was not without surprize [sic] that I saw my name appear in your letter to the secretary of the treasury. In that foolish & [sic]

tiresome heap of idle words, you are pleased to represent me as one of the men who most openly violate the laws of this country, and you found that assertion on my attachment to the cause of the Mexican Patriots. What, at a time when the greatest orators of the United States are exerting themselves in favor of the South American Independence, at a time when from the bay of Mexico to the lakes of Canada, a wish is everywhere manifested to support an oppressed people against their tyrants, you poor little collector of the port of New Orleans, dare to represent, as criminals the generous minds who entirely devote themselves to the defence of that noble cause! How could you have been led into that excess of ridicule & [sic] wickedness? Are you in any way interested in seeing the triumph of injustice over equity, and would you wish to make common cause with those venal souls who provided they occupy lucrative offices, would with insensibility witness their citizens groaning under the yoke of oppression. It [sic] at the glorious epoch when America struggled for her independence, none but men of your cast had existed, your brave countrymen would still be the slaves of Great Britain; and is it because I have embraced with all my heart, the independence of Mexico, because I have supported it with all my pecuniary means, and even at the peril of my life, that you represent me as a pirate who respects no flag. I defy you, and defy any man to whatever nation he may belong, to prove that I did ever capture any vessels but those navigating under the flag of Ferdinand VII. You are speaking Mr. Collector of a pardon granted me by your government; and what pardon was I in want of? Criminals only are in want of pardon, and I never was a criminal. Had I been actuated by motives of cupidity, and I consulted a sordid love of wealth, should I have repelled with indignation the offers which were made to me by the admiral Cochrane at the time of the landing of the British in Louisiana(?)

You might find in the secreacy [sic] of State's office all the documents which show, that the most advantageous proposals were made to me, to enter the British service and that I made no other answer, than joining the standards of the brave General Jackson. I very much doubt, Mr. B. Chew, whether you would have acted in the same manner. Before leaving you I must tell you, that although I never was a bankrupt, I never said from [sic] any man that he was one; that no letters of mine were ever intercepted which bore proofs of my being in correspondence with the enemies of my government; that I never was reproached with acts of cowardice.

I am your servant,  
Prre Laffite [sic]

Source: La. State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Michinard (copyist), Dillon (typist)

\* \* \* \* \*

The Courier of Louisiana-November 24, 1819-Page 3, Column 1

Yesterday a boat of the United States Schr. Lynx arrived here with four of the men, who were concerned in robbing the house of Mr. Lyon in Attakapas, in the month of September last: It appears that part of the robbers made the best of their way to Galvestown, where they were arrested

by Jean Lafitte, tried and all sentenced to death, by a Court and Jury appointed by Lafitte for that purpose. The leader George Brown, was hanged in pursuance of the sentence; the rest were pardoned. The Captain of the Lynx demanded them when he appeared off Galvestown, and they were delivered to him without difficulty. [Orleans Gaz.]

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Michinard, R.St.A. (D.C.)

\* \* \* \* \*

The Courrier of Louisiana-March 19, 1821-Page 3, Column 2

Charleston Feb. 22

We understand that a schooner called the Nancy Eleanor, on board of which was LAFITTE, brother to the celebrated pirate of that name, left this port in a clandestine manner a few nights since.

It is said she had on board arms and a large number of men, and is supposed to be bound on a piratical expedition.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Michinard, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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The Courrier of Louisiana-Friday, November 29, 1822-Page 3, Column 1

We have been informed that the famous LAFITTE of piratical memory, after having been wrecked on the island of Cuba, being destitute of all means of living and of escape, had been discovered and apprehended by some inhabitants who had brought him to Porto-Principe, where he had been thrown into a dungeon. Unfortunately for mankind, Lafitte was recognized by several influential persons of the place to whom he had formerly rendered some service and who facilitated his escape. We cannot avoid applauding the feeling of gratitude which moved those persons to break the chains of their benefactor, but at the same time, we cannot too deeply regret, that the monster who has shed so much innocent blood, should have perhaps for the hundreth time, escaped the sword of Justice, which has been so long hanging on his guilty head.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Michinard, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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Le Courrier de la Louisiane, The Courier of Louisiana - Monday, April 18, 1825 - Page 3, Column 3

DIED--Yesterday at 4 o'clock, after a long and painful disease, Mr. STEPHEN LAFITTE.

He was throughout his life an upright and honest man, and notwithstanding the much retired life he led, he acquired a great number of friends who deeply mourn his loss.

His funeral will take place this afternoon at 4 o'clock. His remains are exposed at his late dwelling, corner of Royal and Bienville streets, where his friends and acquaintances are requested to attend.

Source: Louisiana State Museum Library, Lower Pontalba Building, New Orleans  
Copyist: Michinard

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Daily Delta-October 21, 1851-Page 2-Column 2

De Bow's Review and Lafitte

We received the following note from Professor De Bow last Evening.

New Orleans, Oct. 20th 1851

Editors Delta:

I have just returned to the city, and think it sufficient to say, in reply to your several columns, that the paper on "Lafitte" was not "vouched for" by me as "authentic and genuine history," though it may be as much so as many of the accounts we are in the habit of receiving of revolutionary movements, etc., almost under our very eyes.

I took particular care to put every reader on his guard by an array of authorities, embracing "Books of Pirates," "Galveston newspaper," "Byron's Corsair," and "public documents," as if one should justify his orthodoxy by the canons of the bible and Gill Blass.

It is quite likely, upon the whole, that I have heard as many of the floating legends of Lafitte, through the late Col. Morgan, of Point Coupee, Col. White, and other old citizens as the Delta has, and am as little likely to be misled or to mislead others.

Your obedient servant.

J. D. B. De Bow.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Professor's explanation does not appear very satisfactory. His journal purports to be a solid, substantial work of facts, statistics and history, not a mere magazine of fiction and romance. We look for something more reliable than legends and piratical stories, in a commercial agricultural and scientific Review.

We have enough fiction and romance in other periodicals with which the country is flooded. The habit of romancing, or creating fiction out of the facts of history, is one which it ought to be the object of scientific journals and learned professors to discountenance and suppress. The events referred to by the contributor to De Bow's are public facts, many of them of a very notable character, which occurred [sic]

in this city and its vicinity less than forty years ago. There is, therefore, less excuse for the publication here of so much gross error, than there would be for the composition of such legends at a distance from our city and state.

When a stranger or a youth, unread in history, sees a description of the battle of New Orleans in De Bow's Review, he would very naturally look to it as an authentic and reliable statement. On perusing it, his imagination would be filled with ideas of those "charging squandrions of horse," of that grand "glacis" within which Packenham fell, of the unhappy fate of Kean, "cut down at the head of the Southern Highlanders" and of the "fearful destruction of that charge of Lafitte" over the redoubt just "under the edge of the Mississippi," all of which are gross errors. But how great would be the mortification of this reader to learn, sometime afterwards, that these were mere legends, which the Review left him to believe, or not, just as he pleased, without any caution or correction. Professor De Bow says he did not vouch for the accuracy of this story, that he gave the authorities of the writer, embracing "Books of Pirates," Galveston newspapers, "Byron's Corsair" and "public documents," as if (he adds) one should justify his orthodoxy by the canons of the bible and Gill Blass.

We do not know what to object to most in this sentence, the orthographical inaccuracy, impropriety of writing "bible" with a small initial letter, the irreverence of associating it with a book of fiction like Gil [sic] Blass, whom our worthy colaborer [sic] honors with two capitals, or the theological blunder involved in the phrase "canons of the bible;" canon being a rule prescribed by the Church or Council.

But, passing over these objections, we hold that it is the duty of the editor of a Scientific Review to do something more than give the authroities of his contributors. He should, as a general rule, exclude gross error, but when, to enliven his columns, he admits legends and fictions, he should caution his readers in regard thereto, and not mix up fact and fiction in one undistinguishable mass, and thus smuggle baseless legends into the memory, as veritable historical thruths.

Professor De Bow says that he has heard as many of the floating legends of Lafitte as the Delta. We do not doubt it. Our objection is that the Professor has too great a penchant for legends. He may indulge his own love of the marvelous as much as pleases him, but we think his readers would be better pleased with facts and figures. We do see the logical force of the conclusion, that because he has heard as many of the aforesaid "floating legends," therefore he is "as little likely (as the Delta) to be misled by them, or to mislead others." We do not think that the listening to legends is calculated to make a man of vivid imagination a very reliable historian. The Professor of Economy in the University of Louisiana, might find better employment. We trust that, in future, when he admits into his columns historical or biographical sketches, he will mark that which is legendary, and that which is historical, so that the different classes of his readers may pursue their several tastes.

Source: City Hall Archives, New Orleans  
Copyist: Stokes, R.St.A. (D.C.)

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The Daily Delta - November 9, 1851 - Page 2, Col. 2 - 3

NEW ORLEANS

Lafitte and the Battle of New Orleans

In our criticism of the article in De Bow's Review, which purported to give a reliable history of an individual who has been handled with great freedom by Historians and Romance writers, to wit:

Jean Lafitte, the celebrated "Model Pirate" or "Free Booter" (,) our sole motive was to rescue truth from the embraces of fiction, and to protect the facts of history from the interpolations and innovations of that tribe of poetical romancers, which the unfortunate example of Macaulay has quite lately given new life and encouragement. We certainly were not prompted by any ill will towards the writer, being entirely ignorant who he was. We have since received a communication from the author in whom we recognize a gentleman who would not knowingly misrepresent any fact, and who erred on this occasion through the misrepresentations of others. The communication addressed by the writer, contains remarks, which would forbid its publication in our paper, but as we desired the writer to have a hearing, we handed his letter to Professor De Bow, who struck out the objectionable portions. Thus expurgated of remarks, which do not involve the substance of his communication, we give his letter in full, following it with comments of our own.

Lafourche, Oct. 27, 1851

Lafitte

Eds. Delta:-

In your journal of the 20th instant, I read, with some surprise, an article that purports to be a criticism on a biographical sketch of "Lafitte," published in the October number of De Bow's Review. You set out with the object of discrediting the authorities on which this "sketch," is based. These authorities are:

Frost's Life of Jackson - from individuals who have known and served under him - from the Galveston Civilian - from a note to Byron's Corsair, which is taken from an American newspaper, and other sources enumerated in the note. Now, I take it for granted that books and chronicles of public history are admissable [sic] to prove ancient facts of a public character. Old newspapers may be considered as the histories and chroniclers of times in which they were written. It is not probable that, in events of public notoriety, they would publish what the world knew to be false; it is upon the same principle that inscriptions on tombstones, and other funeral monuments - engravings on rings, inscriptions on family portraits, charts of pedigree, etc., - are received in evidence. This is from the necessity of the thing, and has been no recognized by mankind from the earliest ages.

Secondly - you aver "that this man was, in truth and reality, a blacksmith from Marseilles who for fourteen years pursued his useful and honorable avocation on St. Philip street" (,) New Orleans. This is all

together an assertion on your part, done, probably, to give credence to an article published a year or so ago in your journal, which created but little notice, for the reason that few believed it. That there may have been a man by that name (which is common among the French) no one pretends to doubt; but that an individual of Lafitte's genius could have followed such an avocation for so many years, and in his prime of life, is absurd.

I stated in the article that Lafitte had a brother by the same name, who was imprisoned in New Orleans on the charge of smuggling, but was subsequently released. These individuals must not be confounded. These facts may be seen in Frost's history, and are corroborated by persons now living in this vicinity, who have had frequent interviews and conversations with both brothers.

You object to that part of the article in question, which describes Lafitte as having been a captain in Bonaparte's army. I rely upon the "American newspaper" for this fact, and leave it altogether with the public to believe it or not. It is the best evidence that can be produced, and until refuted should, as a matter of public notoriety, be taken for true, at least until refuted. The letter to Gov. Claiborne, you quote as a proof of LaFitte's honesty and patriotism, and utterly inconsistent [sic] with his lawless traits. This is a singular argument. The most desperate and crime-sullied characters have been able, when an opportunity presented itself, to throw off their real nature and assume that which was most compatible with the occasion, or consistent with their avowed intentions. It was Lafitte's policy to write such a letter, in which he states he was "the stray sheep wishing to return to the fold." It had the desired effect - and that this was not his purpose, is proven by his subsequent career.

I now come to speak of the Battle of New Orleans. Upon this subject your remarks are certainly frivolous. The description of this battle I took from the manuscript of an eye-witness, who asserts that there was a "glacis", and whose assertion is equally as good as your own. This writer also says that the ladders and fascines were not brought up; and, in a word, every particular relating to this battle (with the exception of the cavalry and Lafitte's actions upon that occasion), are taken from the manuscript of this eye-witness. I may be in error as to the number of horse(s), but you are equally so in the other extreme, when you allege there were "not over a dozen horses in the whole army". You are also in error when you say I convey the idea that Kean was killed. This construction could not be put on the sentence, taken in connection with the previous events of the battle.

"Kean fell at the head of his troops" - "Burning to revenge the death of their commanders, ("not command, as you quote") the Highlanders rushed forward with inextinguishable fury".

If your intent was to prove that the description of this battle being false, the whole article must be so, I have only to remark that such intent is unworthy a public journal, particularly one that pretends "to use its best endeavors to check and restrain the increasing tendency

of the age - to supplant correct and authentic history with exciting inventions and fabrications, concocted to inflame the imagination, rather than instruct the intellect."

You also seem to sneer at the idea of money being found upon the islands on the southern coast of Louisiana, but the facts as stated, is true, and can be vouched for by a number of creditable individuals in this vicinity - whose names I do not wish to parade in public - and who are cognizant of the whole transactions.

Whether this money was buried by Lafitte or not, I do not pretend to say - I only draw the inference, and state the fact as it occurred. In case of necessity, I can give my authority.

You also misrepresent the writer when you state, "the Texas revolution" burst forth "previous to 1818".

The writer says no such thing - Lafitte's old fort, now in ruins, is pointed out to the traveler in Galveston island - and his transactions there are of too public a nature to admit a doubt, and many persons who served under him are still living.

Yours etc. The author -

Without entering upon the subject of the extent to which chronicles, newspapers, etc., should be received as materials of historical evidence, we content ourselves with denying the accuracy of the authorities relied on by our correspondent, in respect to the facts set forth by him, relative to the life, character, and deeds of Jean Lafitte. But we shall not be satisfied with mere averments - we will give the best of all testimony, - that of living witnesses, to sustain our allegations.

Our author says that few ever believed our statement that Jean Lafitte was a blacksmith, who kept his shop on St. Philip Street. This only shows the prevalence of a taste of gaudy fiction, in preference to sober truth, in the present era of romance and novels. We dislike to surrender the ideal and fanciful stories with which our memories were stored in youth. How painful is the shock we experience, when, as our minds expand, and our judgements [sic] begin to escape from the control of the imaginations, we learn that there really was no such character as Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin with his wonderful lamp, and that Pinto and Munchausen were sad liars, who imposed on juvenile credulity!

And then, when advanced to the college era, we peruse Niebube's refutation of the pleasant little story of Romulus and Remus, and the she wolf, - and of Curtius leaping into the abyss, - and of Rome being saved by the cackling of a goose, we incontinently pronounce the prying Prussian to be a bore, - a dull, heavy, stupid old murderer of traditions which formed the chief pleasures of our earliest intellectual developments. Similar are the feelings of the readers of the Pirate's own Book, of Professor Ingraham's Novels, of Frost's History of Professor De Bow, and our own worthy correspondent, when they find that their favorite



hero, "Lafitte, the Corsair of the Seas", the bloody pirate and accomplished cut-throat, was only a blacksmith from Marseilles, who could scarcely manage a jollyboat, and did not know anymore about sailing a vessel then he did of mixed mathematics. Hence, the scepticism which our correspondent, who resides in that pleasant, but, at times, rather inaccessible region, the Lafourche, undertakes to say so universal, in regard to our statement respecting Lafitte.

And yet, here is an additional illustration of the maxim, that "truth is stranger than fiction", for we reassert that Jean Lafitte, who commanded the band of men who were broken up at Barataria, in 1814, by Commodore Patterson, - who was tried in the United States Court in this city, for a violation of our neutrality law and for smuggling, (never for piracy) - was no other than the aforesaid blacksmith from Marseilles, whose identical shop stood on St. Philip street until it was pulled down, a short time ago. And for the truth of this statement, we rely upon the testimony of Colonel John R. Crymes, of this city, who has been for the last forty years, one of our most prominent citizens; and who was the counsel and attorney of Jean Lafitte, in the prosecutions by the United States.

Also Mr. Kilty Smith, a venerable citizen, who held the office of Naval Officer in this city during the invasion of 1814, about the time of Lafitte's transactions here. We read the extract in De Bow's Review to these gentlemen, and they both concurred in the facts stated in our criticism. It was from them, as well as from others of our old residents, we derived the information that Lafitte was a blacksmith. It is true he had a brother, but we refer to Jean, and we suspect our "Author" has committed the very error we have avoided, of confounding the two brothers.

The statement that Jean was a captain in Napoleon's army, is not at all consistent with "the author's" story, which started with the fact of his early devotion to the sea, and purports to follow his career on that element, up to his appearance in the Gulf. It is also rendered improbable by the fact, that a captain in Napoleon's army would hardly have abandoned his position, at a time when Napoleon was at the zenith of his power, to come over here to make horseshoes and axes on Philip Street.

As to whether Lafitte was a pirate, or not, we only profess our willingness to give him a fair trial, which requires us to presume his innocence until he is proved to be guilty. Many suspicions and charges of that character were made against him, but they were never proved with sufficient distinctness to entitle them to be received as historical facts. If he had been a pirate, there was certainly an opportunity of proving it, when he was tried in the United States Court for smuggling, and fitting out armed expeditions to cruise against a friendly power, under the Carthaginian flag. But no such indictment was found against him, - and even of the offenses charged, he was acquitted.

Our Author, proceeding to the battle of Chalmette, or New Orleans, as it is generally styled, reasserts, on authority of an eye-witness, that there was a "glacis" which is defined by Webster: "In [sic]

infortification, a sloping bank; that mass of earth which serves as a parapet to the covered way, having an easy slope or declivity toward the champaign or level." Now, we think it would puzzle the most ingenious military engineer to construct a glacis on the perfect level of the Mississippi bottom. An artificial mound, of great height, would have to be thrown up in order to make a plain, and when it was made, we do not see how the cannon could be placed, so as to be so effective as they were on the 8th of January. Besides, what could be done with the ditch of water which ran from the river to the swamp, it had to flow over a glacie? Our correspondent must excuse us for saying that the eye-witness has been running a saw upon him.

But to settle this, as well as the other disputed questions, discussed by our correspondent, we addressed a note to Col. H. W. Palfrey, one of the most intelligent of the survivors of the great battle of 1815, and President of the Association of Veterans, propounding to him queries on the points at issue, to which we have received the following prompt and obliging reply, and with which we beg to conclude this controversy:

New Orleans, Nov. 5, 1851

Editor of the New Orleans Delta: I received your note of this date. I was not personally acquainted with Mr. Jean Lafitte. At the time of the British invasion I was only sixteen years old. During two or three years proceeding that period, Lafitte was the leader of a large force of pirates and smugglers, who landed their plunder at Barataria, and several merchants of New Orleans were engaged with him in smuggling large quantities of merchandise into New Orleans. My information was derived from general report, and not from personal knowledge.

The American entrenchment was a rough mud bank, thrown up hastily (according to the fancy or industry of each soldier) against a plantation fence, on the other side of which there was an old saw mill race. There was nothing connected with it that could properly be called a "glacis". Having been one of a fatigue party detailed from my company to assist in removing some of the wounded British, I saw the fascines and ladders strewed on the ground among the killed and wounded, near to our entrenchments, and some in the ditch. The ladders were used in removing the killed and wounded, and the fascines, (bundles of sugar cane) served as pillows for the wounded.

I saw no cavalry in the British army, and only five or six officers were mounted. If there had been more, I think I should have seen them. Capt. Dominique's and Commodore Bluche's men (sometimes called Lafitte's men) were from Barataria, and served with great skill and bravery two 24-pounders, which were mounted on the lines, between the Seventh Regiment and Major Plauche's Batt(a)lion and about one hundred yards from the river.

I did not see Lafitte or hear of his being at the American lines - I am confident that he was not entrusted with any important command in General Jackson's Army.

General Packenham [sic] was said to have been killed near the woods, about one hundred and fifty yards from the American lines.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. Palfrey

The foregoing letter, it will be seen, sustains, in every particular the statement, made by us. We may state further, that our venerable and patriotic fellow-citizen, Maunsel White, Esq., who commanded the company of Louisiana Volunteers, to which Colonel Palfrey was attached, informed us that Lafitte was not present at the battle of New Orleans. This gives a last blow to the whole Lafitte Romance - destroys the only chance for immortality left to the Corsair of the Seas, and conveys a useful lesson to our worthy correspondent, to confide [sic] his fine imagination and poetical talents, within their appropriate sphere, rather than permit them to wander into the dry unproductive field of historical fact.

Source: City Hall Archives, New Orleans

Copyist: Stokes, Typed by: R. St. A., Retyped by: C. B. Dillon

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De Bow's Review, Volume XI - 1851, Art. IV. - Life and Times of Lafitte.  
Pages 372-387

JEAN LAFITTE, "the terror of the Gulf of Mexico," was a Frenchman, and was born at St. Malo, about the year 1781. He was tall, finely formed, and in his pleasant moods was always agreeable and interesting. When conversing upon a serious subject, he would stand for hours with one eye shut; at such times, his appearance was harsh.

From his earliest boyhood, he loved to "play with old ocean's locks;" and long before he had reached the age of manhood, he had made several voyages to the different seaports of Africa and Europe. With a suavity of manners and apparent gentlemanly disposition, combined with a majestic deportment, and undoubted courage, he swayed the boisterous passions of those rude, untutored tars, of whom

The author of this biographical sketch of Lafitte, the "Corsair of the Gulf," assures us in a letter, that it is "compiled from various sources - from individuals who have known and served under him - from an old number of the Galveston Civilian - from a note to Byron's Corsair - Frost's History - from public documents, letters, proclamations, and the most generally received accounts of his life and exploits in the books of pirates." - (ED.)

he was the associate and chief. He was universally esteemed and respected by all his crew. They were taught to admire his commanding mien, his firmness, his courage, his magnanimity and professional skill.

Soon after attaining the age of majority, unchecked in his bold career, with an independent and restless spirit, his aspirations naturally looked forward to other avenues of ambition than the inglorious avocations of private life. To the chivalric spirit the ocean wave offers allurements that nothing on land can equal. There is a proud feeling, a strong temptation to tread the peopled deck of a majestic ship - to ride, as it were, the warriorsteed of the ocean, triumphant over the mountain billows, and conflict of mighty elements. True, there may be dangers, - the mutiny - the storm - the wreck - all conspire to intimidate the inexperienced youth; but he soon learns to turn the imaginary dangers to delight, and look to the honor, the fame, that awaits on such bold achievements. The world of waters lay before him - and he determined to seek that more congenial life upon its bosom, which had been denied him on land. Nor was it long before an opportunity was presented. A French East Indiaman, under orders for Madras, had taken her full cargo, and only waited a favorable wind to weigh anchor. Through the influence of several respectable acquaintances and friend, he was offered the birth [sic] of chief mate, which he accepted. The vessel proceeded on her voyage, and nothing of consequence occurred, till on doubling the Cape of Good Hope, she was struck by a squall, and suffered so much damage by the shock and a fire that broke out in the hold, and other accidents, that the captain, [apparent omission] of such an aggravated nature, that the former, [Lafitte] whose haughty spirit never brooked control, determined to abandon the ship the moment she touched port, and refused to proceed on the voyage. As soon, therefore, as the vessel landed at the Maritius, he quitted her in disgust, and from this period may be dated his illegal connection with the ocean. His restless spirit had been inflamed by the romantic exploits of the hardy bucaniers [sic] of the time, whose names and deeds had resounded over every land and sea; and he resolved to imitate, if not surpass, their most brilliant actions, and leave a fame to the future that would not soon be forgotten.

He did not long remain inactive. Several privateers were at this time fitting out at the island, the captaincy of one of which was offered Lafitte, and accepted. She was a beautiful fast-sailing vessel, and Lafitte spared no pains to make her the pride of the sea. Thus equipped, he attracted indiscriminately the weaker vessels of every nation, and though he accumulated vast sums of gold and silver, and enriched his crew, these sums were as soon squandered in profligacy and liberality; and his desires increasing with success, he resolved, without hesitation, to embark in the slave-trade. While at the Seychelles taking in a cargo of these miserable victims bound for the Mauritius, he was chased by an English man-of-war as far north as the equator; and not having sufficient provisions to carry him to the French colony, with that energy, boldness and decision for which he was remarkable, he immediately put the helm about, and made for the Bay of Bengal, with the design of replenishing his stores from some English vessels then in port. He had not lost sight of his formidable pursuer many days, before he fell in with an English armed schooner with a numerous crew, which after a sanguinary conflict, he captured. His own ship was but two hundred tons, carrying two guns only and twenty-six men, nineteen of whom he transferred to the schooner,

of which he took the command, and proceeded to cruise on the coast of Bengal. He had not cruised many days on this coast, teeming as it was in rich prizes, before he fell in with the Pagoda, an English East Indiaman, carrying a battery of twenty-six twelve pounders, and manned with one hundred and fifty men. He so manoeuvred his vessel, as to induce the enemy to believe him a Ganges pilot; and as soon as he had the weathergauge of the ship, he suddenly boarded, cutlass in hand, and put all who resisted to the sword. Lafitte transferred his command to the captured vessel, and immediately made sail for the Mauritius, where he arrived, sold both his prizes, and purchased a strong, well-built ship, called the "La Confiance," in which he put twenty-six guns, and two hundred and fifty men. Shortly after, (in the year 1807), he sailed for the coast of British India; and while cruising off the Sand Heads, fell in with the "Queen", East Indiaman, pierced for forty guns, and manned with a crew of about four hundred men. All eyes were upon her. She moved majestic in her way, as in defiance of his inferior force, and confident of her own strength. Yet Lafitte was not to be intimidated. He determined to take her. Accordingly, he addressed a powerful speech to his men - excited their wildest imaginations, and almost seemed to realize their most unbounded anticipations. This speech had the desired effect. Every man waved his hat and hand, and cried aloud for action. The Queen bore down upon him in all the confidence of victory, and gave him a tremendous broadside, but owing to the height, did but little execution. Before the commencement of the action, he had ordered his men to lay flat upon deck, so that the crew of the Queen, believing they were killed or wounded, unwarily came alongside, with the intention to grapple and board. At this moment Lafitte gave a whistle, and in an instant the deck was bristling with armed men. While yet the smoke prevailed, he ordered his hands into the tops and upon the yards, whence they poured down an incessant fire of shells, bombs, and grenades into the fore-castle of the Indiaman, producing such havoc and slaughter among the crew, that they were obligated to retreat. At this critical juncture, he beat to arms, and placing a favorite at the head of forty of his men with pistols in hand and daggers in their clenched teeth, ordered them to board. They rushed upon deck, driving back the panic stricken crowd, who retreated to the steerage, and attempted to maintain a position of defence, and after a sever(e) conflict, slew him. [sic] Still the crew of the Queen maintained their post, and fought bravely. Lafitte, impatient at their obstinacy, pointed at them a swivel, surcharged with grape and canister; when, seeing extermination the result of further resistance, they surrendered. The vessel was then abandoned to plunder, and large amounts of gold and silver coin divided among the crew.

The fame of this exploit spread over the Indian seas, and struck such a panic in the British commerce, that it was under the necessity of employing strong convoys to protect its trade.

Seeing all hope of success cut off in this quarter, Lafitte concluded once more to return to his native France. On his way thither, he doubled the Cape of Good Hope. and coasted along the Gulf of Guinea and the Bight of Benin. On his way he captured two valuable prizes laden with palm-oil, ivory and gold dust. Arriving at St. Malos, the

place of his birth, he disembarked, and shortly after sold to advantage the La Confiance, the two prizes and their valuable cargoes, and trod once more his native soli - opulent and renowned, where ten years previous he was scarcely known.

But he did not remain long inactive. His restless spirit, like a caged eagle, longed once more for his native element, the breeze, the battle, and the storm.

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De Bow's Review - Vol. XII - New Series, Vol. V - 1852  
Pages 111-113; 222

#### 4.- Life and Times of Lafitte.

The paper which was published in the October number of our Review with this caption, was animadverted upon by one of the city presses, the Delta, with a great deal of harsh criticism, so far as the author of it was concerned, and so far as we ourselves were interested, with a great deal of injustice. This was so evident to many as to induce the belief that some motives of personal ill feeling were mixed up with the criticism though considering our previous relationship with that Journal, it is difficult to say how such feelings could have been provoked. But be that as it may, we never endorsed the paper on Lafitte as genuine or authentic history, in every particular, but simply gave it with the author's own authorities (and he is a very respectable gentleman), as we give a great many other papers, and as every other editor necessarily gives them. Even had the piece been a pure romance, it would have been admissable under the head in which it was placed, that of General Literature, where many months ago we announced a determination to include "sketches of fact and fancy" for the purpose of enlivening the pages of the Review. Our readers know that we have inserted several sketches, without the possibility of their being deceived, and if there were errors in the paper upon Lafitte, which we think not improbable, the authorities relied upon are not of such a character as to furnish a guarantee against them.

The first point at issue is - was Lafitte a pirate, a sailor, a captain, in early life, under Napoleon, or was he, as it is alleged, a blacksmith of New Orleans, and a very commonplace adventurer. Having given the views of our author, we insert those of his critic.

"Jean Lafitte, who commanded the band of men who were broken up at Baratavia, in 1814, by Commodore Patterson, - who was tried in the United States court in this city for a violation of our neutrality law, and for smuggling, (never for piracy) - was no other than the aforesaid blacksmith from Marseilles whose identical shop stood on St. Philip street, until it was pulled down, a short time ago. And for the truth of this statement, we rely upon the testimony of Colonel John R. Grymes, of this city, he has been for the last forty years one of our most prominent citizens; and who was the counsel and attorney of Jean Lafitte, in the prosecutions by the United States. Also Mr. Kilty Smith, a

venerable citizen, who held the office of Naval Officer in this city during the invasion of 1814, about the time of Lafitte's transactions here. We read the extract in De Bow's Review to these gentlemen, and they both concurred in the facts stated in our criticism. It was from them, as well as from others of our old residents, we derived the information that Lafitte was a blacksmith."

The second point is -- Did Lafitte serve in person at the Battle of New-Orleans? Our author's assertion, that he did, is denied generally, upon the authority of our estimable citizen, Maunsell White, and specifically upon the following declaration of H. W. Palfrey, Esq., another of the veterans of 1815: "I did not see Lafitte, or hear of his being at the American lines; I am confident that he was not entrusted with any important command in General Jackson's army." These gentlemen had the means of being correctly informed, though we learn there is a contemporary authority in Niles' Register, that Lafitte was actually at the battle. We shall hunt it up and notice it hereafter.

The third point is -- Did the author give a correct account of the battle of New-Orleans? Mr. Palfrey says, "There was nothing connected with it that could properly be called a glacis. I saw no cavalry in the British army, and only five or six horses. If there had been more, I think I should have seen them." Let the author justify himself on these particulars.

"The description of this battle I took from the manuscript of an eye-witness, who asserts that there was a "glacis", and whose assertion is equally as good as your own. This writer also says, that the ladders and fascines were not brought up; and, in a word, every particular relating to this battle (with the exception of the cavalry and Lafitte's actions upon that occasion) are taken from the manuscript of this eye-witness. I may be in error as to the number of the horse(s), but you are equally so in the other extreme, when you allege there were "not over a dozen horses in the whole army." You are also in error when you say I convey the idea that Kean was killed. This construction could not be put upon the sentence, taken in connection with the previous events of the battle. "Kean fell at the head of his troops." -- "Burning to revenge the death of their commanders," (not command, as you quote,) "the Highlanders rushed forward with inextinguishable fury."

Nothing is calculated to give a more correct notion of the difficulties that environ history, and which made Sir Walter Raleigh despond in the preparation of his, than all this incartitude and discussion about a matter which happened in our very midst, and within the memories of hundreds of our citizens. Let any man read the different versions of the battle of New-Orleans in the histories, and he will be convinced of this. It is sufficient to say, that many of the most important points remain unsettled, and that no one can rise from a study of the subject without the conviction that public opinion has been for a long time in the wrong about them. We believe that Latour is the most reliable, though he is corrected by some of the "eye-witnesses." Why does not Mr. Gayarre, who is our native historian, take up this matter and sift it thoroughly? he would win great laurels in this field. Meanwhile we intend

ourselves a closer study of the subject, and shall, before long, present a paper upon it, being aided by a very interesting manuscript contemporary record, kept by an officer in the field, and embracing a period of several weeks before and after the battle.

Source: Howard Memorial Library, New Orleans  
Copyist: Jacobson, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/23-24/42

Page 222

J E A N L A F I T T E

We referred in our last to the statement of parties in New-Orleans, that Lafitte was not present at the battle of New-Orleans, as has been commonly supposed. That he was there is sustained by a writer in the National Intelligencer, dated Alabams, etc., as we find in the following extract. We trust that, as Gen. Butler has been referred to, he will settle this mooted point.

In the columns of the "National Intelligence", of the 28th instant, I noticed an article, in which it is said: It has been currently believed, on the authority of novelists, etc., that the celebrated Lafitte was a pirate, and fought in the American ranks at New-Orleans. Whoever knows personally anything of Lafitte, as stated, could have asserted any such thing. [sic] The writer of this had the honor of serving under General Jackson at the siege of New Orleans as an officer; saw Lafitte every day and knew him personally. He was not in the first battle, fought with the British forces on the night of the 23d of December, 1814; but was at the breastworks called Jackson's lines immediately thereafter, where he remained until the retreat of the enemy and the breaking up of the American camp. He was placed with his men by Gen. Jackson -- who had full confidence in his skill, ability, and fidelity to the American cause -- in command of a battery of two 24 or 32 poundercannon, not far from the river, and between the 7th United States Infantry, Major Pierre and Plauche's battalion of city volunteers; and I affirm that a more skilful [sic] artillerist, a braver or more determined officer, soldier, or one who rendered more effective service during the siege, was not in Jackson's army. And pirate or blacksmith, the services he rendered the American cause should not be denied, blotted out, or buried in oblivion, now that he is no more, and perhaps has left none behind to defend him.

What I have stated is on my own personal knowledge, and acted under my own eye; and is well known to Gen. Wm. O. Butler, of Kentucky, at that time a captain in the 44th Infantry.

Source: Howard Library, New Orleans  
Copyist: Jacobson, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/24/42

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[L A F I T T E]

We cannot refrain from extracting from the Philadelphia Bulletin the following, which seems to shed further light upon the history of this remarkable personage. It will be perceived, that the writer expresses the belief that he could obtain other and most satisfactory data from the family of Lafitte, now living in their native province. We trust that he will do so, and that eventually we shall be enabled to sift out the facts from the multitude of fictions which in regard to him have gained currency and credit. Though there was a good deal of romance mixed up in the sketch that we published last October, which was from the pen of a gentleman now no more, several of the statements in it which were controverted are being corroborated from other sources.

History of Lafitte, the Pirate

Circumstances made us acquainted at one period of our life with the real facts of Lafitte's history, verified in a manner that left no loop-hole for falsehood to creep in. Since then, we have read most of the novels that have been written respecting him, and greater libels were probably never penned, for they represent Lafitte either as a romantic hero, or as a human fiend, when, in fact, he was neither. On the contrary, he was a man who had been goaded by great wrongs to seek revenge, which he did in that wild Arab way which so often characterizes seamen, and which is nourished in the blood, partly the loneliness of the sea, and partly by a life free from the conventionalities of civilization. For a true sailor has, as Herman Melville says, a spice of the wild morality of the desert, and is, as it were, the Bedonin of the great deep.

Jean Lafitte was born in the Garonne, and not at Marseilles, and was, from his very boyhood, accustomed to the ocean; for he belonged to a family which, for many generations, had furnished some of the most skilful seamen and daring privateers of Bayonne. In the great war of the French Revolution, when the commerce of his native province was almost destroyed, he embarked as lieutenant on board a private armed vessel, which, after running a brilliant career, was finally captured by a superior force and carried into an English port. Here Lafitte himself remained a prisoner. His friends, however, and relatives, were active to procure his discharge. Several times were prisoners of equal rank sent into the English ports, (by) the agency of his old captain, in order to be exchanged for him, but it was not until many years had passed that Lafitte found himself free. This long detention raised in him an almost savage thirst for vengeance against England; and, on his release, he returned immediately to privateering, principally for the harm he might thus do to English ships.

The pacification of Europe after the treaty of Fontainebleau deprived him of the means of legally carrying on his revenge. But long years of solitary brooding in prison, and night watches afterwards on the lonely sea, had destroyed, to a great extent, his reverence for human laws; he had, in a word, become an Arab at heart. Determined,

accordingly, to continue his career. Yet he refrained from attacking any but English vessels, since it was only against England that he sought revenge. His relations in France heard of his course with inexorable pain, and remonstrated with him earnestly, especially one, who had been a sort of guardian in his youth, and who now expostulated with him almost with tears. But Lafitte was inexorable. At last his early friend called in the aid of religion, and reminded the erring man of the awful destiny he was preparing for himself in eternity. The reply was characteristic: "If I do go to ----," wrote Lafitte, savagely, "I will drag plenty of Englishmen with me." His relatives, aware how great had been the provocation, could say no more. But, from that hour, for many years, the name of the wandering outlaw ceased to be spoken in the household of his fathers; and children, in whom ran blood kindred to his own, grew up to manhood, ignorant of his very existence.

The subsequent career of Lafitte is well known. Though he committed acts of piracy only on British vessels, he paid no regard to the revenue laws of any nation. For a long period he had under him quite a considerable force at the Island of Barataria. But his early education, which had been strict, asserted its power at last; old memories were re-awakened, and he sighed to return again to civilized life, to lay down the brand of the pirate, to pass his days in quiet. The volcano of passion or insanity, for it was as much the last as the first, had burned out in that fiery heart. He made his peace with the United States, as is popularly known, just before the battle of New-Orleans. Subsequently he returned to his native land, where he died not many years ago. His wife, whom he married in America, is still living, or was, at the time when we heard the narrative we have given.

We should have to violate the sanctities of private life, if our authority was to be given. At the time we heard of the history of Lafitte, we were told the name of his old captain, of the privateer in which he was captured, and many other facts which we have since forgotten. We regret that we did not take down in writing those details. We could possess ourselves of them, indeed, in a month or two, for his relatives still live in their native province; and, perhaps, we may do this yet.

Source: Howard Library

Copyist: Jacobson, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/24/42

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De Bow's Review - Vol. XIII - (1832)

Pages 204-205

Editorial and Literary Department

L A F I T T E

Pontotoc, Miss., 20th May, 1852

Mr. Editor, --- In common with the readers of the "Review", I have noticed with lively interest, the controversy which has sprung up in relation to the fact of the celebrated Lafitte's identity, and the still more important, and to Americans, more interesting fact, of his

participation in the battle of New Orleans. This is a matter about which there should be no conflict of history. Lafitte was there, or he was not there. History should assert the one fact or the other with entire certainty. And without presuming on my own part to determine the point affirmatively or negatively, I will communicate the following incident, merely as a matter of evidence to give conviction or confirmation to the opinions of others. The fact to which I allude was communicated to me in a private conversation, by the late Robert L. Cobb, Esq., of Columbia, Tennessee. Here a question may be suggested as to who was Robert L. Cobb? This question can be easily and satisfactorily solved. Robert L. Cobb, in the early part of his life, was a physician, and at the time of the battle of New Orleans, was surgeon to one of the regiments which composed General Coffee's brigade. He was a scientific, skilful, and meritorious gentleman in that department. After the war of 1812, he prepared himself for the bar, and located in Columbia, Tennessee, where he died some years since, if I am correctly informed. As a lawyer, he was learned, able, and gifted, and for many years he had an extensive and lucrative practice; while, as a man of integrity, probity, and honor, no man ever stood higher in that intelligent and public spirited community. But to the incident - it is this. A short time previous to the battle of New-Orleans, General Coffee's brigade was stationed at Fort Adams, which, I think, was not far from the vicinity of Baton Rouge, in Louisiana. And whilst there, were greatly destitute of the necessary military stores, such as hats, shoes, blankets, and comfortable clothing of every description. Whilst in that condition, General Coffee, from some source or other, received information that one or more of Lafitte's "warehouses" had been discovered among the bayous in the bottom beyond the river from his camp, filled with such articles as he needed for his soldiers. General Coffee determined that if this information was correct, as Lafitte was then an outlaw, with his hand against all nations, that he would rifle his warehouses, and appropriate such articles as he needed to the use of his troops. For the purposes of ascertaining the truth of this information, General Coffee ordered Captain Gordon's company of spies - a celebrated company - - to leave the camp secretly as possible, and go with the individual, who brought the information, a guide, and ascertain the truth or falsity of his statements. In the course of something near two hours afterwards, say about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a runner or messenger came from General Jackson to General Coffee with the information, that the British had either appeared on the coast, or had landed, or had driven in the gun-boats on the Mississippi; and which, I will not pretend to state positively -- my memory not serving me faithfully here -- that he expected an attack upon the city hourly, and that he must hasten with all his available force to the defence of New-Orleans. General Coffee immediately recalled Gordon's spy company, put his brigade in motion, and hastened to General Jackson's assistance. During the busy scenes that followed, leading a life of constant activity, excitement, and peril, General Coffee soon forgot all about the expedition of Gordon's spies upon Lafitte's warehouses until it was recalled to his mind afterwards in a very peculiar and significant manner. General Coffee had not been thrown with Lafitte before, nor during the battle of the eight. But they met at a ball that was given by the citizens of New-Orleans to the officers of General Jackson's army shortly after the battle was over. Coffee did not arrive at the ball till late and most of the officers of

his brigade had preceded him, and were standing about the rooms when he arrived, noticing every object of interest and notoriety which presented itself, "beautiful women and brave men," etc., etc. Among those objects of interest was the celebrated Lafitte -- the Baratarian pirate. Mr. Cobb was standing but a few feet from Lafitte when General Coffee entered, and witnessed an introduction which occurred between them. When Lafitte's name was called, Coffee immediately recollect(ed) that he had been associated with Lafitte's name in some way or other, in endeavoring to recall the circumstances to his mind paused, and exhibited a great deal of hesitation in his manner. This, Lafitte, who appeared to be on the alert for slights, noticed, and attributing Coffee's hesitation to a repugnance of recognizing him as a gentleman on account of his previous reputation, immediately drew himself up with haughtiness, and in a hasty manner advanced a step or two, and exclaimed, with peculiar emphasis, "Lafitte, the pirate!" Coffee immediately discovering the error he had committed, advanced to Lafitte, and taking him by the hand, apologized for the tardy manner in which he recognized the introduction, and explained the cause of his hesitation.

This is the incident related to me by Mr. Cobb, as having occurred under his own observation. He related it to me as being true, and I believe him incapable of telling a falsehood about anything. He farther informed me that it was as well understood, according to his recollection, that Lafitte was a participant in the battle of New-Orleans as that General Jackson was there. He added, "I did not see him in the battle, nor did I see General Jackson in the battle, but I know he was there; so I know Lafitte was there, and I saw him afterwards." This conversation occurred in Columbia, Tennessee, in the month of January, 1840. He moreover, gave me the description of Lafitte's person, but it was by way of comparison to a gentleman then living in Columbia, and as the impression made on my mind as to Lafitte's personal appearance is associated with that individual, the description of Lafitte, might, in truth, turn out to be that of another man were I to attempt it.

I have thrown off this letter hastily and cudely, and it is at your disposal. If you think the facts, relative, worthy of publication, you can publish it; but individually, I have no wish to appear in print. Very respectfully,

W.H.K.

Source: Howard Library, New Orleans  
Copyist: Jacobson, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/25/42

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De Bow's Review - Vol. XIII - (1852)  
Pages 422-426

#### 4. -- LAFITTE. -- PROFESSOR INGRAHAM'S LETTER

The following note, with which we have been favored by Prof. Ingraham, is an amusing comment upon the controversy which has sprung up in regard to this traditional and historical personage, about whom we suffered ourselves once to be put out of temper, though, upon our

word and honor, we never cared a pinch of snuff whether his reputation were that of pirate or peddler. We simply published in the first instance a graphic, though highly embellished sketch, which was furnished us by a literary gentleman of Louisiana, the correctness of which, we said, was vouched for, using his own language, upon a number of authorities, which were set forth. Every one could weigh the value of these authorities, and the paper was published, as every editor in the Union is accustomed to publish, upon its own merits. What has restored our good humor, however, is that we observed in the columns of the very journal which called us so severely, and, as we think, ungenerously to task, in classing ours "among other fictitious works," and italicising its claims to verscity, before even the ink of the criticism had dried, a notice under the editorial head, most flattering in its terms, and associating the Review, in rank and "scientific" position with Silliman's Journal, -- certainly one of the most veracious journals in America. This opinion of our labors corresponding with a great many others from the same source, for which we have always entertained the most grateful feelings, we try to flatter ourselves, comes from the heart; though the other is quite disagreeable enough, upon the old principle, to be nearer the truth. The Delta has gained laurels enough on its own short career (and none more than ourselves have rejoiced over them) to leave a few for its neighbors. Even the "pirate" Lafitte -- we ask pardon of his memory, whilst we dismiss him -- cannot rob us of these.

"Aberdeen, Miss., Sept. 1, 1852.

"That Lafitte was ever a 'blacksmith' I cannot, in justice to my taste in the selection of a hero, for a moment entertain the idea. The romantic young ladies who have fallen in love with him, and the amateur juvenile buccaneers, who have admired him as a daring corsair, would never forgive me, should it prove so. It is not to be questioned that there have been very clever blacksmiths, citizens good and true; and our own day has produced a learned blacksmith. There is Vulcan also, who has doubtless done much to ennoble the profession; but as modern heroes of romance do not usually

'On thundering anvils ring their loud alarm,  
And puffing low the roaring bellows blow;

I must beg leave to protest against Captain Lafitte('s) being biographized into a blacksmith! To exchange his picturesque costume for a leather apron; 'that Damascus blade' for a rusty iron hammer; those 'jewelled fingers' for sooty fists; that 'darkly flowing plume' for unkempt locks,

'With cinders thick besprent;'

his quarter-deck for the mud floor of a forge; and the

'Glad waters of the dark blue sea,'

for a colling [sic] trough; and all the buccaneering splendor of his aristocratic person, for

'Sinevy arms and shoulders bare,  
His pon(d)erous hammer lifting high in air;  
While bathed in sweat from forge to forge he flies,  
'Mid sulphurous smoke that blackens all the skies!'

-- I must positively protest against smutting for a moment the fair fume of the elegant 'Pirate of the Gulf' by admitting for a moment the possibility of such a thing. A blacksmith? The hero of the Mexique seas, a blacksmith! Two duodecimo volumes of sentiment,\* rose-colored at that, thrown away upon a shoer of horse(s), and peradventure of asses! Not even Vulcan's fame, god though he were, nor Venus's 'smiles celestial', as she watches her sooty lord forging thunderbolts, not even the fact that he was the son of Jupiter and brother of Neptune, the god of the sea, on which Lafitte achieved his romantic name, can induce me to comment for a moment that this chivalrous and very gentlemanly pirate should be blacksmithed down to posterity! What would become of the romances that make him the fighting Adonis of the seas! We shall next learn that Ivanhoe was a tailor, the Red Rover a cobbler; and that the 'Last of the Mohicans' sold old clothes! We should handle these two volumed novel heroes, especially nautical, my dear Mr. De Bow, with the softest doe skin-encased fingers.

"But to reply more seriously to your inquiry: I have every reason to believe Lafitte to have been, if not gentle-born, well born, and educated with some degree of refinement. At this late day I cannot furnish you with every authentic information that would serve as data for a faithful biographical memoir. Seventeen years ago I gathered from various sources, from persons who knew Lafitte well, and from others, many facts which I wove into my romance. Since then other facts have been related to me, all of which have led me to the conclusion that he was an intelligent man, brave and chivalrous, with the bearing and amenities that distinguished the courteous Creole, -- and a Creole he undoubtedly was by birth and education. He first prominently made himself known by certain smuggling operations, by which he introduced rich freights into New Orleans, furtively conveyed from the Gulf through bayous. In these enterprizes [sic] he was aided by the means of merchants who in a few years were enriched by this unlawful commerce. When at length M. Lafitte, who was in their confidence, and had also made great gains, learned that he was watched, and that efforts were being made to entrap him into the custody of the law, he abandoned this perilous pursuit, and with his two or three small vessels lent his aid to one of the struggling republics of the Spanish Main. Success in arms seems to have rendered him bolder and more ambitious; for the following year we hear of him actually buccaneering on the coast of Texas, and carrying on a system of spoliation, -- respecting no flag that came into his power. Some depredations upon the coastwise navigation of Louisiana drew down from Gov. Claiborne a proclamation upon him, appended to which was a large reward for his head!

"Such, so far as I could ever obtain it, is the outline of his career up to the beginning of our war with Great Britain; and this outline I filled out in the novel, with the usual free creations of the

romancer's pen. Although authentic enough for fiction, it wants the rigid verification which a biography calls for.

"At the time the war broke out, (1812-1815) Lafitte had his rendezvous at Barrataria [sic], a picturesque bay on the Gulf coast, less than fifteen leagues from New Orleans. His sympathies were enlisted on the side of the Americans, and it is a matter of well-authenticated history that when the English commander would have bribed him to conduct them by the secret avenues of the bayous to the city, he refused their bribes of gold and naval rank with disdain; and in the face of the proclamation for his head hanging over him, he presented himself before Governor Claiborne and volunteered his arms, vessels, and men, in the service of his native state.

"That he was at the battle of New Orleans, as asserted by you, there can be no question. I have had pointed out to me on the field the very spot on which he was posted, it having been close to the river on the extreme right of the American line. The account in the novel is faithful to the narrative of his conduct there as told to me. If you have at hand a copy of Marbois' History of Louisiana, or Latour's, you will in one or perhaps both find a correspondence between Governor Claiborne and President Madison, in which the fact of his presence in the battle and his gallantry in maintaining his position, is not only stated, but is, I think, advanced as good ground for the clemency of the executive. But it is so many years since I have thought of this subject, that I have quite forgotten where I found many of my facts made use of in my novel; and it is barely possible I may be incorrect in referring you to Marbois, as I have no copy by me by which to verify my reference. Col. Chotard, of Natchez, commanded, in the defense of New-Orleans, a troop of Mississippi horse, the only cavalry, I believe in battle. A letter to him would no doubt elicit what knowledge he possesses upon this point. Governor Poindexter, of Louisville, was also in the action as aid to General Jackson. Either of these gentlemen could give certain information touching Lafitte's presence at the lines on that day.

"That there were two brothers is probable, though questionable; yet, that there were others of the name is quite likely, as it is by no means an unusual name, either in the South or in France. There is but one Lafitte, however, who has any romantic or historical interest at all associated with his career; and this personage is the veritable Barratarian chief, known as 'The Pirate of the Gulf,' the velvet-capped, sabre-armed, lofty-browed, glossy-locked, chiselled-lipped, tender, sentimental, courteous, throat-cutting Lafitte! Whatsoever harmonizes not with the chivalrous character of this Barratarian hero and salt-sea gentleman, should be set down to the credit of his obscure namesake to whom you allude, and the events of whose life you conjecture have crossed and mingled with those of the true romance man. This personage may have been his brother, for ought that I knew, and also have been a 'learned' or unlearned blacksmith, and, like Old Vulcan, have forged his more warlike brother's cutlasses and cannon. A sword has been presented to me by a gentleman of New Orleans, Duncan Hennen, Esq., which was taken from Lafitte at the time of his capture; and if one might venture

an opinion from the rude, massive cleaver-like fashion in which it is made, it was doubtless fabricated by this leather-aproned brother - a first effort, unquestionably, of the anvil-beating brother's smithy skill. Moreover, a six-pounder, which once belonged to Lafitte, was a few years since presented to me by a friend, as a trifling souvenir of 'my hero'. It has such a very fierce, bull-dog look about the muzzle, and so rough a coat, that I have set it down as a first effort of rough casting of the hypothetical brother aforesaid. Mr. Tooke, (?) who ought to know, says in his 'Pantheon', that immortal English classic, how that Vulcan wrought a trident for his brother Neptune. Why then should not Lafitte, the junior, cast a cannon or forge a two-handed iron sword for his brother?

"Had I now at hand all the alleged facts which I once collected in relation to Lafitte, I could not offer them to you as authentic, not regarding them as sufficiently genuine material for a faithful memoir. I found, in my researches, twenty years ago, romantic legends so interwoven with facts that it was extremely difficult to separate the historical from the traditional, I am very sure that the same cause will make it impossible to arrive at the truth of his life. His only biographer at last must be the romancer!

"There is to be found in Mr. Timothy Flint's 'History of the Valley of the Mississippi' a chapter, the perusal of which first suggested to me the idea of writing the novel of 'Lafitte'. I inclose a copy of the chapter. Mr. Flint was contemporary with Lafitte, was a keen hunter of testimonies, and is to be regarded as good authority touching him as any one now to be found. He says, in brief space, all that I believe can be said in certainly respecting him; and he asserts, as you will perceive on reading this extract, that he was at the battle of New Orleans.

"A curious instance of the strange mixture of magnanimity and ferocity found among the demi-savages of the borders, was afforded by the Louisianian Lafitte. This desperado has placed himself at the head of a band of outlaws from all nations under heaven, and fixed his abode upon the top of an impregnable rock,\* to the southwest of the mouth of the Mississippi. Under the colors of the South American patriots, they pirated at pleasure every vessel that came in their way, and smuggled their booty up the secret creeks of the Mississippi, with a dexterity that baffled all the efforts of justice. The depredations of these outlaws; or, as they styled themselves, Barritarians (from Barrita, their island,) becoming at length intolerable, the United States government dispatched an armed force against their little Tripoli. The establishment was broken up and the pirates dispersed. But Lafitte again collected his outlaws, and took possession of his rock. The attention of the Congress being now diverted by the war, he scoured the gulf at his pleasure, and so tormented the coasting traders, that Governor Claiborne, of Louisiana, set a price on his head. This daring outlaw, thus confronted with the American government, appeared likely to promote the designs of its enemies. He was known to possess the clue to all the secret windings of the many - (")



\*Mr. Flint is in error as we are all liable to be, in regard to "the rock". There is no rock on the northern shores of the Mexican Gulf in the neighborhood of the Delta of the Mississippi. Lafitte had a fort in the interior, "which still remains in tolerable preservation."

Source: Howard Memorial Library, New Orleans

Copyist: Jacobson, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/30/42

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De Bow's Review - Vol. 19

Pages 145-157

Lafitte, "The Pirate" - Early Times in The Southwest

Several years ago we became involved in a discussion relating to the character and deeds of Lafitte, a name so often referred to the chronicles of the southwest. One of the editors of the New Orleans Delta was the leading party in the discussion, and he has lately gone over the whole field of Lafitte's life and times in one of the numbers of that paper. The subject is one of such wide interest that we transfer with pleasure the entire chapter to our pages. It is one of a series of papers published in that Journal entitled Jackson and New Orleans.

About one mile above New Orleans, opposite the flourishing city of Jefferson, and on the right bank of the Mississippi, there is a small canal, now used by fishermen and hunters, which approaches within a few hundred yards of the river's bank.

The small craft that ply on this canal are taken up on cars which run into the water by an inclined plane, and are then hauled by mules to the river. Launched upon the rapid current of the Mississippi, these boats are soon borne into the crescent port of New Orleans. Following this canal, which runs nearly due west for five or six miles, we reach a deep, narrow, and tortuous bayou; descending this bayou, which for forty miles threads its sluggish course through an impenetrable swamp, we pass into a large lake, girt with sombre forest and gloomy swamps, and resonant with the hoarse croakings of alligators and the screams of the swamp fowls.

From this lake, by a still larger bayou, we pass into another lake, and from that to another, until we reach an island, on which are discernable [sic], at a considerable distance, several elevated knolls, and where a scant vegetation and a few trees maintain a feeble existence. At the lower end of the island there are some curious aboriginal vestiges, in the shape of high mounds of shells, which are thought to mark the burial of some extinct tribes of aborigines. This surmise has been confirmed by the discovery of human bones below the surface of these mounds. The elevation formed by the series of mounds is known as the Temple, from a tradition that the Natchez tribes of Indians used to assemble there to offer sacrifices to their chief deity, the "Great

Sun". This lake or bayou finally disembogues into the Gulf of Mexico, by two outlets, between which lies the beautiful island of Grande Terre.

This island is a pleasant seaside resort, having a length of six or eight miles, and an average breadth of a mile and a half. Towards the sea it presents a fine beach, where those who love "the rapture of the lonely shore, who delight in the roar and dash of the foaming billows, and in the ec(s)tacy of a bath in the pure, bracing surge,(") may find abundant means of pleasure and enjoyment.

Grande Terre is now occupied and cultivated by a Creole family, as a sugar plantation, producing annually four or five hundred hogsheads of sugar. At the western extremity of the island stands a large and powerful fortification, which has been quite recently erected by the United States, and named after one of the most distinguished benefactors of Louisiana, Edward Livingston. This fort commands the western entrance or strait leading from the Gulf into the lake or bay of Barataria. Here, safely sheltered, some three or four miles from the Gulf, is a snug little harbor, where vessels drawing from seven to eight feet of water may ride in safety, out of the reach of the fierce storms that so often sweep the Gulf of Mexico.

Here may be found even now, the foundations of houses, the brick work of a rude fort, and other evidences of an ancient settlement. This is the spot which has become so famous in the history and romance of the southwest, as the "Pirate's Home", the retreat of the dread corsair of the Gulf, whom the genius of Byron and of many succeeding poets and novelists has consecrated as one who

"Left a corsair's name to other times,  
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes."

Such is poetry - such is romance. But authentic history, by which alone these sketches are guided dissipated all these fine flights of the poet and romancer.

Jean Lafitte, the so called pirate and corsair, was a blacksmith from Bordeaux, France, who within the recollection of several old citizens now living in New Orleans, kept his forge at the corner of Bourbon and St. Philip streets. He had an older brother, Pierre, who was a sea-faring character and had served in the French navy. Neither were pirates, and Jean knew not enough of the art of navigation to manage a jolly boat. But he was a man of good address and appearance, of considerable shrewdness, of generous and liberal heart, and adventurous spirit. Shortly after the cession of Louisiana to the United States, a series of events occurred which made the Gulf of Mexico the arena of the most extensive and profitable privateering. First came the war between France and Spain, which afforded the inhabitants of the French islands a good pretence to depredate upon the rich commerce of the Spanish possessions -- the most valuable and productive in the New World. The Gulf of Mexico and the Carribbean sea swarmed with privateers, owned and employed by men of all nations, who obtained their commissions (by purchase) from the French

authorities at Martinique and Guadaloupe [sic]. Among these were not a few neat and trim crafts belonging to the staid citizens of New England, who under the tri-color of France, experienced no scruples in perpetrating acts which, though not condemned by the laws of nations, in their spirit as well as in their practical results, bear a strong resemblance to piracy. The British capture and occupation of Martinique and Guadaloupe, in 1806, in which expeditions Col. Edward Pakenham, who will figure conspicuously in these sketches, distinguished himself, and received a severe wound, broke up a favorite retreat of these privateers. Shortly after this Columbia declared her independence of Spain, and invited to her ports of Carthage [sic] the patriots and adventurers of all nations, to aid her struggle against the mother country. Thither flocked all the privateers and buccaneers of the Gulf. Commissions were promptly given or sold to them to sail under the Columbian flag, and to prey upon the commerce of poor old Spain, who invaded and despoiled at home, had neither means nor spirit to defend her distant possessions. The success of the privateers was brilliant. It is a narrow line at the best, which divides piracy from privateering, and it is not all wonderful that the reckless sailors of the Gulf sometimes lost sight of it. The shipping of other countries was, no doubt, mistaken for that of Spain. Rapid fortunes were made in the business. Capitalists embarked their means in equipping vessels for privateering. Of course they were not responsible for the excesses which were committed by those in their employ, nor did they trouble themselves to inquire into all their acts. Finally, however, some attention was excited to this wholesale system of legalized pillage. The privateers found it necessary to secure some safe harbor, into which they could escape from the ships of war, where they could be sheltered from the northerners, and where, too, they could establish a depot for the sale and smuggling of their spoils.

It was a sagacious thought which selected the little bay or cove of Grande Terre for this purpose. It was called Baratania, and several huts and store houses were built here, and cannon planted on the beach. Here rallied the privateers of the Gulf, with their fast sailing schooners, armed to the teeth and manned by fierce looking men, who were sharp cutlasses, and might be taken anywhere for pirates without offense. They were the desperate men of all nations, embracing as well as those who had occupied respectable positions in the navel or merchant service, who were instigated to their present purpose by the love of gain, as those who had figured in the bloody scenes of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Besides its inaccessibility to vessels of war, the Bay of Baratania recommended itself to another important consideration: it was near to the City of New Orleans, the mart of the growing valley of the Mississippi, and from it the lakes and bayous afforded an easy water communication, nearly to the banks of the Mississippi, within a short distance of New Orleans. A regular organization of the privateers was established, officers were chosen, and agents appointed in New Orleans, to enlist men and negotiate the sale of goods.

Among the most active and sagacious of these town agents was the blacksmith of St. Philip street, who, following the example of

much greater and more pretentious men, abandoned his sledge and anvil, and embarked in the lawless and more adventurous career of smuggling and privateering. Gradually by his success, enterprise, and address, Jean Lafitte obtained such ascendancy over the lawless congregation at Barataria, that they elected him their captain or commander. There is a tradition that his choice gave great dissatisfaction to some of the more warlike of the privateers, and particularly to Gambio, a savage, grim Italian, who did not scruple to prefer the title and character of "pirate", to the paling (?), hypocritical one of "privateer". But it is said, and the story is verified by an aged Italian, one of the only two survivors of the Baratarians, now resident in Grande Terre, who rejoices in the "nomme de guerre", indicative of a ghostly sabre cut across the face of "nez Coupe", that Lafitte found it necessary to sustain his authority by some terrible example, and when one of Gambio's followers resisted his orders, he shot him through the heart before the whole band. Whether this story be true or not, there can be no doubt that in the year 1813, when the association had attained its greatest prosperity, Lafitte held undisputed authority and control over it. He certainly conducted his administration with energy and ability. A large fleet of small vessels rode in the harbor, besides others that were cruising. The store houses were filled with valuable goods. Hither resorted merchants and traders from all parts of the country to purchase goods, which, being cheaply obtained, could be retailed at a large profit. A number of small vessels were employed in transporting goods to New Orleans, through the bayou we have described, just as oysters, fish and game are now brought.

On reaching the head of the bayou, there goods would be taken out of the boats and placed on the backs of mules, to be carried to the river banks, whence they would be ferried across into the city at night. In the city they had many agents, who disposed of these goods. By this profitable trade, many of the citizens of New Orleans laid the foundations of their fortunes. But though profitable to individuals, this trade was evidently detrimental to regular and legitimate commerce, as well as to the revenue of the federal government. Accordingly, several efforts were made to break up the association, but the activity and influence of their city friends generally enabled them to hush up such designs. Legal prosecutions were commenced on the 7th. of April 1813, against Jean and Pierre Lafitte, in the United States District Court for Louisiana, charging them with violating the revenue and neutrality laws of the United States. Nothing is said about piracy, the gravest offense charged being simply a misdemeanor. Even those charges were not sustained; for although both the Lafittes and many others of the Baratarians were captured by Andrew Holmes, in an expedition to the lakes, about the time of the filing of those informations against them, yet it appears they were released, and the prosecutions never came to trial, the warrants for the arrest were returned "not found". These abortive proceedings appear to have given encouragement and vigor to the operations of the Baratarians. Accordingly, we find on the 26th of July, 1814, the grand jury of New Orleans making the following exposure of the audacity and extent of these unlawful transactions: "The grand jury feel it a duty they owe to society to state that piracy and smuggling, so long established and so systematically pursued by many

of the inhabitants of this State and particularly of this city and vicinity, that the grand jury find it difficult legally to establish facts, even where the strongest presumptions are offered."

"The grand jury, impressed with a belief that the evils complained of have impaired public confidence and individual credit, injured the honest fair trader, and contributed to drain our country of its specie, corrupted the morals of many poor citizens, and finally stamped disgrace on our State, deem it a duty incumbent on them, by this public presentation, again to direct the attention of the public to this serious subject, calling upon all good citizens for their most active exertions to suppress the evil, and by their pointed disapprobation of every individual who may be concerned, directly or indirectly, in such practices, in some measure to remove the stain that has fallen on all classes of society in the minds of the good people of our sister States."

The report concludes with a severe reproof of the executive of the State, and of the United States, for neglecting the proper measures to suppress these evil practices.

The tenor of this presentation leads us to the belief that the word piracy, as used by the grand jury, was intended to include the more common offenses of fitting out privateers within the United States, to operate against the ships of nations with which they were at peace, and that of smuggling. Certainly the grave fathers of the city would not speak of a crime, involving murder and robbery, in such mild and measured terms, as one "calculated to impair public confidence and injure public credit, to defraud the fair dealer, to drain the country of specie, and to corrupt the morals of the people." Such language, applied to the enormous crime of piracy, would appear quite inappropriate, not to say ridiculous. It is evident from this, as well as other proofs, that the respectable citizens, several of whom now survive, who made this report, had in view the denunciation of the offence of smuggling into New Orleans goods captured on the high seas, by privateers, which no doubt seriously interfered with legitimate trade, and drew off a large amount of specie.

However, indictments for piracy were found against several Baratarians. One against Johnsess, for piracy on the Santa, a Spanish vessel, which was captured nine miles from Grand Isle, and nine thousand dollars taken from her; also against another who went by the name of Johannot, for capturing another Spanish vessel, with her cargo, worth thirty thousand dollars, off Trinidad. Pierre Lafitte was charged as aider and abettor in these crimes before and after the fact, as one who did, upon land, to-wit: in the City of New Orleans, within the district of Louisiana, knowingly and willingly aid, assist, procure, counsel and advise the said piracies and robberies. It is quite evident from the character of the ships captured, the indictments be(en) prosecuted to a trial, they would have resulted in modifying the crime of piracy into the offence of privateering, or that of violating the neutrality laws of the United States, by bringing prizes taken from Spain into its territory and selling the same.

Pierre Lafitte was arrested on these indictments. An application for bail was refused, and he was incarcerated in the Calaboose, or city prison, now occupied by the sixth district court of New Orleans.

Those transactions, betokening a vigorous determination on the part of the authorities to break up the establishment at Barataria, Jean Lafitte proceeded to that place and was engaged in collecting the vessels and property of the association, with a view of departing to a more secure retreat, when an event occurred, which he thought would afford him an opportunity of propitiating the favor of the government, and securing for himself and his companions a pardon for their offences.

It was on the morning of the second of September, 1814, that the settlement of Barataria was aroused by the report of cannon in the direction of the Gulf. Lafitte immediately ordered out a small boat, in which, rowed by four of his men, he proceeded toward the mouth of the straight [sic]. Here he perceived a brig of war, lying just outside of the inlet, with the British colors flying at the masthead. As soon as Lafitte's boat was perceived, the gig of the brig shot off from her side and approached him.

In this gig were three officers, clad in naval uniform, and one in the scarlet of the British army. They bore a white signal in the bows [sic], and a British flag in the stern of their boats [sic]. The officers proved to be Capt. Lockyer, of his majesty's navy, with a lieutenant of the same service, and Capt. McWilliams of the army. On approaching the boat of the Baratarians, Lockyer called out his name and style, and inquired if Mr. Lafitte was at home in the bay, as he had an important communication for him. Lafitte replied, that the person they desired could be seen ashore and invited the officers to accompany him to their settlement. They accepted their [sic] invitation, and the boats were rowed through the strait into the Bay of Barataria. On their way Lafitte confessed his true name and character; whereupon Captain Lockyer delivered to him a paper package. Lafitte enjoined upon the British officers to conceal the true object of their visit from his men, who might, if they suspected their design, attempt some violence against them. Despite these cautions, the Baratarians, on recognizing the uniform(s) of the strangers, collected on the shore in a tumultuous and threatening manner, and clamored loudly for their arrest. It required all Lafitte's art, address and influence to calm them. Finally, however, he succeeded in conducting the British to his apartments, where they were entertained in a style of element hospitality, which greatly surprised them.

The best wines of old Spain, the richest fruits of the West Indies, and every variety of fish and game were spread out before them, and served on the richest carved silver plate. The affable manner of Lafitte gave great zest to the enjoyment of his guests. After the repast, and when they had all smoked a cigar of the finest Cuban flavor, Lafitte requested his guests to proceed to business. The package directed to "Mr. Lafitte, (") was then opened and the contents read. They consisted of a proclamation addressed by Colonel Edward Nicholls, in the service of his Britannic Majesty, and commander of the land

forces on the coast of Florida, to the inhabitants of Louisiana, dated Headquarters, Pensacola, 29th August 1814; also a letter from the same directed to Mr. Lafitte, as the commander at Barataria; also a letter from the Hon. Sir W. H. Percy, captain of the sloop-of-war Hermes, and commander of the naval forces in the Gulf of Mexico, dated September 1, 1814, to Lafitte; and one from the same Captain Percy, written on 30th August, on the Hermes, in the Bay of Pensacola, to Captain Lockyer of the Sophia, directing him to proceed to Barataria, and attend to certain affairs there, which are fully explained. The originals of these letters may now be seen in the records of the United States district court in New Orleans, where they were filed by Lafitte. These letters contained the most flattering offers to Lafitte, on the part of the British officials, if he would aid them, with his vessels and men, in their contemplated invasion of the State of Louisiana. Captain Lockyer proceeded to enforce the offers by many plausible and cogent arguments. He stated that Lafitte, his vessels and men, would be enlisted in the honorable service of the British navy; that he would receive the rank of Captain, (an offer which must have brought a smile to the face of the unnautical blacksmith of St. Philip street) and the sum of Thirty thousand dollars; that being a Frenchman, prescribed and persecuted by the United States, with a brother then in prison, he should unite with the English, as the English and French were now fast friends; that a splendid prospect was now offered to him in the British navy, as from his knowledge of the Gulf coast he could guide them in their expedition to New Orleans, which had already started; that it was the purpose of the English government to penetrate the upper country and not in concert with the forces in Canada; that everything was prepared to carry on the war with unusual vigor; that they (were) sure of success, expecting to find little or no opposition from the French and English population of Louisiana, whose interests and manners were opposed and hostile to those of the Americans; and finally it was declared by Captain Lockyer to be the purpose of the British to free the slaves, and arm them against the white people, who resisted their authority and progress. Lafitte, affecting an acquiescence in these propositions, begged to be permitted to go to one of the vessels lying out in the bay to consult an old friend and associate, in whose judgment he had great confidence. Whilst he was absent, the men who had watched suspiciously the conference, many of whom were Americans, and not the less patriotic because they had a taste for privateering, proceeded to arrest the British officers, threatening to deliver them up to the Americans. In the midst of this clamor and violence, Lafitte returned and immediately quieted his men, by reminding them of the laws of honor and humanity, which forbade any violence to persons who came among them with a flag of truce. He assured them that their honor and rights would be safe and sacred in his charge. He then escorted the British to their boats, and declaring to Captain Lockyer that he only required a few days to consider his flattering proposals, and would be ready at a certain time to deliver his final reply, took a respectful leave of his guests, and escorting them to their boat, kept them in view until they were out of reach of the men on shore. Immediately after the departure of the British, Lafitte sat down and addressed a long letter to Mr. Blanque, a member of the House of Representatives of Louisiana, which he commences by declaring that "though proscribed in my adopted country, I will never miss an occasion

of serving her, or proving that she has never ceased to be dear to me." He then details the circumstances of Captain Lockyer's arrival in his camp, and enclosed the letters to him. He then proceeds to say: "I may have evaded the payment of duties to the custom-house, but I have never ceased to be a good citizen, and all the offences I have committed have been forced upon me by certain vices in the laws." He then expresses the hope that the service he is enabled to render the authorities, by delivering the enclosed letters, "he may obtain some amelioration of the situation of an unhappy brother," adding, with considerable force and feeling, "our enemies have endeavored to work upon me, by a motive which few men would have resisted. They represented to me a brother in irons, a brother who to me is very dear, whose deliverer I might become, and I declined the proposal, well persuaded of his innocence. I am free from apprehension as to the issue of a trial, but he is sick, and not in a place where he can receive the assistance he requires." Through Mr. Blanque, Lafitte addresses a letter to Governor Claiborne, in which he stated very distinctly his positions and desires. He says:

"I offer to you to restore to this State several citizens, who, perhaps, in your eyes, have lost that sacred title; I offer you them, however, such as you could wish to find them, ready to exert their utmost efforts in defense of the country. This point of Louisiana which I occupy is of great importance in the present crisis. I tender my services to defend it, and the only reward I ask is, that a stop be put to the prosecutions against me and my adherents, by an act of oblivion for all that has been done hitherto. I am the stray sheep wishing to return to the sheepfold. If you are thoroughly acquainted with the nature of my offences, I should appear much less guilty, and still worthy to discharge the duties of a good citizen. I have never sailed under any flag but that of the republic of Carthage, and my vessels are perfectly regular in that respect. If I could have brought my lawful prizes into the ports of this State, I should not have employed the illicit means that have caused me to be proscribed. Should your letter not be favorable to my ardent desires, I declare to you that I will instantly leave the country to avoid the imputation of having co-operated towards an invasion on that point, which cannot fail to take place, and to rest secure in the acquittal of my own conscience."

Upon the receipt of those letters, Governor Claiborne convoked a council of the principal officers of the army, navy and militia, then in New Orleans, to whom he submitted the letters, asking their decision on those two questions? 1st whether the letters were genuine? 2d. Whether it was proper that the governor should hold intercourse or enter into any correspondence with Mr. Lafitte and his associates? To each of these questions a negative answer was given, Major General Villere also dissenting - this officer being (as well as the governor, who, presiding in the council, could not give his opinion,) not only satisfied as the authenticity of the letters of the British officers, but believing that the Baratarians might be employed in a very effective manner in case of an invasion. The only result of this council was to hasten the steps, which had been previously commenced, to fit out an expedition to Barataria to break up Lafitte's establishment. In the



meantime, the two weeks asked for by Lafitte to consider the British proposal having expired, Caaptain Lockyer appeared off Grande Terre, and hovered around the inlet several days, anxiously awaiting the approach of Lafitte. At last, his patience being exhausted and mistrusting the intentions of the Baratarians, he retired. It was about this time that the spirit of Lafitte was sorely tried by the intelligence that constituted authorities whom he had supplied with much valuable information, instead of appreciating his generous exertions in behalf of his country, were actually equipping an expedition to destroy his establishment. This was truly an ungrateful return for services which may now be justly estimated. Nor is it satisfactorily shown that mercenary motives did not mingle with those which prompted some of the parties engaged in this expedition. The rich plunder of the "Pirate's Retreat", the valuable coastwise vessels that ride in the Bay of Barataria, the exaggerated stories of a vast amount of treasure heaped up in glittering piles, in dark mysterious caves, of chests of Spanish doubloons buried in the sand, contribute to influence the imagination and avarice of some of the individuals who were active in getting up this expedition.

A naval and land force was organized under Commodore Patterson and Colonel Ross, which proceeded to Barataria, and with a pompous display of military power entered the Bay. The Baratarians at first thought of resisting with all their means, which were considerable. They collected on the beach armed, their cannon were placed in position, and matches were lighted, when, lo! to their amazement and dismay, the stars and stripes became visible through the mist.

Against the power which that banner proclaimed they were unwilling to raise their hands. They then surrendered, a few escaping up the bayou in small boats. Lafitte, conformably to his pledge, on hearing of the expedition, had gone to the German coast - as it is called - above New Orleans. Commodore Patterson seized all the vessels of the Baratarians, and, filling them and his own with rich goods found on the island, returned to New Orleans, loaded with spoils. The Baratarians who were captured were ironed and committed to the calaboose. The vessels, money and stores taken in this expedition were claimed as lawful prizes by Commodore Patterson and Colonel Ross. Out of this claim grew a protracted suit, which elicited the foregoing facts, and resulted in establishing the innocence of Lafitte of all other offenses but those of privateering, or employing persons to privateer, against the commerce of Spain, under commission from the Republic of Columbia, and bringing his prizes to the United States to be disposed of, contrary to the provisions of the neutrality act.

The charge of piracy against Lafitte, or even against the men of the association of which he was the chief, remains to this day unsupported by a single particle of direct and positive testimony. All that ever was adduced against them, of a circumstantial or inferential character was a discovery among the goods taken at Barataria of some jewelry, which was identified as that of a Creole lady, who had sailed from New Orleans seven years before, and was never heard of again.

Considering the many ways in which such property might have fallen into the hands of the Baratarians, it would not be just to rest so serious a charge against them on this single fact. It is not at all improbable - though no facts of that character came to light - that among so many desperate characters attached to the Baratarian organization, there were not a few who would, if the temptation were presented, "scuttle a ship or cut a throat" to advance their ends, increase their gains, or gratify a natural bloodthirstiness.

But such deeds cannot be associated with the name of Jean Lafitte, save in idle fictions by which the taste of the youth of the country is vitiated, and history outraged and perverted. That he was more of a patriot than a pirate, that he rendered services of immense benefit to his adopted country, and should be held in respect and honor, rather than defamed and calumniated, will, we think abundantly appear.

Source: Howard Library, New Orleans

Copyist: L. Spear, Typed by C. B. Dillon, 11/19-23/42

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#### NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

##### Laffite vs Dumon

"The first lawsuit filed in the Parish of Ascension, which was then in the Second Judicial Court, is that of Andrew Robin vs Godefroi Dumon. It was filed July 28, 1814. Stephen A. Hopkins was attorney for the plaintiff and apparently the defendant was unrepresented.

"Of far greater interest than this suit, however, is suit No. 34 of the same docket, filed before John Foley, Clerk of Court, on August 17, 1816. It is entitled 'Pierre Laffite vs Godefroi Dumon,' and is a proceeding for foreclosure of a large tract of land situated on what is referred to as Canal Lafourche. Thomas Nicholls was attorney for Laffite and Ben Winchester for the defendant in the suit. The affidavit to the petition is signed in proper person by Pierre Laffite before David A. Randall, Justice of the Peace for the Parish of Ascension, on July 29, 1816. According to local reports this suit was an attempt on behalf of Pierre Laffite and probably his brother, Jean, to get control of the canal, which later became known as the Attakapas Canal, already referred to, and which was, in those days, the main connecting route between New Orleans and points east with the Teche country and Texas." J. L. H.

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##### A Guide to Laffite Materials in the Louisiana Division of the New Orleans Public Library

The Louisiana Division of the New Orleans Public Library, located at 219 Loyola Avenue (70140), contains books, microfilms, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, and printed documents relating to every phase of

Louisiana history, with particular emphasis on New Orleans and environs. Special collections of source materials pertaining to the activities of the brothers Laffite include contemporary newspapers, parish archives, notarial and court records.

The Louisiana Division has the following early nineteenth century newspapers on microfilm: L'Ami des Lois (1813-1820), Le Courrier de la Louisiane (1810-1820), Le Moniteur de la Louisiane (1802-1814), and the Louisiana Gazette (1804-1820). There is a card index to newspapers in the Division--unfortunately, of the papers listed above, only the Gazette is covered, and only for the years 1804-1811 and 1814-1815. There are several gaps in the microfilms for these newspapers--especially in the case of L'Ami des Lois--some of which can be filled with materials available at the Louisiana State Museum Library in the Cabildo.

The Division's holdings of early nineteenth century archival materials include the New Orleans City Archives: "Proceedings of the City Council" (1803-1829), "Messages of the Mayors" (1805-), "Correspondence of the Mayors" (1811-1827), and "Reports of the Commissaries of Police" (1816-17). There are two volumes listing flatboats, barges, steamboats, &c. in the Port of New Orleans (1806-1823). A recent addition to the Division's archival collection are the Civil Court records for New Orleans (1805-1880), which include groups of manuscripts from the Orleans Parish Court (1805-1807), the Territorial Court (1805-1813), the Superior Court (1804-1813), and the Court of Probate (1805-1845). Only the wills, successions, &c. in the probate records are indexed.

The Orleans Parish Notarial Archives are available on microfilm and cover the entire Laffite era. The original manuscripts are housed in the archives of the Civil District Court, located one block away. There is no reliable index for the notarial records, which are grouped under the names of the individual notaries.

None of the Louisiana Division's microfilm or manuscript collections circulate; most of these materials are restricted to use for purposes of serious research by "persons of university age or above." Microfilm readers in the Louisiana Division area are numerous and well maintained; newspapers, documents, and printed materials can be photocopied at reasonable expense on a coin-operated machine near the information desk; photostat and microfilm reproductions can be obtained through personal contract with either of two commercial firms. R.C.V.

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Early Nineteenth Century Maps of Louisiana, Texas, and the Gulf of Mexico  
in the Library of Congress (Geography and Map Division)

1. Lopez, D. Tomás. Mapa geográfica de la península y provincia de Yucatán, segun las mejores noticias ... Madrid, 1801. Scale ca. 1:930,000. Black and white. Entire map in 4 sheets, 12 x 14 in. each; area of interest (covering the northeast tip of Yucatan including Mujeres Island) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Mexico. Yucatan (Prov.) etc.]

2. Langara, Don Juan de. Carta esferica que comprehende las costas del Seno Mexicano ... 1799-1805. Scale 1:2,500,000. Black and white. Entire map 23 1/2 x 37 in.; area of interest (covering the Gulf of Mexico including the Texas and Louisiana coasts and Yucatan) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Gulf of Mexico. 1799-1805. etc.]
3. Lafon, B. Carte générale du Territoire d'Orléans ... Paris, [1806]. Scale 1:555,000. Black and white. Entire map 34 x 48 1/2 in.; area of interest (covering New Orleans to the Mississippi River Delta) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Louisiana. 1806. etc.]
4. Spain. Direccion Hidrografica. Carta particular de las costas setentrionales del Seno Mexicano ... Madrid, 1807. Scale ca. 1:1,500,000. Black and white. Entire map 23 x 35 in.; are of interest (from Galveston to the Mississippi River) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Gulf of Mexico. 1807. etc.]
5. Dessiou, Joseph. Laurie and Whittle's new chart of the West Indies, Gulf of Mexico ... London, 1809. Scale ca. 1:3,500,000. Lightly colored. Entire map in 4 sheets, 23 x 29 in. each; of your interest (covering the Gulf of Mexico including the coats of Texas and Louisiana and Yucatan) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: West Indies. 1809. etc.]
6. Lafon, B. Plan of the entrance of Barataria, with a projected battery proposed by Lt. Col. G. T. Ross ... 1813. Scale not indicated. Colored manuscript. 7 x 12 in. [filed: vault, Louisiana. Barataria. etc.]
7. Melish, John. Map of New Orleans and adjacent country. 1815. Scale ca. 1:625,000. Black and white. 15 1/2 x 21 in. [filed: Louisiana. 1815. etc.]
8. Lafon, B. Plan of the city and environs of New Orleans, taken from actual survey ... 1816. Scale not indicated. Black and white. Includes index of 61 place names. 20 x 21 1/2 in.; may be reduced slightly to a 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Louisiana. New Orleans (city). 1816. etc.]
9. Spain. Direccion Hidrografica. Bahia de Galvez-town. From their Portulano de la America Setentrional, Madrid, 1818, palte 34. Scale not indicated. Black and white. 8 x 11 in. [filed: Texas. Galveston Bay (misc.). etc.]
10. Great Britain. Hydrographic Office. An accurate chart of the coast of West Florida and the coast of Louisiana ... describing the entrance of the River Mississippi ... surveyed in the years 1764-1771 by George Gauld ... published, with improvements, London, 1823. Scale ca. 1:350,000. Black and white. Entire map in 4 sheets,

23 1/2 x 31 in. each; area of interest (covering New Orleans to the Mississippi River Delta) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Louisiana. Coast. 1823. etc.]

11. [Mexico. Hydrographic Office?] Carta particular de la parte sur del Seno Mexicano, que comprende las costas de Yucatan ... 1825. Scale ca. 1:1,600,000. Black and white. Entire map 22 1/2 x 35 in.; area of interest (covering tip of Yucatan and Mujeres Island) may be covered by one 17 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. exposure. [filed: Mexico. Yucatan (region). 1825. etc.]

R.C.V.

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# The Service Record of Renato Beluche

ESTADO NOMINAL DE LOS SEÑORES JEFES Y OFICIALES DE LA MARINA NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA, CON EXPRESION DE SUS CLASES, NOMBRES, PATRIAS, APTITUDES? ACCIONES DE GUERRA Y OTROS SERVICIOS, CON DECORACIONES Y DESTINOS ACTUALES O SUERTE DE CADA UNO.

Class	Nombres	Patrias	Edades	Aptitudes
General de Brigada	Renato Beluch	Neuva Orleans	48 años	

## ACCIONES DE GUERRA Y OTROS SERVICIOS

Este jefe fue nombrado en 2 de mayo de 1816 en la Isla de Margarita por su excelencia el Libertador Capitán de Navío de la Armada Nacional de Colombia. En 12 de mayo de 1827 fue ascendido a General de Brigada de dicha armada. Empezó a servir a la República a principios del año de 1813 en Cartagena por espacio de nueve meses con los corsarios de su propiedad nombrados Popa, Piñeres y general Bolívar en las expediciones contra Santa Marta, la una al mando de Chetillon, la otra al mando del coronel Lavatn y la Portobelo al mando del señor Chanerio. En los diferentes cruceros que ha hecho en esta época ha destruido a los enemigos por mas de un millón de propiedades. En el año de 1816 estuvo en la expedición contra Venezuela al mando de su excelencia el Libertador con el corsario de su propiedad nombrado Júpiter. El 2 de mayo del mismo año frente a Margarita apresó y abordó con la goleta Bolívar de su mando el bergantín Español nombrado Intrépido. Su excelencia el Libertador presenció este combate; siguió después en la expedición contra Carúpano y Ocumares, y siguió cruzando con el bergantín Arismendi hasta el año 1817 y principios del de 818 que lo mandó el general Arismendi a observar los movimientos de la armada enemiga en las costas de Puerto Cabello. El expresado bergantín de la propiedad de este jefe fue después empleado por el gobierno en la expedición de Cumaná y Barcelona. Cuando fueron empezadas las hostilidades contra los españoles el bergantín de este jefe, Dos de Mayo estuvo bajo su mando empleado por el general Montilla en Santa Marta; después lo mandó a conducir a Maracaibo el batallón Rifles de la Guardia, y los prácticos de la barra de Maracaibo le perdieron el bergantín; después tomó el mando de la toleta de guerra Independencia y



The Dominique You Papers

The documents relating to Dominique You and the privateer Le Pandoure listed below are to be found in the holding of the Williams Residence Museum, the research library of the Historic New Orleans Collection, located at 503 Royal Street, New Orleans, La. 70130.

1812, August 12. Statement by Jas. B. Many, Capt. of Artillerists, Fort St. Philip, that he stopped the French privateer "Pandoure."  
In French.

1812, October 15. Statement by M. Duralde of the Bureau of Mortgages at New Orleans that there are no mortgages registered against Mr. M. Domec's "Le Pandoure." In French.

[1812] August 23. Unsigned to Mayor McRea on the loss of masts by the "Pandoure" and the near death of the captain [dominique you] in a storm, and requesting permission for ship's repairs and medical attention for the captain.

1812, September 17. Rough draft of a letter requesting a new Letter of Mark for the "Pandoure." The reverse side containing an affidavit on the profits of the ship's last crossing. Also attached are:

1812, December 29. Statistics on Brig hope Capt. Patterson Morris. In French.

1813, January 8. Rough draft of a letter requesting a new Letter of Mark for the ship "Pandoure." In French.

n.d. Letter of command from Dominique to Fred. Youx, Capt. of the French corsair, on allowing the ship to come upriver to New Orleans for repairs. In French.

1812, September 12. General Statement of the Crossing, Prizes and Expenses of the French corsair "Pandoure." Signed at New Orleans by Captain Frederic You. In French.

1812, September 17. Inventory of the French Corsair "Le Pandoure" commanded by Capt. Frederic You and listing arms, ammunition, the condition of the ship, its supplies and provisions. Signed by Capt. Frederic You and by Laporte, French Consul at New Orleans. In French.

1812, September 17. Settlement of Spoils captured by "Le Pandoure," signed by Frederick You at the Consul of France at New Orleans. In French.

n.d. List of ships captured by the "Pandoure" between the 9th of February and the 24th of July, giving also the monetary value of each ship. In French.

- 1812, June 19. Affidavit by Francois Thomassin of the "Pandoure," before Louis de Tousard, vice-consul of France at New Orleans, on the goods captured by the corsair. In French.
- 1812, August 23. Affidavit by Frederic Tainburier of the "Pandoure" on a storm which nearly destroyed the ship and all on it, incurring a loss of money needed to obtain passage from the Governor of Louisiana. In French.
- 1812, August 23. Affidavit by Frederic Tainburier, Lieut., and Pierre Mouille, Andre Bertellau, Thomas Raffo and Pierre Manuel, crewmen, on the damage to the "Pandoure" by a storm and flood in the lower Mississippi. In French.
- 1812, November 2. Affidavit by Francois Thomassin of the "Pandoure" on the sale of an uninventoried length of cable from the ship. At New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, December 31. Affidavit by Jean Baptiste Benjamin Vignie on the ownership of the "Pandoure," requesting passage rights and discussing division of spoils. At New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, October 15. Act of Sale by Jean Baptiste Labatut, merchant and agent for Marc Domec, armer of the ship; Philippe Chandos Guieu, shareholder; and Bernard Lafosse for Alexandre Louis Sendrey transferring the ship "Pandoure" to Jean Baptiste Benjamin Vignie before Jean Baptiste Laporte, Chancellor of the French Consulate at New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, March 28. Receipt of money by Mark Domec from Ph. C. Guieu for three-eighth share of the "Pandoure" and the proceeds of her expedition. At Charleston. In French.
- 1812, June 19. Receipt of money by Balan Fougrou from Melunne at New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Andre Durand from Mr. Benetaud at New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Bonhomme from Benetaud at New Orleans for rice and peas. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Lafferanderie Son for Lay & Lachataiguerais from Benetaud at New Orleans for cordage.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Samuel Paxton from Mr. Benetaud at New Orleans.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Juan Thomas from Mr. Thomassin. In French.



- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Benetaud from Dominique You for sums paid by Benetaud to various persons on You's debts. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by J. Eline from Mr. Benetaud for four chests. At New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Hallame for Jean Lanusse from Mr. Beneteau for vinegar, brandy and other substances. At New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by W. V. J. Montgomery from Mr. Bennet at New Orleans for beef, mackerel and pepper.
- 1812, June 20. Receipt of money by Benet from Mr. Thomas at New Orleans for his share of the captured goods of the corsair "Le Pandoure" under Captain Dominique. In French.
- 1812, June 21. Receipt of money by Guity from Mr. Beneto at New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, June 21. Receipt of money by Hallame for Jean Lanusse from Mr. Beneteau for liquor. In French.
- 1812, June 21. Receipt of money by F. Bureau from Mr. Cenetaud at New Orleans. In French.
- 1812, October 1. Receipt of money by Manuel Jose from Dominiga, Captain of the corsair "Pandeur" at New Orleans. In Spanish.
- 1812, October 5. Receipt of money by Bonome from Dominique You at New Orleans. In French.

R.C.V.

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