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LETTERS OF JOHN INNERARITY

THE SEIZURE OF PENSACOLA BY ANDREW JACKSON,
NOVEMBER 7, 1814

[To James Innerarity, Mobile]

[Pensacola] 10th/11th [Nov. 10] 1814

M. D. B. [My Dear Brother]

These last four days have been the most fatal in the annals of this place. The first advice the inhabitants received of the approach of Genl. J. [Jackson] was announced from the Fort. Two days previous it was asserted by high authority that a letter had been intercepted by Coll. N. [Nicholls] from Genl. J. to the Sy. at War in which he stated that he had nearly concentrated all his forces to the amount of about 7000 men for the purpose of an attack on this place which he had only been enabled to do by promising to give up the Town to 24 hours pillage, to which hard alternative he had been obliged reluctantly to submit.

All the inhabitants were thrown into the greatest consternation & alarm, which was infinitely increased by the threats of the B. [British] Commodore that so soon as the Spanish flag was lowered the Town would be levelled.

Our house was particularly named as the most conspicuous object from the assurance which Col N. had used every means to impress on the mind of the Commodore and the officers of the navy that we were entirely in the Amn. interest.

Note—These letters are a part of the series of documents, survivals of the records of Panton, Leslie and Company and its successor, John Forbes and Company, the publication of which was begun in a late issue of the QUARTERLY. The originals are in the possession of Mrs. John W. Greenslade, a great-granddaughter of John Innerarity, who has transcribed them. The series will be continued in the following issues.

This being the case & finding every effort abortive to do away such an injurious impression by stating to the Commodore the reasons on which I founded my unalterable neutrality, as a feeble return for the great protection which we rec'd both from the Am. & the Sp. Govt. I employed the night of the 7/8 to put a few of our most valuable on board of the Moscow along with my family, & I had nearly loaded a Canoe with some valuable packages when the Amns. entered the East end of the Town, torn down the Colours, firing volleys of musquetry close to the wharf, when the owner of the Canoe forcibly took it away from me, grounded it & went ashore to endeavour to save some property belonging to himself & while so doing numbers leaped into the Canoe & made off to save their lives, but whither or what has become of the property I have not yet been able to learn altho' I have used every effort to obtain information & recover same. As to myself I jumped into another Canoe to await the decision, but it was full almost to sinking when they pushed off far into the Bay to Bru's Schn. & from thence I got on board of the Moscow to my family, from whence I was not permitted to return by the men of war until next afternoon & even then several discharges of musquetry on board announced their prohibition. So soon as the Amns. entd. the Town the Sophy, Sloop of War, drew nigh & fired numerous shots on the Town, which had it not been for the humanity of Capt. Gordon would have been reduced to ashes.

The Sea Horse frigate however ordered the Sophy to join the Childers at Barrancas & then to destroy the Forts & powder magazine, which was done that night & next day & nothing now remains of the Town or Forts Barrancas Redout [?] but piles of ashes.

All the negroes in town & ours along with them fled to the other side of the Bay to save their lives.

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When the Sea Horse & Carron got underway everybody supposed that it was with an intention of coming as nigh as possible to complete the work of desolation & destruction, but they went to Barrancas. Coll. N. went in a Gun Boat Cutter to make all the Indians immediately commence their march for Appa. & with them he *drove* about 300 negroes, women & children pressing all the Barges & Canoes for this purpose since when we are without any information of their fate. This man Coll. N. has been the occasion of the ruin of many & the abhorrence & detestation of all. Tomorrow McPherson will go in quest of the negroes.

Instead of the Massacre & pillage which was anticipated, Genl. J. & his army have obtained for themselves a lasting name for their humanity & good order.

The first onset was dreadful, but this over all was peace & tranquillity among the few inhabitants left in the Town which had been previously almost deserted.

Not a single excess was committed—The Genl & his army are now leaving the Town. The terror & panic with which they were previously impressed have given way to the most favorable opinion among the inhabitants & even Col. N was obliged to confess that he had never seen such a body of men enter into a Town who had conducted themselves with such good order.

I have only had about half an hour to write you these hurried lines, my mind which has been much perturbed ever since this shameful plunder of our [—?] at BS [Bon Secours] is now almost distracted from the contemplation of the past, the great wreck of property & the dread of the future, as I am certain that our *troubles* have only *commenced* & will be renewed with tenfold rage or fury in a few weeks.

To all this is to be added my uneasiness at not hearing from you since yours of the 4th ult—I have been much distressed by the accounts of your ill health, but somewhat comforted by the assurances of your convalescence.

Inclosed you have S. H. Garron on Garron & Wilson for \$1000 at 5 D/s in our favor with which please do the needful, also with the enclosed a/c against Major J. P. Kennedy for \$65... 4

God bless & preserve yr health
& peace of mind

J. I. [John Innerarity]

[To James Innerarity, Mobile]

Pensa. 29th Nov. '14

My Dear Brother

I recd yr much esteemed favor of the 18th on the 24th Inst. & was surprised to perceive that you were not then in possession of my letter to you P Captn D. Files, which covered the 1st of the inclosed note on Garrow & Wilson at 5 D/S for \$10,000 & the within a/c against Major Kennedy for———both sums I hope are 'ere now at our Cr.

The heavy losses which we have lately sustained excite in you rage & Indignation against the Authors, & in me a more blameable dispondency.

The accompanying copy of my representation to the Captn Gen. will apprise you of the extent of our losses at Bon Secours; but those which we suffered in consequence of the attack on this place are of still greater magnitude.

Twenty-five of our negroes (as P the inclosed list) who fled for safety to the opposite side of the Bay were, with many others belonging to the inhabitants here forcibly driven on to Appala some overland, & others by water via Choctawce & coastwise for which

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purpose all the perogues & Boats that could be found, nearly forty in number were seized & among others our Barque Canoe & new Boat—also the Cust. Hr. Barge—All these, however I firmly believe will be restored, as I am convinced that the Commodore Captn Gordon had no sinister view in directing this step. Be this as it may, Noriega went to Appa. about a fortnight ago with Credentials from the Govr to enable him to recover & bring back all the Negroes who were carried off & by him I wrote a long letter to Doyle Which I trust will have the desired effect.

I had previously chartered Mayerca's Schooner to bring away all the skins & other property & by her I hope to receive back all the negroes in a few days. Your negro Smart, I am happy to inform you is working in the yard.

There are no Indians on the Path or any obstacles whatever to your coming here, which I pray you to do immediately. I would advise you to come by the way of Bon Secours & make yr arrangements so as to stay here for about a month as perhaps it may be necessary that I should go on to Appa. or even to Nassau.

There is no Amn. vessel here & no possibility of sending the goods you ask for by Sea, as the Carron strictly blockades this Port & is scarcely ever out of sight of Barrancas. Her Cutter also watches the Coast; so that it would be impossible for any vessel to elude their vigilance. In the mean-time our horses are literally dying & our negroes suffering much for want of corn which is not to be had here at any price.

I am told that Gen'l Jackson touched with a generous sympathy for our sufferings on all sides will now allow this place to be supplied wt Corn & provisions—If so, I beg you to load the Henry *immediately* wt Corn, a quantity of Bacon, some Lard, Hogs &c & send her to B'Secours from whence I will have them brought here immediately; To venture outside would be ex-

posing the vessel to certain Capture. The Corn we Must have, if possible, for our subsistence. Will yr Collector now permit goods to be sent (via) Bon Secours? If so I can supply all your wants & will willingly comply with any formalities he may prescribe for securing the duties.

In my last I stated to you the circumstances under which Gen'l Jackson ordered my riding horse to be taken on the presumption that he was the property of Coll. Nichols, altho' I pledged my word of honor to Capt. Files that this deadly enemy of ours Coll. N. never had in any shape or way whatever any right or interest directly or indirectly to the horse in question.

This pledge I had flattered myself would have been sufficient but the Gen'l. had already commenced his march & said he would make further inquiries & either return the Horse or pay you \$200 the price said to have been paid for him to me by Coll. N. which I again most solemnly aver to be false & that he never even proposed to purchase him at all.

I beg all yr attention to the inclosed letter of Dn. Jayme Fontenales [illegible] which I can bear testimony—He is indeed a man who would not for any pecuniary consideration whatever utter a syllable that was not religiously true & the whole town can beside bear evidence to the fact.

He is on all occasions very friendly to me & I wish to oblige him, please to attend to what he says relative to the payt which ought to be made to him the same as specie here, that is to say, taking into a/c Comns, Disct in Bk notes &c A propos,—I have on hand four thousand Dollars in Bk notes; I am afraid to risk them all at once in remitting same to Orleans—Can I not cut them in halves? & I will then send them to you.

I fear much that they will depreciate every day more & more. I am in the greatest want of Dollars &

beg you to bring can Muster.

I have detain copy of . . . repr. Cyril Morant v. The delay in fin. scalding his hair ward the inclos 30th. at nig until now in Co sight, which wa bringing back 1 Rebecca in ten. 30 casks of be signed to us.

I again beg delay via Bon

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Sir

I have ju [journey] to that which y Gen. Winche me.

I do not f arrangement lately occupi of your lett war who w proper.

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beg you to bring with you all the Gold & Silver you can Muster.

I have detained Honoré until now waiting for the copy of representations to the Captn. Gen'l. which Ciril Morant volunteered a fortnight ago to make. The delay in finishing same was in consequence of his scalding his hand—Please to return it to me, & forward the inclosed certificate of Ciudadanea to Milne.

30th. at night—I have further detained Honoré until now in Consequence of a large Brig's heaving in sight, which was generally supposed to be the Sophie bringing back the Negroes, but proves to be the Brig Rebecca in ten days from Kingston, Jama. She brings 30 casks of best rum & a cargo of Dry Goods consigned to us.

I again beg & intreat you to come here with out delay via Bon Secours.

God bless you & yours,

JOHN INNERARITY

ANDREW JACKSON TO JOHN INNERARITY

Natchez

20 April 1815

Sir

I have just received, at this place, on my return [journey] to Tennessee, your letter of the 16th Inst., that which you allude to as having been forwarded by Gen. Winchester on the same subject, never reached me.

I do not feel myself authorized to make any definite arrangement as to your land which Genl. Winchester lately occupied as an encampment; but the substance of your letter shall be communicated to the Sec: of war who will no doubt, do in regard to it what is proper.

As to the flour taken from M. Fontinales at Pensa-

cola. I can only remark that it was represented by the Spanish Intendant (Morales) as well as by others high in office as belonging to Capt Woodbine; & that M. Fontinalès must clearly show that it really belonged to him before he can expect any order to be given for the payment— He must be sensible, that no such order can be given upon a bare statement made by his friend.

I beg you to believe it would afford me great happiness to render ample justice in both the cases referred to in your letter.

I reciprocate the good wishes you have expressed for me

Very respectfully

I am

Yr. Obt. St.

ANDREW JACKSON

Major Genl Comdg.

7th M Distct.

Mr. Innerarity.

(This series of documents will be continued in the following issue of the QUARTERLY.)

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[Author's Note.]
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July 1831

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO COLONEL EDWARD NICHOLLS AND CAPTAIN GEORGE WOODBINE IN PENSACOLA, 1814.

His Britannic Majesty's Ship
Royal Oak off Mobile Bay
15 March, 1815

Sir,

The Honorable Captain Spencer of H.B.M. Ship Carron, who is at present on a commission to Enquire into and regulate the Claims of the Spanish Inhabitants at Pensacola & Appalachicola has transmitted to me your Excellency's letter of the 9th inst. addressed to Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane & myself inclosing a representation from the Inhabitants of Pensacola respecting their losses, which I shall forward by Express to Sir Alexander Cochrane my Commander in Chief and I have no doubt that strict Enquiry will be made into the Conduct of Colonel Nicholls & Captain Woodbine & that the losses Sustained by the Spanish Inhabitants at Pensacola will be remunerated by the British Government if the Slaves do not return.

I have the honor to be Sir
with the greatest respect
yr most obt. hble. Servt

Percy (?) Malcolm
Rear Admiral Comnd.
HBM Squadron off Mobile

His Excellency
Gonzalez Manrique
Governor of Pensacola

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His Britannic Majesty's Ship
Bonnant, off Mobile 10 July 1815

Most Excellent Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your Excellency's Letter of the 25 ult. And it is with Extreme regret I learn that the Slaves at Apalachicola have not gone back to their Masters, And I also feel Sorry that it has not been in my power to bring back the Spanish Soldiers from that vicinity. The Services upon which I have been Engaged have not permitted of my detaching any vessel from the fleet to bring back these troops, but in a few days I will dedicate a Sloop of War Solely to that purpose—It is necessary in relation to the Negroes that I should be clearly understood by your Excy. as having no Sort of Control over any of those not Actually taken by the British Marines. for such as thought proper to join the Indians, your Excellency must make application to their Chiefs, Situated as I am with so few white Troops at Appalachicola it would be attended with much hazard the making use of forcible measures which accordingly I must entirely decline.

I return your Excellency my very best thanks for your offers of Services in which I beg leave most cordially to reciprocate, And to express to your Excellency that I am with much Consideration

Your Excellencys most obt. &
very humble Servt

ALEX. COCHRANE

Vice Admiral & Commander in chief
of HBM Ships & vessels upon the
North American [Station]

His Excellency
Don Gonzalez Manrique
Commr. of West Florida

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Be it Known to all whom it doth and may concern that I, John Innerarity, one of the very oldest inhabitants of this place, do hereby constitute and appoint James S. Pott Esqr, of the City of Manchester, England, official assignee therein, to be my true and lawful attorney in fact for me and in my name and stead, and as my legal representative, to claim from the British Government or from whomever may have any authority or right to claim, the fullest indemnification and remuneration for all Spoliations and losses of property sustained by me at the close of the years one thousand eight hundred and fourteen and commencement of one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, especially by the abstraction and abduction from me (in common with many inhabitants of this city) of Forty-five slaves belonging to me, of which said slaves forcible possession was taken from me by Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nichols of the British Royal Marines by his own authority and that of his own Commission and conveyed from thence by the force under his command to a Fort constructed by his order on the River Apalachicola, where he held them under his exclusive authority and command, so effectually that the said John Innerarity never regained them or has ever been able to regain or recover possession thereof as well as for the total loss by explosion of Forty six barrels of Gunpowder, which were stored by him, the said John Innerarity, in the Powder Magazine of the Fort of San Carlos de Barrancas, which said powder was blown up therein by order of Commodore Gordon, commanding the British Naval forces at this station, of which he held forcible possession at the time of the advent of the troops of the United States into this place—all which Spoliations and losses as more particularly specified in the accompanying depositions the said John Innerarity claims full indemnification and remuneration through his attorney the said James S. Potts Esqr hereby prom-

ising and engaging to ratify and confirm all whatever
my said attorney may do in the premises, as fully and
efficiently, and to all intents and purposes as if done
by myself personally. In faith and testimony of which
I here unto affix my seal and signature in the City of
Pensacola this sixteenth day of May one thousand and
eight hundred and fifty-four.

(copy, unsigned)