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MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

TRANSMITTING, PURSUANT

TO A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

OF

THE EIGHTEENTH INSTANT,

INFORMATION

*RELATIVE TO THE OCCUPANCY OF AMELIA ISLAND,
ST. MARKS, AND PENSACOLA, &c. &c.*

JANUARY 30, 1819.

Read, and referred to the committee on Foreign Relations.

WASHINGTON:

E. DE KRAFFT, PRINTER.

1819.

To the House of Representatives of the United States:

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 18th instant, requesting me to cause any information, not already communicated, to be laid before the House, whether Amelia Island, St. Marks, and Pensacola, yet remain in possession of the United States, and, if so, by what laws the inhabitants are governed; whether articles imported therein, from foreign countries are subject to any and what duties and by what laws, and whether the said duties are collected, and how; whether vessels arriving in the United States, from Pensacola and Amelia Island, and in Pensacola and Amelia Island from the United States respectively, are considered and treated as vessels arriving from foreign countries, I transmit a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, and likewise one from the Secretary of War, which will afford all the information requested by the House of Representatives.

JAMES MONROE.

January, 30th, 1819.

The Secretary of the Treasury, to whom has been referred the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 18th instant, requesting the President of the the United States "to cause any information not already communicated, to be laid before this House, whether Amelia Island, St. Marks, or Pensacola, yet remains in the possession of the United States; and, if so, by what laws the inhabitants thereof are governed; whether articles imported therein are subject to any and what duties, and by what laws; and whether the said duties are collected and how; whether vessels arriving in the United States from Pensacola and Amelia Island, and in Pensacola and Amelia Island from the United States respectively, are considered and treated as vessels from foreign countries," has the honor to report to the President,

That no duties have, within the knowledge of this Department, been collected by or on account of the United States in Amelia Island or at Pensacola. No returns, statements, or reports, have been made to this Department of any revenue, imports, or duty which has been secured or paid at either of those places, by any person exercising or holding the office of collector, in Amelia Island or at Pensacola. Vessels arriving in the ports of the United States from Pensacola, or Amelia Island, are considered and treated as foreign vessels. The treatment which the vessels of the United States received in Amelia Island and at Pensacola is not known to this Department.

All which is respectfully submitted.

Treasury Department,

January 25, 1819.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,

21st January, 1819.

The Secretary of War, to whom was referred the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 18th instant, requesting the President of the United States to cause any information, not already communicated, to be laid before the House, whether Amelia Island, St. Marks, and Pensacola, yet remain in possession of the United States; and if so, by what laws the inhabitants thereof are governed; whether articles imported therein from foreign countries, are subject to any, and what duties, and by what laws; and whether the said duties are collected, and how; whether vessels arriving in the United States, from Pensacola, and Amelia Island, and in Pensacola, and Amelia Island, from the United States, respectively, are considered and treated as vessels arriving from foreign countries, has the honor to report, so far as the information called for refers to the War Department, that by the latest reports, the places referred to in the resolution, to wit: "Amelia Island, St. Marks, and Pensacola, yet remain in possession of the United States."

He also encloses an extract of a letter from major Bankhead, dated the 10th of January, 1818, marked A, which accompanied the regulations (a copy of which is annexed) for the government of the inhabitants of Amelia Island, and also, a copy of a letter from this Department, prohibiting the taking of bonds, for the payment of duties on goods imported into Amelia Island, marked B.

The division order of major general A. Jackson, issued at Pensacola on the 29th of May, 1818 communicated in the message of the President of the United States to the House of Representatives, on the 2d ultimo, shows by what laws the inhabitants thereof are governed; and the duties which the goods imported are subject to, and the laws by which such importations are regulated.

A. S. Marks is a mere military post, without inhabitants, the commandant's authority is confined to the garrison.

J. C. CALHOUN.

The President of the United States.

A.

Extract of a letter from Major James Bankhead, dated Fernandina, Amelia Island, January 10th, 1818, to the honble. J. C. Calhoun, Secretary of War.

The necessity of having some mode, to settle the disputes and claims of individuals, and other civil arrangements, after the occupation of this place, by the United States' troops, will have presented itself to your mind; and in anticipation of your instructions I have deemed it incumbent on me, to make such regulations as the situation of things required and would admit of. I enclose to you a copy of these regulations. I have, in conjunction with commodore Henly, appointed two of the most respectable inhabitants, justices of the peace, and they have progressed in the discharge of their duty, in a very satisfactory manner.

The peculiar character of the people who had assembled here, required the immediate adoption of some plan to insure justice and security to those with whom they had any dealings. The evident determination to evade the payment of their debts, and to plunder wherever they could, made it necessary to interpose some authority; and it has been done in a manner least likely to be exceptionable, by the temporary appointment of magistrates, with limited authority. I conceived it proper, to prohibit the landing of any merchandise, or other articles on this island, subject to pay a duty in a port of the United States, unless the same duties were secured here, because it will be in the power of government to remit the duties, if they think proper; but it would not be practicable to impose those duties, after such things had been landed and disposed of; goods or merchandise deposited here, may be easily conveyed into the United States, and unless the duties are paid here, they would be brought to this island to be smuggled into the adjacent state, where, I suspect it has hitherto been done, with too much facility. Another consideration has had its weight, in the possible event of a restitution of this island to Spain, or any other power, which may have a claim to it, might not a demand be made on the government of the United States, for the amount of those duties, which might have been received by such power, had it not been in the possession of the United States?

If I have erred in this respect, it has been from a fear of omitting the performance of any duty which may be expected of me.

(Copy.)

*Fernandina, Amelia Island,
January 5th, 1818.*

Until the pleasure of the government of the United States be further known, the following arrangements have been made:

Two justices of the peace shall be appointed, and they shall have power to appoint a sheriff and a constable

The jurisdiction of the justices of the peace, shall extend in all claims or debts, to the sum of one hundred dollars, and their decision shall be final.

In all claims exceeding one hundred dollars, the parties concerned, have power to nominate each an arbitrator; and in case of disagreement, the arbitrators shall call on a third person, and their decision shall be final.

The award shall be filed in the offices of the justices of the peace, that it may be carried into execution.

In disputed claims, where one of the parties refuses to appoint an arbitrator, the justices of the peace shall decide—should they differ in opinion, the commanding officer shall act as umpire, and the decision shall be final.

Criminal cases shall be investigated by the justices of the peace, and their opinion referred to the commanding officer. But no decision shall be final that may extend to the life of any person.

The commanding officer decides on all cases of riot, or other disorders that may affect the peace and security of this place.

In all cases, particularly in matters of evidence, the usages and customs of the United States will be observed and conformed to, as nearly as possible.

In all articles subject to pay duty in the United States, which may be landed at this place, (and they will not be permitted to be landed, on any other part of this island,) the amount of the duties shall be paid to the commanding officer; to be at the disposal of the government of the United States. It is, however, recommended to all those who may be concerned, to have such articles entered at the customhouse at St. Marys, in the state of Georgia. The fees and dues, &c. &c. for the magistrates and sheriff, will conform to those of the state of Georgia, in certain cases, and will be made known to those concerned.

B.

(Copy.)

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,

May 14th, 1818.

SIR,

You will discontinue taking bonds for the payment of the duties on goods imported into Amelia Island. The entry and bonds must be executed at St. Marys, for the future, and you will turn over to the collector at St. Mary's, all the bonds which you have taken.— You will not permit any goods to be landed at Amelia, until the forms of entry and of giving bonds, be complied with at the custom-house at St. Mary's.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) JOHN C. CALHOUN.

*Colonel James Bankhead,**Amelia Island, via St. Mary's, Georgia.*

(Copy.)

*Head Quarters, Fernandina, E.F.**December 29th, 1818.*

SIR,

I have received information from several persons lately from St. Augustine that a party of armed men headed by a person called captain Miller, assuming the rank and authority of a Spanish officer, about the 23d instant, fired upon Augustus Santee, a sergeant of the United States artillery, with two citizens of the state of Georgia. The sergeant had obtained a short leave of absence to accompany his brother on a visit to St. Johns. This brother and the other citizen are reported to have been badly wounded. The sergeant and one of his companions (the other being unable to travel) were seen on the 24th marching under guard towards St. Augustine.

I have addressed a note to governor Coppinger, demanding the immediate liberation of the sergeant and other persons confined—a copy is enclosed herewith, marked No. 1.

The captain Miller, above mentioned, is reported to be a deserter from our service, he is nevertheless understood to be a captain of the Florida militia and to have acted under the authority of the Spanish governor.

The sergeant was absent without my knowledge; the unfortunate citizens who were wounded are represented to be disorderly men, and are suspected of having gone to Florida with a design to arrest some fugitive offender who had escaped from prison in Georgia. This impression however appears to be founded only in vague rumour. Be this as it may, there is notwithstanding, much ground to believe, that the Spanish authorities only want the means to enable them to give us open and unequivocal proofs of their settled hostility, and intimate connexion with our red enemies. In support of this opinion, I enclose herewith No. 2, a copy of a letter from major Fanning, commanding St. Marks, received by the last mail. By this it appears from Indian testimony, that the Spaniards at St. Augustine with all their affected purity have lately furnished hostile Indians at the bay of Tambo, with ten horse loads of ammunition, recommending to them united and vigorous operations against us. I shall hold myself in readiness to do what can be done with the limited means under my controul and shall strike at any force that may present itself.

Permit me to request that an officer of the quartermaster general's Department may be ordered to join me with the sum of twenty thousand dollars, for defraying the expenses of that Department, and that a batallion of infantry may be ordered to this place in addition to my present command.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

EDMUND P. GAINES.

The Honorable J. C. Calhoun,

Secretary of War

No. 1.

(Copy.)

Major General Gaines to Governor Coppinger.

Head Quarters, Amelia Isand,

December 28th, 1818.

SIR,

I have received information that Augustus Santee, a sergeant of the United States artillery, who had obtained from his command-

ing officer a temporary leave of absence, was a few days since fired on, arrested and imprisoned, by a party of armed men at St. Johns, headed by a person assuming the rank and character of a Spanish officer.

It is likewise reported that two citizens of the United States, were by the same party fired on, wounded, and imprisoned; and that the perpetrators of this outrage, with a view to shelter their conduct under the veil of Spanish authority, took the sergeant and citizen by force towards St. Augustine, whither it was understood they were to be carried, under a pretext that they would there be arraigned and tried as offenders.

Presuming that the information given me upon this subject is correct, I hasten to demand of you the immediate liberation of the sergeant and citizens, thus arrested, wounded, and imprisoned within your government.

Major James M. Glassell, of the general staff of the army of the United States, is instructed to hand you this letter, and to take charge of, and order to this place the persons confined; and by this officer I shall expect to receive from you a proper explanation, with the assurance that the perpetrators of this outrage, will be punished as its enormity demands.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed)

EDMUND P. GAINES,

Maj. Gen. by Brevet Commanding.

To his Excellency,

Gov. Coppinger, St. Augustine.

No. 2.

(Copy.)

Major Fanning, Commanding St. Marks, to Maj. Gen. Gaines.

Fort St. Mark's, East Florida,

November 27th, 1818.

SIR.

From an Indian family arrived here yesterday, from Tampa Bay, I learn that the Seminoles have received, from St. Augustine,

ten pack horse loads of ammunition, and that it was distributed among them sixteen days ago.

That an English trading vessel was at Tampo, a month since. Some provisions and ammunition were procured from her by the enemy. That, ten days past, that two English trading vessels were at Snake Island, not far from the mouth of Sukaney river.

Thus, there can be little doubt of the Seminoles being now well supplied with ammunition and provision.

The Spaniards recommended to the enemy united and vigorous operations against us, telling them, that they themselves were going to take St. Marks, which they expected to do, without fighting, in the same manner it was taken from them. That from St. Marks, they would go to Fort Gadsden, where they expected some little resistance, and finally to Pensacola.

These circumstances have put new life among the Sukaney Indians, but Kinjah says he has heard such talks too long, and that he will collect his people, and go back to his old situation, and be on friendly terms with the United States. The other Indians who left their towns and went to Sukaney, during our last campaign, are moving, or about to move back again, and wish to have nothing further to do with the war.

There is too much appearance of truth in this relation, not to deserve attention; and, in conformity to the spirit of the general order of the 16th September, I shall not give up this post to the Spaniards, should they arrive, until I may be convinced of the falshood of the report respecting their conduct, or until I may receive orders so to do, from superior authority.

I have the honor to be,

Most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

A. C. W. FANNING,

Maj. U. S. Army, Commanding

St. Marks.

*Maj. Gen. E. P. Gaines,
Commanding 6th and 7th Military
Departments, Fort Hawkins,
or elsewhere.*

Certified,

DANIEL E. BUNCH,

Aid de Camp.

Extract of a letter from General Andrew Jackson to the Secretary of War, dated Head Quarters, Division of the South, Nashville, 28th November, 1818.

I enclose you a copy of a letter from col. King, detailing a conflict between captain Boyles of the rangers, and a detachment of hostile warriors. The conduct of the captain in this affair was meritorious, and I trust ere this he has recovered from his wound, and disappointed the hopes of the warriors of the Choctawhatchy. A short time since, every mail from the south reported the pleasing intelligence of the general submission of the Seminoles; the cause of the reassumption of hostilities is stated in the colonel's communication. The fact, that the news of the restoration of Pensacola to Spain, had revived their hopes, and again excited them to war, is an additional evidence of the propriety of my operations in the Floridas, and has confirmed me in my unalterable opinion, that the Seminole conflict could not have been terminated by any other means than those adopted. My only apprehensions are, that my operations were not sufficiently extensive to ensure permanent tranquillity in the south. St. Augustine is still in possession of the Spaniards, and the whole peninsula is beyond the control of our garrisons. The situation of Florida, in relation to our country, is peculiar, and demands the early attention of our government. Bordering almost on the Creek nation, and within the vicinity of the four southern tribes of Indians, her territory will always prove an asylum to the disaffected and restless savage, as well as to a more dangerous population, unless some energetic government can be established to control or exclude these interlopers. The savages and negroes who have not submitted to our authority, have fled east of the Suwany river, and whether settled in the Alotchaway plains, near St. Augustine, or more southwardly, we have yet to learn. Their force, no doubt, is too inconsiderable to create any serious disturbances with this country, but if unmolested, they may acquire confidence with their strength, and prove a destructive enemy to our frontier settlers. They should be pursued before they recover from the panic of our last operations.

I submit to your consideration military operations for this spring, connected with the occupancy of the Bay of Tampea. The plan proposed is, to embark from fort Gadsden, or Pensacola, 500 regulars, for the Bay of Tampea, together with a force, say 150 or 200 men, adequate to the maintaining of the work to be constructed at that point. Simultaneous with this movement, to push a force of 5 or 600 men up to the St. Johns, and occupy a position at or near the old Indian town, Pecolota. This force, as soon as strongly fortified, to be actively employed in scouring the country as far west as Suwany, forcing to, or receiving the, submission of the hostile Indians, who will be sent into the interior of the Creek nation. The troops detached to the bay of Tampea, having constructed, and garrisoned a suitable work, having reconnoitered the neighboring country, and

destroyed Woodbine's negro establishment, to march to the position occupied on the St. Johns, deviating only where Indian villages or settlements (if there are any in the country) invite their attention. From the best information I can collect, the march from Tampea to the point proposed on the St. Johns, would not exceed seven days. Each man, from my own experience can march with eight days rations on his back, which, with due economy, will last twelve—time sufficient to perform the operation intended. The expense of the expedition would be trifling, as it is proposed that none but regulars should be employed, and the advantage to the nation incalculable, as finally crushing savage hostilities in the south, and affording active service to some of our regiments who have grown sluggish from the inactivity of garrison duties.



(Copy.)

Pensacola, October 15, 1818.

SIR,

Captain Boyle returned to this place on the 13th, having been wounded in an affair with a party of hostile Indians, near the Choctawhatchy.

He reports, that on the 6th instant he left his boats in Yellow Water, and with a detachment of twenty-two men on foot, pursued a party of Indians whose track he had discovered. He overtook them on the 8th, about 25 in number, attacked and defeated them, killing four, wounding many, and making some prisoners. A large quantity of ammunition, and all their plunder, fell into his hands.

The following morning, just before day, the party defeated the day before, supposed to have been reinforced, attacked him in his camp; but he succeeded in repulsing them with loss, notwithstanding one half of his men fled at the first onset, and were never again brought into action. In this affair the captain himself received a musket ball in his side, and had one of his men dangerously wounded: this, together with the want of provisions, compelled him to return to Pensacola, bringing with him sixteen prisoners. He reports to have made seven scalps during the expedition.

The rangers being very much fatigued, I shall permit them to rest a few days. I hope captain Boyle will be sufficiently recovered to resume his command. I shall then once more order him to the Choctawhatchy, where he is of opinion, a party is concealed, of from

40 to 50 warriors, who have resolved never to surrender, confiding in the expect'd return of the Spaniards, when they are sure of protection and supplies, and will again commence their depredations on our settlements. This expedition I flatter myself, of captain Boyles, will disappoint and render them harmless, before the province is evacuated.

I cannot close this communication without again calling your attention to the meritorious conduct of capt. Byles. In zeal, activity and perseverance, he is surpassed by no partizan I have ever known.

(Signed)

W. KING,

Col. 4th Regt.

*Major Gen Andrew Lawson,
Comd'g. Division of the South.*