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## The Panton, Leslie Papers: Letters of Edmund Doyle, 1815

Edmund Doyle



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THE PANTON, LESLIE PAPERS

LETTERS OF EDMUND DOYLE  
*(The Third Installment)*

Prospect Bluff Appalachicola River  
6th April 1815

\*Gentlemen

In consequence of advices which I lately received of Mr. John Innerarity one of the partners of the firm of Messers John Forbes & Co. of Pensacola, I have the honor of submitting to your consideration the following particulars.

That on the arrival of Captain George Woodbine, His Britannic Majesty's agent to the Creek Indians I was employed by the firm of Mr Forbes as agent to their Establishment for Indian trade at this place, which employment I held for several years before his arrival; wishing to aid his Majesty's service at the Solicitation of Captn. Woodbine, I relinquished my charge of their affairs and accepted the Employment of Store Keeper under His Majesty.

By these means the affairs of Mr. Forbes has been in a great Measure exposed, and of course a considerable loss has accrued to them in part of their property formerly in my charge (as they could not get any person to venture their person amongst the Indians who was capable of Managing their affairs) It therefore becomes my duty to State that a Considerable Stock of Cattle has been nearly destroyed *by the Indian Allies of His Britannic Majesty*. Several of the Horses carried off and the following Negroes, who are now on the Bluff, the restoration of them appears doubtful, to Wit-Billy & Lally & their children Cressy, Flora Beek, Cynthia & Nero

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\*This letter of Edmund Doyle's appeared in the *Quarterly*, the issue of April, 1933 (XI. 190). It is reprinted because of its relation to this series.

-Stephen & his wife Cynthia-Tom a House  
Servant-I make these particulars known to you  
that you may be pleased to act therein as in Your  
wisdom shall deem expedient-

I am &c

Edmund Dolye

To the Honble. R. C. Spencer Captn. R. [oyal N. [avy]  
and Robert Gamble Esqr.

\* \* \* \*

(Superscription missing)

I sincerely lament the failure of your presentation  
against Woodbine who I thought must have been  
overwhelmed under the weight of evidence YOU car-  
ried with you from Pensacola. It is certain when  
Woodbine arrived at the Bluff he was accompanied  
by none of the negroes carried from St. Augustine  
or Lachua ; but on the evening of the day of his ar-  
rival a large body of men arrived, I saw some of  
them, and asked them where they came from they  
told me from Lachua, I asked if any came from St.  
Augustine, I was told not one, those fellows of  
course received their Lesson along the way: Cassel,  
Harrison, Armbrister and others now in Nassau I  
know . . . . . (missing) reported at the Bluff  
that thro' the means of Woodbine twenty negroes  
of both sexes arrived at the Bluff (from?) St. Au-  
gustine, St. Johns and Lachua; shortly after his ar-  
rival Mr. Hambly received letters from St. Au-  
gustine requesting him to enquire after some  
negroes that was carried away from thence by  
Woodbine-Woodbine denied in my presence his  
carrying one (or any) negro from thence ; Wood-  
bine came here prepared for villainy and he took  
care to evade all evidence except what answered his  
weakest purposes : I hope his objection to his cor-  
respondence with the Governor of Pensacola, will  
be a great means of exposing his character in its

true vilany every person who knows him must keep in mind that he boasted largely of his masterly talents in "tricking the old Governor" to use his own phrase in this negotiation

You will no doubt have it fully in your power to prove his letter to the Governor either by him his Secretary, the interpreter, or by some other persons who might have been present at its delivery. I heard in Pensacola that the correspondence of Woodbine and the Governor was brought forward, at a Council of warr, held there by the English and Spanish officers a few days before the entrance of the American army: the present Governor was one of the Council-It is needless for me to point these circumstances as you will no doubt make the necessary enquiries yourself: it appears almost impossible that any honorable jury could seriously believe his assertion relating to this letter was just. it is one of those equivocal turns he is so well master of: he well knew his correspondence with the Governor would effect him, and he had this lie ready to meet it, but I hope providence has contrived it so far as to be an instrument of detecting his villainy: I positively affirm, that I never received a letter from Woodbine but one, it was written from Pensacola: requesting all the Kings goods deposited in our stores: this letter was signed with his initials:

I received two other notes from him signed in like manner written in pencil: In Pensacola I received a sett of exchange signed with his name, which I kept a few days and handed over to Mr Innerarity: I received also another sett of exchange after the war ceased, when I was going on to Pensacola, but hearing of money coming on to the Bluff to pay off all demands I surrendered the Bills and waited untill paid off by the British agents; thus thro, my whole acquaintance with this infamous

character he even kept his signature from my knowledge as far as it was in his power, no doubt for some private motive-I must here observe that a few days before I left the Bluff, I repeatedly saw his signature to several bills exhibited by individuals in the Nation, I never took particular notice of it as I never conceived it to be of any consequence to me, or any other person-If you cannot fully prove the reality of the letter I fear all your endeavors against him will be in vain

I think it one of my greatest misfortunes to be so situated as to have any acquaintance with this man: It was not until some time after his arrival at the Bluff, that I mistrusted his hypocritical character, a thousand unheard of reports before his arrival was set afloat to our prejudice, which I now believe was thro' his means: I was therefore necessarily obliged to take all means of securing part of our property from his grasp, all I had earned for many years was there, which he well knew, and I was resolved never to part with it but with loss of life.

Woodbine is confident that no man could induce me to act improperly, he well recollects when alone at Prospect Bluff, after their retreat from Pensacola, the reports set abroad of letters of a treasonable nature being detected written by you to Hambley and I: To the eternal disgrace of some high characters of the Army and the Navy, I was called on to accuse the House relating to some infamous groundless charges brought forward by them: What was my replies altho' surrounded by the damned negro and Red Stick allies : did he see any fear in me, did not I inform them that even the poor Indians themselves would not believe their ridiculous assertions : On the whole I believe there is not a greater scoundrel in existence then this very Woodbine.

Good God, of what substance must the hearts of these inhuman men be made of: figure to yourself a British Colonel and a respectable character a British agent, to sit down coolly at a post belonging to their friends and allies, and meditate the destruction of a poor defenceless set of indians, already ruined by their enemies whom they were sent to protect, and which common humanity would dictate to preserve but hearts hardened with iniquity, such as Nicols and Woodbine are only actuated by private interests-

The indians penetrate already into their wicked policy, and will I hope unite and represent their grievances to the British Government, the conduct of those men have given a mortal wound to the influence of the English Government in this Land-my only consolation is that in a few days we shall root from the Land their already expiring policy-

It is well ascertained that hundreds of negroes was carried away from the Nation, that many are left behind, we all know by common report, and every negro I saw says they were seduced from their Masters-we also know that there were only a very few (not more than ten) American Negroes, arrived at the Bluff: Still this villainous affair was so ably managed that it will be difficult to prove that they were seduced from their masters except by the Black people who voluntarily return-all we can say is that the hero Nicolls and Woodbine sat down at the Bluff (except Woodbines trip to St. Augustine) and by help of their agents and black spies, corrupted the negroes of their friends and Spanish allies-for they dared not to venture within some hundreds of miles of the American territories. I hope you will pardon me for writing in this strain,

but I must give some vent to my feelings-In hopes  
that you may yet hang the Scoundrel

I remain Dr Sir

Your very obt servt

Edmd Doyle

Mr. Hambly was at the Forks of the River when  
Woodbine arrived from St. Augustine

I have forwarded this letter to him that it may  
be sent on to you, which will give him an oppor-  
tunity of writing