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John Innerarity



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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.

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 have only *commenced* & will be renewed with tenfold rage or fury in a few weeks.

To 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 Choctawbe & coastwise for which

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 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 with you all the Gold & Silver you can Muster.

I have detained Honore 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 Honore 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. Fontinales 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.)