

points: First.—Are the letters genuine? Second—Is it fit that the governor of Louisiana should hold intercourse with the Lafittes and their associates? Full of the scheme then on foot for breaking up the establishment at Barrataria, and not inclined to lose an adventure that was sure to be pleasant, and might be profitable, the council concluded that the letters were forgeries, that Lafitte's story was an invention and the whole plan to deliver Dominique from captivity, and avert the threatened attack of Barrataria. Governor Claiborne did not coincide in this opinion, nor did General Villere of the militia, but it prevailed. And thus it was that the only effect, so far as the authorities at New Orleans were concerned, of Jean Lafitte's honorable and patriotic conduct was to hasten the departure of Commodore Patterson's expedition! No, not the only effect; for Governor Claiborne took the precaution to send copies of the letters and papers to General Jackson.

Jean Lafitte, meanwhile, foreseeing the result of his zealous endeavors, continued to give proof upon proof of his attachment to the United States and his strong desire to atone the past. A few days after Captain Lockyer's departure, a letter from Havana fell into the hands of Lafitte which confirmed Lockyer's statements in every particular, and called on all Americans residing on the Gulf to prepare for an overwhelming invasion. This letter was promptly forwarded to New Orleans. On the 10th of September, Pierre Lafitte, eldest of the three brothers, who had been absent during Lockyer's visit returned to Barrataria. He, too, wrote to Governor Claiborne, approving all that his brother had done "under such difficult circumstances," and declaring that he was "fully determined to follow the plan that may reconcile us with the government." All in vain. On the 11th of September Commodore Patterson sailed for Barrataria, which he reached on the 11th and answered the letters of Jean and Pierre Lafitte by seizing nine of their vessels, many of their men, and destroying their establishment, taking care to secure the loot. The Lafittes escaped, but Barrataria was no more. Punctually on the fifteenth day, Captain Lock-

yer returned and thundered with his signal guns, at intervals, for 48 hours. But no boat answered his summons. Concluding that Lafitte had played him false, and fearing to fall into a trap if he sent a boat to reconnoitre, he sailed away—soon to reappear in those waters and play a gallant part in the tragic drama about to open.

Fortunately, the communications of the Lafittes and the papers which accompanied them, were soon made public in New Orleans. They made an impression on the public mind very different from that which they had produced upon the official understanding. Edward Livingston, the master spirit of the American population, knew the Lafittes too well to adopt the ruse theory for one moment, and through his influence chiefly the efforts of the privateer chiefs were turned to account in rousing the people of Louisiana to a sense of their danger and their duty.

The Lafitte letters and documents were published in the New Orleans papers September 12th. Jackson had received from Governor Claiborne copies of these letters and documents in due time and after the repulse of the British forces at Fort Bowyer, in Mobile bay, and moved by Capt. Lockyer's interview with Lafitte and the copy of Colonel Nichol's proclamation, the General issued on September 21, a counterproclamation to the people of Louisiana in which this paragraph occurs:

"The proud, vain-glorious boaster, Colonel Nichols, when he addressed you Louisianans and Kentuckians had forgotten that you were votaries of freedom, or he would never have pledged the honor of a British officer for the faithful performance of his promise to lure you from your fidelity to the government of your choice, I ask you Louisianan's can we place any confidence in the honor of men who have courted an alliance with robbers and pirates? Have not these noble Britons, the honorable men. Col. Nichols and the Honorable Captain W. H. Percy, the true representatives of their royal master, done this? Have they not made offers to the pirates of Barrataria to join them and their holy cause? And have they not dared to insult you by calling on you to associate,

as brethren, with them and this hellish banditti?"

General Jackson reached New Orleans December 2, and proceeded to put the city in a state of defense. Twelve days later the British fleet was off the coast at the mouth of Bayou Beivevenue and sixteen hundred British troops were within eight miles of New Orleans. It was the greatest crisis in our national history, Consternation prevailed and rumors of disaffection and treason prevailed in the city. On the 16th Jackson proclaimed martial law, converting the city into a camp and all its citizens into soldiers. The day following this proclamation, Lafitte appeared before the General. A large number of his band, taken by Commodore Patterson, languished in prison; others were concealed in the city to avoid arrest and waiting to offer their services to their country. Forgetting that Jackson had stigmatized him and his Barrataria friends as "hellish banditti" and that they were publicly committed to exclusion from the ranks of honor, Lafitte offered to General Jackson his services and those of his Barratarian companions. The General at first was disinclined to receive them. But the Judge who was to try them, a committee of the legislature, the District Attorney who was to prosecute them, Edward Livingston, and a large number of American residents, all untiring in recommending the acceptance of Lafitte's offer, the General consented, and the whole band was formed into two most efficient companies of artillerymen, who rendered more efficient service in the defense of the city than any other companies of equal number. So destitute was the city of munitions of war that the very flints of these privateers' pistols were received by General Jackson as a precious prize and transferred to muskets.

Such confidence had Edward Livingston in the honor and humanity of the Barratarian chiefs, that he had assigned to Pierre Lafitte the charge of his beloved wife and child. If the British should succeed in penetrating the lines Pierre, whose post was at Fort St. Johns, two miles above the city, was to hasten to Livingston's residence and convey to a place of safety, in a little chaise that

stood ready for the purpose, Mrs. Livingston and her daughter, then a beautiful child of seven years, afterwards famous as Cora Livingston, the belle of Washington in President Jackson's day.

On the morning of December 28th the British host appeared before Jackson's works in martial array. Pakingham had said to his officers: "Today we'll dine in New Orleans." The author of "Jackson and New Orleans" says of this December morning: "Fly away noisy rice bird and defiant mocking bird. Music more noisy and more defiant than yours salutes the rising sun; the rolling drum and ringing bugles, namely, that call twelve thousand hostile men to arms. This glorious morning General Pakingham is resolved at least to have one good look at the wary and active foe that for five days has given pause to the invading army, and has not yet been so much as seen by them. With his whole force he will march boldly pu to the lines and if fortune favors, and the prospect pleases, he will leap over them into New Orleans and the House of Lords. A grand reconnaissance is the order of the day. The American General has not used his telescope in vain; he is fully aware that an early advance had been intended. Five pieces of cannon are in position. Before the sun was an hour on his diurnal way, Jackson's anxious glances toward the city had been changed into expressions of satisfaction and confidence by the spectacle of several struggling bands of red-shirted, bewhiskered, rough and desperate-looking men, all begrimed with smoke and mud, hurrying down the road toward the lines. These proved to be Lafitte's Barratarians who had run all the way from Fort St. John, where they had been stationed since their release from prison."

When these men had taken position at Battery Three, ever afterward known as the "Pirates' Battery"—two 24-pounders—two men pushed their way into the General's presence. One was Lafitte, who presented his friend, Col. Ellis P. Bean, of the Mexican Revolutionary Army. "I know Colonel Bean" said the General. "He was once a Tennessean, and has probably come over to see Tennesseans cover themselves with glory today." "I only ask

to be allowed to participate as a private soldier on this occasion," replied Bean. "But if captured you will be shot as a spy," said Livingston. "Tennesseans are not so easily captured," said Bean. And alongside of Lafitte, Col. Bean fought the guns of Battery Three, and witnessed the defeat of the heroes of Waterloo on that December day before New Orleans. The great decisive battle of New Orleans followed on the 8th of January and Lafitte's 24-pound guns from Battery Three contributed to the destruction of Pakingham's army and the glory that crowned the American arms.

To escape the odium of piracy that enemies had heaped upon his name, Lafitte removed to Galveston Island, which was then beyond the jurisdiction of the United States. Through the instrumentality of Col. Bean he was given a commission in the Mexican navy with instructions to harrass the Spanish merchant marine but to respect all vessels that sailed under the American flag. Spain laid complaint before the Washington authorities and in 1821, Lieutenant Kearney with a U. S. vessel of war visited Galveston and ordered Lafitte to leave the island. He obeyed; retired to Yucatan, where he died in 1826.

Yoakum and Thrall have branded

Lafitte as a pirate and this unfounded, unjust charge is taught in every public school in Texas. They declare that on account of Lafitte's gallantry at the battle of New Orleans, President Madison, a month later granted the Barratarian chieftain a full pardon. Pardon for what? A pardon must be based on established guilt. It implies, under our system of jurisprudence, an indictment, a trial and conviction before a court having competent jurisdiction. Jean Lafitte was never indicted. He was never tried. He was never convicted. Then on what grounds could the chief magistrate of the nation offer a pardon? Yoakum gives what purports to be a biographical sketch of Jean Lafitte and gives as his authority one Jim Campbell, an adventurer, who claimed to have been Lafitte's favorite lieutenant, and this creature published an account of Lafitte in the United States Magazine in 1852—more than a quarter of a century after Lafitte had quit the walks of men. I prefer the more reliable authority of Jackson, Livingston, Claiborne and others whose knowledge of the man and whose long acquaintance with him led them to regard him, not as a pirate, but a patriot, whose loyalty to his adopted country could not be seduced by British gold.

## William Greenwood, a Mason Pioneer

*By Mrs Mattie A. Maddux, 922 West Ninth Street, Dallas, Texas*

My father William Greenwood, the subject of this sketch, was one of the early settlers of Mason county, moving to that section in 1852, where he entered the stock business, having bought a small drove of cattle at LaGrange. He bought land near Mason and owned several leagues, one section being known as Greenwood Prairie. He was not destined to lead such a quiet life in that region, although nothing very eventful occurred until his brother, who was Commissioner of Indian affairs under Buchanan's administration, had him, transport a tribe of Indians to a reserve. I believe they were Tonkaways, a friendly tribe. They were out only a few days' travel from Mason when one of

their tribe died, a child of tender years. The Indians refused to travel, neither would they permit the child to be buried, but made a kind of hammock which was swung up in a tree, and on this the corpse was placed. The Indians cut themselves with knives, and mourned and howled like a pack of wolves for several days, when they announced they were ready to travel. This tribe had their village in my father's pasture, and were often accused of committing depredations in the county.

On another occasion father took the Seminoles to the reserve. In all his dealings he never had any trouble with Indians and never saw but two savage Indians during his residence of fourteen

or fifteen years there. But he got the thrill of his life during the Civil War, when a man came into his home and quietly informed him that on a certain night the "Bushwhackers" intended to give him the same treatment that had been administered to Louie Martin. Mr. Martin was langed by the "Bushwhackers" while on his way to Mexico to buy goods for his store. After receiving this alarming news, my mother sent to Camp San Saba, about eighteen miles distant, for rangers to come and protect us. Three rangers came and watched all night, but the "Bushwhackers" never showed up.

I expect my father had a few enemies. He was too old to enlist in the army, when the Civil War came on, and as he owned a few negroes a certain element thought he should fight or be put out. He was instrumental in supplying several men and sending them to fight for the Confederacy. The last man he equipped with horse, saddle, bridle, homespun clothing and a small amount of money, went to Mexico, and after the war ended he came back to Mason.

I think it was in 1864 or 1865 that Alice Todd, a beautiful neighbor girl was captured by the Indians. It was then that Father decided to sell out and move away from that county. He sacrificed everything he had and moved to Fredericksburg, and lived there one year. This move caused him to lose all he had, and he died a poor man. At one time he owned a big stock of cattle which roamed over several counties.

It was during our stay at Fredericksburg that General John B. Hood came on a visit to our home, and remained several days while he was recuperating from his wounded leg.

In the early days in Mason some of the celebrities that came to the fort were often guests, with their wives, at our home. Major Van Dorn was a personal friend. When he went to Wichita Falls my father advised him not to go for he was afraid the Indians would become more hostile, which they did. On his return trip the Major stopped to our home and told us he had captured a white child. Major Van Dorn was quite an artist, and when the post was broken up he gave my oldest sister his

painter's palette and brush. I could mention several of the officers who were guests in our home.

Father never turned away anyone who wanted lodging for himself or horse. He was a quiet, unassuming man, his word was his bond, and he was the very soul of honor. He was a progressive man, and was always instrumental in bringing men to teach school and seeing that these teachers were paid and had a comfortable place to board. There were others there, too, who were progressive, although Mason was a frontier place. The people were far above the average in intellect, and some few were progressive to a marked degree. There are many incidents that I could relate. Years have impaired my vision of the past, and I might not be accurate in my dates, so I will leave this to a more gifted writer. I shall always retain a tender feeling for Mason and its citizens. I have a little brother and sister who are quietly sleeping under the grass near my old home.

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Mr. L. Beasley, Junction, Texas, writes: "Enclosed find \$1.50 to renew subscription to Frontier Times. My wife and I enjoy reading it more than any periodical we take. Our parents were old settlers in Texas, and I had an uncle, Capt. T. M. Dennis, who was a San Jacinto veteran, a member of the first and sixteenth legislature, and was with Jack Hays in the fight with the Indians at Bandera Pass, and also in a great many other Indian fights. I am an old trail driver."

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Capt. W. L. Calohan, 3937 Flora Avenue, Kansas City, Mo., writes: "Enclosed find \$3.00 for two more years subscription to Frontier Times. I was born in Blanco county, Texas, and am familiar with all of the old time people you mention, and was personally acquainted with most of them mentioned in all of your issues. Thanks to Captain James B. Gillett for sending me Frontier Times to start me as a subscriber."

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If you fail to receive your copy of Frontier Times promptly, kindly notify us and another copy will be sent you.

# A Train Robbery Prevented

*This Thrilling Story Appeared in The San Antonio Express, February 6, 1915*

When President Wilson summoned to Washington Duval West of San Antonio to confer on the delicate situation in Mexico, preparatory to sending Mr. West to that troubled republic as the personal representative of the Chief Executive of the American Nation, he was probably not aware that he had picked out a man possessed of iron nerve in addition to long experience with the Mexican people and conditions, politically, socially and otherwise.

There was one night in particular when Duval West showed his nerve, nerve that made him look death in the face for an hour and twenty minutes; nerve that saved the United States Government the loss of its mail and the Southern Pacific Railway a costly robbery. Few persons know that West was the right-hand man of United States Marshal Rankin in days when the frontier of Texas harbored many bad men and that position spelled fighting.

It was Saturday night September 22, 1888, when Duval West distinguished himself as a young man of iron nerve and when he rendered to the United States Government and the Southern Pacific Railway Company a service that has gone down in the annals of deeds of bravery. With former Ranger Captain J. S. McNeel, for one hour and twenty minutes, West fought a party of train robbers, faced death by burning and held the fort, in this case a mail car that was perforated with bullet holes through the walls from three feet from the floor to the ceiling. And it is to the credit of these two men that not a robber put his foot over the sill of the door.

In those days Duval West was chief deputy under United States Marshal John Rankin. The Marshal had received a tip some time previous that the notorious Bill Whiteley was planning to rob a railroad train with his gang. The marshal had with this gang a secret service man, one who kept him informed of the gang's plans. Whiteley, who was raised in Goliad county, had a reputation extending beyond the confines of the State. It had been proven he was

in the Flatonia train robbery, in the train robbery at McNeil, above Austin, and in several others and was considered one of the most desperate train robbers in the country. Captain McNeel was in Bee county early in September and was wired by United States Marshal Rankin to come at once to San Antonio to confer on important business. When he reached the city he was told by the marshal that definite information had been received that Whiteley had picked on the Southern Pacific train from San Antonio to Houston and that his services were required to prevent the robbery.

The Marshal assigned Duval West, then a beardless youngster in his early twenties and unmarried, and Captain McNeel to defend the car. In the express car immediately following the mail car Marshal Rankin had six men with him; all were armed with shotguns and Colts sixshooters. It was believed the robbers would attack first the express car. It was not known definitely what night had been selected for the attack, so beginning September 17 each night the train left San Antonio with a party of armed men in the express car with the Marshal, and the two men with the mail clerk in the mail car. The officers went as far as Schulenburg then return to San Antonio. On the fifth night, September 22, the attempt at robbery was made. When the train pulled into Harwood that Ed Sarano, the mail clerk, who was standing in the door of the car with his arms akimbo, locking out into the night, which was dark with a misting rain, suddenly exclaimed: "Boys they are on—two of them." As all the train crew had been quietly tipped off to what to expect, every man's nerves were on tension, so when Sarano saw two forms boarding the engine just as the train started he took snap judgment which proved to be correct. McNeel called: "Put out that light, quick," and Sarano, reaching up, turned out the wick in the kerosene lamp that in those days was carried in the mail cars. Darkened, the mail car left Harwood.