Natchitoches, 11,400 acres (Journal, Page 126).

3. Pierre's family lived on the Sabine, but he became estranged from them and returned to New Orleans.

3. Miscellaneous
   A. Jean Laffite was reported to have visited “Shawnee Town”, as rough a town as there was in the area. It was located near Los Adaíes. Arsene LeBlue accompanied Laffite there Nardini, Louis R. No Man’s Land, 1961, Page 79).
   B. Jean reported he had business agents in Alexandria.
   C. Pierre's son, Cezar, lived with his mother on the Sabine.
   D. There are many Laffites in De Soto Parish, Louisiana (located North and West of Natchitoches). They think they are related (perhaps to Pierre).

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 1994

REVIEW OF LAFFITE LITERATURE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

JIM NONUS

Jim Nonus presented a wide range of material from his personal library relating to Jean Laffite and the Laffite era. Some of the books and articles presented represent rather accepted views of the Laffite era, while others are highly debatable as to their authenticity.

Even though some pieces of the collection may be controversial, they are valuable in that they comprise part of the legend surrounding Laffite. One of Jim's goals is to accumulate the largest amount of literature available regarding Laffite. The reprint of the Journal of Jean Laffite, by Dogwood Press, as one example, represents a work whose authenticity is the source of a great division between Laffite connoisseurs, but, nevertheless contains some material valuable in the study of the privateer. The irony of the Journal is that the essential premise that Laffite lived a long life after his departure from Galveston is in contrast to the near total paucity of documented information post 1821.

The other books in the collection of material appear to be rather evenly divided on their handling of information post 1821, reflecting their acceptance or rejection of the Journal.

Laffite of Louisiana, by Mary Devereaux, is a romance novel, but was written prior to publication of the Journal. It placed Laffite in France as a contemporary of Napoleon Bonaparte, which is in contrast to information contained within the Journal which claims Port au Prince as Laffite's birthplace.

One must exercise caution and discrimination in acceptance of printed material relating to the study of Laffite. As one example, within the collection of books presented, Laffite's gravesite has been reported in three different locations, a Louisiana grave he shares with Napoleon Bonaparte and John Paul Jones, a grave in the Yucatan, and, one in Alton, Illinois!

Even though controversial sources are included, the focus of the collection is documented material. An original printing of The New York Herald, of 1817, includes correspondence from a Lieutenant with the Mina Expedition on Snake Island (Galveston) dated 1816. It reads:

"Extract of a letter from a Lieutenant, who was one of the Expedition that sailed from the Chesapeake last summer, under the command of General Mina, dated ‘Serpent Island, Galveston Camp [sic], 25th. Dec. 1816’.

“This is the first chance I have had to write since I left Port-au-Prince. I am sorry to say a number of..."
brave officers have died of the yellow fever. Seven died from the regiment I belong to. We are on an island near the main, where I expect we shall remain during the winter months. This Island, only a few months past, was inhabited by wild beasts and serpents. After the capture of Carthagena, Orea [Aury], now governor of this place, made a settlement with about one hundred people of different nations and complexions. He carries on the business of privateering to a very large extent, and is considered not much of a gentleman, for he wants us to join him in preference to the cause we are engaged in, which we will not. I must confess I have had hard times since I left New-York, and nothing but the glorious cause embarked in keeps me alive. You well know what money I had when I left you, (which was but little) and I have the mortification to say I have not since received a cent, but live on hope and fair promises. Our general is a fine man and does all in his power to make us comfortable, and says he placed money in the hands of some of the people in the United States, who have since failed.

You no doubt have had very unfavorable impressions of the expedition, but entertain not the least doubt we shall succeed in our expedition. We calculate to have some hard fighting, but the doubloons will pay for all. As yet we have had no use for our weapons of death, except among ourselves, and I am sorry to see them employed in this way; but such is the fact, for not a week passes by that there are not one or two duels.

P.S. This Island is headquarters for the Mexican privateers and prizes — One was sent in a few days since with the small sum of $200,000. I have not been able to finger any of the Doubloons as yet; expect to when we get to Mexico".

It is known that a high ranking member of the Mina party acted as a spy for Spain, and the hypothesis has been set forth that the anonymous author of the above letter may have been that spy. The content of the letter would certainly give any interested party a description of the status of the Mina Expedition.

Another original newspaper in the collection, The Niles Register of December 27, 1817, was also displayed. This often referenced source presents much information in the form of extracts of correspondences, the most interesting of which is from the Collector of Customs in New Orleans, Beverly Chew, dated August 1, 1817.

Several original issues of The Louisiana Historical Quarterly and Louisiana History, The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, were displayed. These contain articles by Jane de Grummond, Stanley Faye, and Charles Gayarre, relating to Laffite, Aury, Mina, and other individuals and issues related to Laffite.

Also provided was a list of antiquarian bookstores in New Orleans and Galveston where material on the Laffites and their era could be purchased. Specifically, books have recently been obtained at The Dauphine Bookstore (Steve Lacy), The Librarie, Faulkners in Pirate’s Alley, in New Orleans, and Yesterday’s Books (Louise Nichols) and the Galveston Bookshop (John Kemmerly) in Galveston.