Most of us are quite familiar with the actions of Jean Laffite. But what about his brother Pierre, who was a mastermind in his own right? The following letter from Pierre Laffite to Commodore Patterson, Commanding Officer for the N.O. Station, reveals much about his personality. Though it is a long letter, it is quite readable.

New Orleans, Jan. 3, 1820

Sir,

Persuaded that the communication of which this letter is the object, can conveniently be made to you only; it will, I hope, be received as an apology for the liberty I take of addressing myself to you.

Too long since, the name of the Lafittes have been the object of general execration, as well here as abroad; tarnished and devoted to contempt in publications without any foundation; and always found assimilated and attached to the criminal undertakings of a gang of Pirates of all countries; the audacity of which increases by impunity, and who have lately committed depredations and atrocities of all kind on the Sea coast, and even within the jurisdiction of this State. It would not be difficult for me to prove such Banditti never were engaged, kept in pay, or protected by me, or my Brother in our different transactions at Galvez-town; and his late conduct in that country with regard to one of them, ought to destroy the least suspicion.

But, as the non-ratification of the treaty by Spain gives to the Government of the United States the jurisdiction as far west as the Rio Bravo del Norte under the purchase of Louisiana; and as the establishment at Galvez, lying within those limits, was formed as conquered from Spain, by the Mexican Republic, and Republic of Texas; to put an end to all things, and to shew to the whole world that I never contributed to the violation of the sacred rights of nations, or would offer resistance or offence to the Government of the United States; and in view of restoring all confidence to the foreign trade directing itself towards this place; and to destroy all fears which the Establishment of Galvez might occasion; I now offer myself to you, Sir, willingly and at my own risk and expense, to clear Galvez, and disband all those which are to be found there; taking the engagement for myself and my Brother, that it shall never serve as a place of Rendez-vous for any undertakings with our consent, or under our authority. If the offer I make to you, Sir, can receive your approbation, I shall stand in need of no other thing but the necessary permit to prevent any embarrassment in the enterprise offering at the same time any satisfactory security for its unforeseen results, with permission to all those to be found there, to return where they may choose.

If my Demand is accepted, nothing shall be wanted on my part to bring it to a good result; and if you contribute to the general welfare by securing the commerce and the inhabitants against the audacious attempts of Ruffians; I shall be indebted to you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity of striking out the odious epithets affixed to my name by my enemies; and of evincing to the Government of the U.S. my earnest desire to comply with the Laws; and as far as may be in my power to conduct to the safety of the Commerce of this Port, and ridding the Gulf of Mexico of Cruizers obnoxious to the Government. I remain, Sir, your most humble and obedient, Servant.

Pierre Laffite

P.S.-

In case you take the present in consideration, I beg to leave to call on you on the day you may be pleased to appoint.

(SOURCE- Bibliotheca Parsoniana, Louisiana-American MSS, No. 994)