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Through the  
Kentucky Rifleman  
the Spectral Kentucky Rifleman

William Paulson, in "The Republic",  
Boston, 1892, relates the following incident:

A British officer, who was in the Battle of New  
Brunswick, mentions an incident of striking strangeness,  
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whom had been in the defence of the city, as well as  
in the army of Jackson.

### Brank: The Kentucky Rifleman

"The march," said this officer, "in solid column  
a dark line, upon the American defences. I brought  
the staff, and as we advanced, we watched through  
the glasses, the position of the enemy, with that  
accuracy only felt when marching into the jaws  
of death. It was a strange sight, that Brunswick, with  
crowds of beings behind, their heads only visible above  
the line of defence. We could distinctly see their legs  
lying on the ground, and the batteries in view from  
the line spent months making towards us. We could  
see the position of General Jackson, with the  
troops around him. But what attracted our attention  
most, was the figure of a tall man standing on the breast



Branch the  
Kentucky Rifleman in fault of Americans  
~~The Spectral Kentucky Rifleman~~

William Walcott, in "The Republic," Boston, 1832, relates the following incident:

"A British officer, who was in the Battle of New Orleans, mentions an incident of thrilling strangeness; and our description of the western hunter, many of whom hastened to the defense of that city, as volunteers in the army of Jackson.

"He marched," said this officer, "in solid column in a direct line, upon the American defenses. I belonged to the staff; and as we advanced, we watched through our glasses, the position of the enemy, with that intensity an officer only feels when marching into the jaws of death. It was a strange sight, that breastwork, with the crowds of beings behind, their heads only visible above the line of defense. We could distinctly see their long rifles lying on the works, and the batteries in over front, with their great mouths gaping towards us. We could also see the position of General Jackson, with his staff around him. But what attracted our attention most, was the figure of a tall man standing on the breast-



works, dressed in livery-woolsey, with buckskin leggings, and a broad-brimmed felt hat that fell around the face, almost concealing the features. He was standing in one of those picturesque graceful attitudes peculiar to those natural men dwelling in forests. The body arched on the left leg, and swayed with a curved line upward; the right arm was extended, the hand grasping the rifle near the muzzle, the butt of which rested near the toe of his <sup>right</sup> foot. With the left hand he raised the rim of the hat from his eyes, and seemed gazing intently on our advancing column. The cannon of the enemy had opened up on us, and tore through ~~through~~ our ranks with dreadful slaughter; but we continued to advance, unwavering and cool, as if nothing threatened our progress.

"The roar of cannon had no effect <sup>up-</sup> on the figure before us; he seemed fixed and motionless as a statue. At last he moved, threw back his hat-rim over the crown with his left hand, raised the rifle to the shoulder, and took aim at our group. Our eyes were riveted upon him; at whom had he leveled his piece? But the distance was so great, that we looked at each other and smiled. He saw the rifle flash, and



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may rightly conjectured that his aim was in the direction of our party. My right-hand companion, as noble a fellow as ever rode at the head of a regiment, fell from his saddle. The hunter paused a few moments, without moving the gun from his shoulder. Then he relocated, and assumed his former attitude. Throwing the hat rim over his eyes, and again holding it up with the left hand, he fixed his piercing gaze upon us, as if hunting out another victim. Once more, the hat rim was thrown back, and the gun raised to his shoulder. This time we did not smirk, but cast glances at each other, to see which of us must die. When again the rifle flashed, another of our party dropped to the earth. There was something most awful in this marching on to certain death. The cannon and thousands of musket balls playing upon our ranks, we cared not for; for there was a chance of escaping them. Most of us had walked as coolly upon batteries more destructive, without quailing; but to know that every time that rifle was leveled toward us, and its bullet sprang from the barrel, one of us must surely fall; to see it rest, motionless as if poised on a rock, and know, when the hammer came down,



that the messenger of death drove unerringly to its goal, - to know this, and still march on, was awful. I could see nothing but the tall figure standing on the breastworks; he seemed to grow, phantom-like, higher and higher, assuming, through the smoke, the supernatural appearance of some great spirit of death. Again did he reload and discharge, and reload and discharge his rifle, with the same unflinching aim, and the same unfailing result; and it was with the indescribable phosphen that I beheld, as we neared the American lines, the sulphurous clouds gathering around us, and shutting that spectral hunter from our gaze. We lost the battle; and to my mind, the Kentucky rifleman contributed more to our defeat, than anything else; for while he remained to our right, our attention was drawn from our duties. And when, at last, we became enshrouded in the smoke, the work was complete; we were in utter confusion, and unable, in the extremity, to restore order sufficient to make any successful attack. The battle was lost."



The Colored Troops in the Battle of New Orleans.

General Jackson took occasion to compliment the colored troops, both those of the battalions of the free men of color, and of the battalions of <sup>free</sup> slaves from San Domingo, about five hundred volunteers. Under the command of brave and skilful officers, they displayed a courage and discipline in the fighting night battle on the 23<sup>d</sup> of December, as well as on every occasion where danger and duty called them, equal to that of the white troops, and which commanded the praise of the General-in-Chief, and of the whole army.

In contrast with this patriotic display of soldierly qualities in the defence of their country by these troops, the colored troops in the British army, recruited in Jamaica, and brought over in the expectation, would utterly have failed to meet the expectations of the English officers in command. They ran home away from their battle homes and history, from the sunny land of their nativity, under military compulsion, and under no suffer or told



in battle of Jourdeaus  
The Colored Troops, fought gallantly.

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In contrast with this patriotic display of soldierly qualities in the defense of their country by these troops, the colored troops in the British army, recruited in Jamaica, and brought over in the expedition, seemed utterly to have failed to meet the expectations of the English officers in command. They were borne away from their humble homes and kindred, from the sunny land of their nativity, under military compulsion, and made to suffer untold



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hardships in a service in which they had no heart, and at the mercy and bidding of strangers whom they felt had no interest but a selfish one, in them. In a strange country, and amid strange scenes, and often in want and suffering from the chill and exposure of wintry weather, their spirits were broken. A British officer and author, Major Hill, in his "Recollections of an Artillery officer," has this to say:

"The unfortunate blacks forming the West India regiments, about fourteen hundred men in all, suffered most dreadfully, from the change of climate and alteration of food. Several of these poor devils were observed huddled together, and exposed to the artillery fire of the enemy. They were desired to get under cover, to which they replied: 'No, tank you, massa; rader stay here and get kill at once. Weber see de day when we go back to Jamaica; so we die now; Tank you. No stan dis cold and fag, - no house to stay in, - no warm clothes. So nigger him die like dog!'"



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## Drummer Boy of the Colored Battalion

For almost half a century after the Battle of New Orleans, a picturesque and privileged character in the Crescent City, was Nohel, a negro boy, ~~of sixteen years of age~~, who was, at sixteen years of age, the Drummer for the Battalion of Free Men of Color, who volunteered under Jackson, and who fought gallantly in the several actions. Nohel so distinguished himself by his brave conduct in the battle of the 8th of January, as to attract the attention of the officers, and to receive many compliments. His martial character was the pride of his life; and on every anniversary when the victory was celebrated in the city, he was present with the drum he beat amid the roar and smoke of the battle, to head the procession with his part of the martial music.

A writer says: "Prior to the Civil War, each recurrent anniversary of the battle was celebrated by an elaborate civic and military parade, and on these occasions, Nohel, the drummer, was in his glory. He invariably headed the line of march, clad in non-descript military uniform, and beating a tattoo upon the only drum he had carried so valiantly in



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the fore of the colored battalion of freedmen. Behind him came the Mayor in a carriage, followed by the other city dignitaries, all glad to yield the place of honor to the humble veteran."

Nobel died in 1864, and his funeral was attended by a great concourse of friends among the whites, as well as from among the colored people. His widow long survived him, and was living in New Orleans a few years ago; we have no record of her death.



## The Lafittes & the Battle of New Orleans.



## Lafitte's Pirates in battle at New Orleans

### The Lafittes of Barataria; The Pirates of the Gulf.

The story of the Lafittes, the Pirates of the Gulf, ~~of Mexico~~, as they are popularly known in literature, has appeared and re-appeared in history and in the romance of fiction, in so many and in such varying forms of statement, that it is difficult for the reader to distinguish what is fact, and what is fiction. The cultured Louisiana historian will smile when mention is made of the historical novel, "Lafitte of Louisiana," and will tell you that the authoress, Miss Devereux, has expended an inventive imagination with a <sup>privileged</sup> ~~conscientious~~ disregard to the real occurrences which make up the life and adventures of <sup>two</sup> most picturesque characters.

The brothers, Pierre and Jean Lafitte, were natives of France, born and reared in the Gironde country, <sup>not far from</sup> ~~at or near~~ Bordeaux, the point from whence the great English flotilla ~~was dis~~ embarked for the coasts of the United States, and the final invasion of Louisiana. The Lafittes came to New Orleans in 1808<sup>or 9</sup>. Not much is known of them, until rumors were confirmed within a year or two after, that a community of sea-roving outlaws had made a rendezvous of the island of Grande Terre, in the Bay of Barataria, sixty



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miles south of New Orleans, on the Gulf coast, and that the Lafitte brothers were the leaders in these acts of outlavery. It was charged that they were guilty of open piracy upon the high seas, and complaints were made by the officials of friendly nations of the seizure of vessels and their cargoes, and the confiscation of the same, in violation of the laws of nations. Our government was appealed to <sup>to</sup> break up this outlavery, and to punish the violators.

When remonstrated with, and threatened; and sometimes arrested and brought to trial, the Lafittes and their men, through able attorneys and ~~through~~ interested friends, pleaded that they were not pirates, nor amenable to punishment as such. They were defended more than once, by Edward Livingston, then perhaps the ablest lawyer at the New Orleans bar, and afterwards aid and chief counsel in both military and civil proceedings, to General Jackson, throughout the campaign against the English. Many ~~single~~ <sup>had</sup> vessels, ~~been~~ commissioned as privateers by the <sup>French</sup> government at Guadeloupe, to prey upon the commerce of England and other countries at war with France. When Guadeloupe was taken by the English, there was no port in the West Indies where captured prizes could be



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taken and disposed of. ~~For two or three~~ In this extremity, a number of such vessels and cargoes captured, were brought into Barataria Bay. Soon a trade sprang up, and New Orleans and the interior towns became ready markets for the disposal of this illicit merchandise. The Lafittes, by their superior courage and tact, became the recognized leaders of these adventurous sea-rovers, especially Jean Lafitte, the younger brother. When the ~~given by the~~ commissions given their privateersmen by the government at Guadaloupe expired by virtue of the change of government, the masters of the ships applied for new commissions to the little republic of Carthage, which had recently been recognized by France. It was under these commissions, and under the flag of this little republic, <sup>that</sup> the so-called "Pirates of the Gulf," defended themselves from the charges that they were high-waymen of the sea.

Whatever may be said in their defense, under the charge that they were pirates, we can deny that they, for years, carried on an extensive business as smugglers; and in bold defiance of the revenue laws of the United States. So lucrative was this trade to themselves, and so profitable



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to the people of the city and country in Louisiana, that purchases and deliveries of goods were as open, as though made in Philadelphia. Again and again was our government at Washington appealed to to adopt measures, to send an armed force, to break up this nest of free-brokers and outlaws harbored within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States. For some reasons not explained, the ~~(Department)~~ administration was strangely inactive, if not indifferent, to these appeals. A well-manned ship of war, or the military forces at New Orleans, would have been sufficient to have broken up the rendezvous at Barataria and to have captured or dispersed the entire community of ~~guilty outlaws~~. This much was due for the protection of the commerce of friendly nations, as well as to put an end to the violations of our own revenue laws.

But the piracies, under pretence of privateering, had become a source of great profit to many merchants and tradersmen of Louisiana, and the Lafittes and their followers correspondingly popular with these influential classes. Many interested citizens were rapidly accumulating fortunes, and were bent on shielding them from any interference on the



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part of the officers of the law; or the proceedings of the courts, in which the offenders were frequently made to appear on trial. They paid attorneys handsomely for <sup>legal</sup> ~~such~~ services. It is related that Mr. Grimes, an able lawyer who had unsuccessfully defended them in one instance, was persuaded to accompany one of the Lafittes to their lair at Grant Town, to receive ~~payment~~ of his fee. Payment was made, followed by a lavish display of hospitality, during which some games of chance were introduced. Mr. Grimes returned to New Orleans penniless; but afterwards insisted that these Baratarian leaders were not pirates, but were the most brilliant and accomplished gentlemen he had ever met.

Even the revenue, and other officers of the Federal government, at New Orleans and vicinity, became infatuated in their friendly feelings for the Lafittes and their associates, and summed both to call the attention of the heads of departments to the illegal traffic now openly <sup>and extensively</sup> carried on between the outlaws and the citizens. Vessels were almost daily captured and brought ~~to~~ as prizes into the Bay of Barataria. Their rich cargoes of merchandise were sold by wholesale to merchants in this trade, at prices that would



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pay them a profit of two to four hundred per cent. This merchandise was carried in boats, through the navigable bayous, <sup>that interspersed the country,</sup> to New Orleans, or other towns, and there resold to the best advantage. The free-booters trafficked largely in slaves, ship-load of whom they brought over from the coast of Africa, <sup>though the slave-trade was prohibited by the Law of 1808.</sup> Negroes whom they would sell by the cargo, at Baratania, at one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars, were readily worth five to seven hundred dollars on the plantations. It is not surprising therefore that the bold Buccaneers formed many strong ties, and gathered around them powerful friends, in commercial, ~~societal~~ in social, and in political circles; and also in the halls of justice where friend were most met at times.

This smuggling and contra-hand trade had grown to serious proportions, and immunity from prosecution or interference had <sup>so</sup> emboldened the traffickers, both the outlaws and interested citizens, that little attempt at concealment was made. War with England having been declared, the attention of the government was but the more diverted from what was going on in far-away Louisiana. War with England broke out in



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June, 1812; but for two years, the people of Louisiana, far distant from the fields of military operations, took no part in the same. Isolated and exposed to possible attack, the people and government were indisposed to send troops a thousand miles from their homes, when they might be needed for defense there. Especially was this sentiment justified by the fact that the government at Washington made little or no effort to fortify or defend this country against the enemy, until the impending crisis of invasion threatened late in 1814.

It was fortunate for Louisiana, and for <sup>the</sup> Nation, that Governor Claiborne was the chief executive of the ~~the~~ new member of the Federation during this period of emergency. He was a patriotic statesman, and a man of decisive action, though conservative. He put forth all the powers of his official position to organize and arm the militia of his State, under the requisition of President Madison. Under his administration, the frequent and repeated reports of piracy upon the high seas, and the open and defiant smuggling carried on within his territorial jurisdiction, had become public scandals, to the reproach of the Nation. The Governor called the attention of the legislature to this



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lawlessness, and to the fact that its organized head and continued source was, and had been for four years, at the Bay of Barataria, in Louisiana, and but sixty miles away from the seat of government. But there was no favorable response from the General Assembly, the members of that Body claiming that the suppression of piracy and smuggling was a function of the Federal government only. Other reasons were freely surmised for the inaction of the General Assembly; that a number of the members were in league with the Lafittes, and were being enriched by this illicit traffic.

Despairing of assistance from the general government towards the extermination of these buccaniers and the suppression of their outlaws, Governor Claiborne began active measures to these ends, almost solely on his own responsibility as Governor. He was aroused to this course by an attack made by the Baratarians upon an officer and posse of twelve men who were sent on a tour of inspection in the revenue service. Several of the posse were killed or wounded. The Governor had the riot act read to the pirates, and publicly offered a reward of five hundred dollars for the head of Jean Lafitte. The latter retaliated



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by an offer of fifteen thousand <sup>dollars</sup> for the capture of the Governor. It is related that Lafitte defiantly walked the streets of New Orleans, and was seen leaning against a post on which the reward for his head was tacked. It was almost impossible to create a <sup>public</sup> sentiment adverse to the bold and independent rovers of the sea.

The captures of vessels and cargoes were mainly <sup>under</sup> the Spanish flag, for his reasons. The commissions as privateersman by the republic of Cartagena, which had declared her independence of Spain, gave this right by the law of nations. Then again, Captain Jean Lafitte related the story of his life; that he was, some years before, a successful merchant in San Domingo, and had sold out. On his way to Paris, the ship he was on was seized by a Spanish man-of-war, on which he and his wife were subjected to cruel outrages, and finally left destitute on an island. His wife died from the effects of starvation and exposure. He made his way to New Orleans, and had been fighting the Spaniards ever since, and would continue to do so to the end of his life.

Governor Claiborne determined to enforce the laws, and the bandits on sea and land began to feel the mailed hand of



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official power. At the time that Captain Lockyer, from the fleet at Pensacola, anchored his ships outside the pass at Barataria, lowered his pennant, and came in to Grand Terre, with overtures to Captain Jean Lapitte and his followers, of British gold, and British protection, and British honors, provided they would enlist under the British flag, for the invasion of Louisiana, Captain Pierre Lapitte, the brother of Jean, with others of rank among the outlaws, were in prison-chains at New Orleans. Lapitte had but to remember that these very British troops were just debarked from the province of his nativity, ~~France~~ where they had desecrated the country as the enemies of beloved France, to revive within him the traditional hatred of the English. He had many friends in Louisiana and it would <sup>be</sup> an infamy to betray them. He and his men loved and admired the new republic in America, and the spark of patriotism kindled into a flame at once. There was not a moment's hesitation in casting the die for the American cause. The dissembling was only for the few hours, until the English emissary had fully unfolded the designs and plans of the enemy. The emissary dismissed, Lapitte lost no time in revealing in person,



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These designs and plans to Governor Claiborne; and through him, to General Jackson, then at Mobile. The information was invaluable, as the beginning and hastening of preparations to meet and repel the invaders.

The Lafittes at once tendered the services of themselves and all their men, with all the munitions and arms at their command, for the defense of New Orleans, and to share the fortunes of campaign and battle with the soldiers of Jackson's army. They asked no conditions save that the government would pardon them of all offenses against the laws, and give to them the privilege of becoming worthy citizens, when they had proved themselves worthy soldiers. This was promised, and finally done; the sequel we know.

Pierre Lafitte settled down to a quiet life after the war, and was lost to further history. Beluche, Dominique You, and other leaders under the Lafittes, became law-abiding and worthy citizens, and lived and died respected by the people of New Orleans. Captain Jean Lafitte, even the boldest and most adventurous leader of the community of wreckers and smugglers, could not reconcile to himself the quiet ~~(life of the)~~ contented and easy life of the citizen.



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Lost to <sup>public</sup> view for a year or two, this adventurous Eneas, of modern times, came into notice again in 1817, as the head and leading spirit of a ~~community~~ little colony planted on Galveston Island, on the Texas coast. He and the captains of the vessels which made up his fleet professed allegiance to Spain, Texas being then a part of Mexico, a colonial dependence of Spain.

In the turbulent and revolutionary period that resulted in the independence of Mexico <sup>from Spanish domination</sup>, and finally, the independence of Texas of Mexican domination, Captain Jean Lafitte and his followers gave assistance to Texas in the struggles. The chaos of disputed sovereignties, and the confusion and conflict of authorities, opened up new ~~and tempting~~ opportunities for privateering and buccaneering, too tempting to be resisted by Lafitte and his community of followers. Captain Jean went back to his old practices, as at Barataria. The Galveston Islanders did not <sup>long</sup> confine themselves to the capture and spoliation of Spanish ships. Twice they extended their seizures to vessels sailing under the flag of the United States. In the second instance, Lafitte's apologies and explanations were not



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satisfactory to our government. Though his services at New Orleans had been recognized, and a pardon of all previous offenses given, it was decided that the colony of sea-roving outlaws should be broken up, and driven away from Galveston Island. The order was given by our government at Washington; and Lieutenant Kearney, in command of the war-ship, Enterprise, was commissioned to carry it into execution. This was done; and with this exodus of the chief and his adventurous comrades, passes from history and romance the famous "Pirate of the Gulf."

"As mild a mannered man, as ever scuttled ships or cut a throat." An officer of the Enterprise thus describes him: "a stout, rather gentlemanly personage, some five feet ten, in height, dressed simply in a foraging cap and a blue frock of easy fit. His complexion, like that of many Brechs, was olive; his countenance was full, mild and rather impressive; but for a small black eye, which, as he grew animated, would flash in a way to impress one with a notion, that El Capitan might be, when aroused, a very ugly customer. His demeanor was extremely courteous. He was evidently educated, and gifted with no common talent for conversation."



