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A Letter of John Innerarity to John Forbes

John Innerarity



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**A LETTER OF JOHN INNERARITY TO
JOHN FORBES**
(Arrival of land speculators in Pensacola)

Pensa. [Pensacola] 24th May '17 [1817]

My Dear Sir

Your highly esteemed favor of the 28th February only reached me via N. Orleans on the 29th April.

If I have not been so regular in my correspondence as you have a right to expect, I trust that your goodness will more than excuse me when I state to you that I was for a long time without a single assistant save little Benito Caro, who cannot even copy a letter. Forstall was called to Orleans where he remained sometime-Skeate went to Mobile at my Brothers most urgent request, where he still remains.

The Militia Service became so extremely oppressive and degrading during the reign of Martial law as literally to drive the former away; we were constantly harassed by the Government in every shape & way ; and all this at a time when the clouds lowered thick and heavily around us ; when there -seemed no prospect of safety-our books, papers, property, negroes, my family to place in safety; a thousand things to do and none to aid me: in such a situation and under such circumstances, it would have required a mind that could "scowl defiance on the blasts of fate", a mind of more than mortal temper to have stood calm and collected; meet the crises with firmness, and prepare for a tempest that seem-

This letter is in continuation of the series of documents, survivals of the records of Panton, Leslie & Co. and its successor John Forbes & Co., the publication of which has been continuous in the Quarterly. They are in the possession of Mrs. John W. Greenslade who has transcribed them.

ed to blow from the four winds-Mine, I confess, became oppressed & sunk under the accumulated weight, yet I strove with all my might against the current which was overwhelming me, and am still striving indefatigably to bring up my lee way.

I have postponed until the last moment replying to that part of your important letter of the 16th Ulto. intimating your intention of withdrawing from this Concern at the end of June or December next.

The subject is of too deep interest for me to venture on singly, and I have awaited my Brothers answer. Your wishes of course, are sacred, and the slightest expression of them a law to us, whatever may be the consequences to us, or whatever sacrifices it may be necessary to make.

The more extended the term of your withdrawing your support, the more of course we will consider ourselves as favored-Our obligations to you in every way through a long series of years are at least equal to those due to a kind Patron and Parent, and our debt of gratitude more, far more than our utmost efforts can ever repay.

Nothing can be more equitable than the mode you propose for the valuation and division of the real property. I flatter myself that in the space of one year from hence that part of it in Pensacola can be disposed of to considerable advantage; as a somewhat eager inquiry has already commenced for Houses and Lots; more especially, Water Lots. This proceeds from the *confident* expectation of a very early change.

A Col. Walton of St. Stephen (formerly of Charleston) a Mr Fitz-Simmonds (a relation of a respectable family in the same City) and a Mr Carney, all men of Capital, have been for this fortnight on the look out for purchases, of which they have

made a few inconsiderable ones wherever they could find bargains. Every one in Town has in consequence given a nominal value to their property, and many who were lately eager to sell now hold back in the expectation that the value will soon be greatly enhanced.

These gentlemen will return in about a month; they are desirous of establishing themselves here this Fall, and will be followed by many others.

Pray what is the minimum you would advise me to take for the Whole of our premises? I wish to Heaven we could make one general sell off, and that our lot could be thrown at Matanzas near you; which is my Brother's earnest wish as well as my own, but it is a consummation rather devoutly to be wished than expected, while we have such a Mill stone about our necks-However, Nil desperandum est. If you can by dint of any possibility only fly with the utmost haste to P-a (or to the Seat of Wisdom) as my Brother recommends in the dispatches which accompany, I would fondly anticipate that the result would prove a great stride towards enabling us to shake off our connection with this Country, and transplanting ourselves somewhere on the banks of the Canimar-I should be extremely grieved if you viewed my former "request" of not drawing upon us at that time for silver, in the light of taking too much liberty. It was not so at least intended, but merely the information of our situation.

I pay due obedience to your caveat against any new speculations, and in this spirit, I not only decline addressing Mr M. on the subject of the shipment of Sugar & Coffee to my friend Greeve, but have directed him to place \$2000 say Two Thousand Dollars to your Cr & our debit out of present remises P Bru & Del Barco of flour, lumber, Bills &c.

You may rest assured that all that we can possibly spare with out entirely paralysing our little operations shall be consecrated to your claims on us. We neither have, or can have, any other views, -none so congenial to our wishes. You will not I trust deem it inconsistent with these Professions, if I simply lay before you the inclosed extract from Greeve's letter to me of the 13inst He is not perhaps richly endowed with the fair gifts of a highly polished Education ; but, amply with the nobler gifts of the heart. He has a clear head, sound judgment, firm integrity, and in him industry & punctuality are personified. Parden the warmth & verboseness of this introduction. . . .

Folch is playing a deep & dishonorable game. If he would honestly come forward & make fair proposals for discharging the Mortgage, he might then be met with a spirit of compassion & indulgence. But instead of this he attempts to dispute the Validity of the same and holds out threats (as P extract).

The truth is he wishes to get [illegible] negroes out of my hands and then laugh at me.

The Coulon family are very grateful for the friendly interest you take in their welfare & I believe they will adopt your advice of settling at Matanzas as soon as they can put things in a train, & sell their property here & at Orleans. They have about twenty slaves in all including women and children. The worthy young Guillemard is fully bent on so doing & has written to Orleans to sell their property-This done he says he can master a Capital of about \$10,000 (but I suppose only about 8 or \$9000 CASH even including their house here).

He had a strong desire of going to see you this trip & taking a view of the Country-He would in-

deed be an acquisition-He is ingenious in a high degree & nothing can exceed his industry. There is no vacuum in his life.

But my paper is exhausted & I presume your patience also.

I am, my Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Servt

JOHN INNERARITY.

John Forbes Esqr.