

Article Title: Continuation of letters between Andrew Ellicott and Gov. Gayoso of Natchez concerning growing tensions at Walnut Hill between the Spanish military and American settlers on the frontier.

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P A P E R S

Which accompanied the President's Message of the 12th inst. on Spanish Affairs.

(Continued)

(No. 10.)

Mr. Ellicott's compliments to his friend Governor Gayoso, and wishes to be informed, whether the following information which he received this day, " that all the works at the Chickesaw Bluffs have been either demolished or carried to the opposite of the river, and that every exertion is making at the Walnut Hills to put that post in state of defence," to be correct.

March 23d, 1797.

(No. 11.) From his Excellency Manuel Gayoso de Lemos,
to Andrew Ellicott, Esq.

Natchez, March 23, '97.

MY DEAR SIR, I have just now received your communication of this day, by which I am sorry to find the constriction you put on the storing of the ammunitions that came from the Walnut-hills in this fort. I have no other place to put them in ; for it would be imprudent to leave them exposed in an unsecured place, a time when the Indians might take advantage of us, if they found, that, in the present circumstances, we acted without the necessary precautions. At the time you see me conducting ammunitions to the fort, you will likewise see as many go out of it for the Arkansas, to reinforce that post, which will now be exposed to the incursions of the Osage Indians, who, in the last season, pillaged the white hunters of the country.

I am entirely unacquainted with any ill treatment that the citizens of the United States should have received at the Walnut Hills If you mean the execution of the orders of the general in chief of this Province to demolish that post, it was in consequence of our treaty with the Indians, that they might have no just reason to complain at our conduct ; but since I have been informed of their unsettled disposition, I have sent counter orders to suspend every thing that might injure the actual state of those fortifications, and in such circumstances, shall not move any thing else, until the arrival of the American troops that are daily expected.

The unavoidable detention that have been experienced in a beginning the line, you know the reasons, but they shall soon be removed, as Lieutenant Colonel Guillemard is far on his way up, and at his arrival, this important business shall be begun.

I do assure you that there is nothing that can prevent the religious compliance of the treaty, though I might observe, that the conduct of some persons, that seem to affect an immediate interest for the United States in such, as to occupy my attention. I request that you will be so kind as to take such measures as to suppress untimely expressions that can only tend to disturb the tranquility of the public, of which I am solely answerable for the present.

As I was finishing this Mr. Gillespie brot to me your note inquiring of the works at the Bluffs had been destroyed, or removed to the other side of the river.

What I have already said concerning our treaty with the Indians I suppose has guided the General of this Province, to take that step. I really do not know whether they are destroyed or not. I give you my word that I did not know what was to be done there, and it is only by Baron Bastrop that I learn that that post would soon be evacuated ; but as this is a thing that only regards the General of the Province, I can not account for it, nor can I say more on the subject, as all the orders proceed from his, that post being out of my jurisdiction.

My dear Sir, your humble obedient servant and friend;
MANUEL GAYOSO DE LEMOS.The Hon. Andrew Ellicott.
(No. 12.)From Andrew Ellicott, Esq. To his Excellency
Manuel Gayoso de Lemos.
Natchez, March 24th '97.

MY DEAR SIR, It is with pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's very satisfactory letter of yesterday. You may rest assured that I have, and shall continue to discountenance every measure, and the propagation of any opinion which may have a tendency to disturb the good order and harmony of this settlement. I shall close this with requesting that the commandant of the Walnut Hill be directed to treat the citizens of the United States with politeness when they stop at the post, as a contrary conduct may be attended with disagreeable consequences on a river which both nations have an equal right to navigate.

I am, with sentiments of real esteem,
You sincere and affectionate friend,
ANDREW ELLICOT.His Excellency Manuel Gayoso de Lemos.
(COPY.) (No. 13.)

From his Excellency Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, to Andrew Ellicott, Esq. (COPY.)Natchez, March 25 '97.

MY DEAR SIR, By every report you are acquainted with the confirmation of every thing I have told you concerning our business ; you know that Lieut. Col. Gullermard will be here very soon, and that immediately we shall proceed to the running of the line. But as nothing but friendly arrangements are to guide our conduct, it is necessary to avoid every shadow of compulsion. By the contents of my Letter to captain Pope, you will see my reasons ; therefore, I request that you will join a couple of lines to avoid any more writing.

I am surrounded by many people who have business, this being court day, though I have tried to disembarass myself, but cannot wait upon you.

I am, with the highest esteem and respect, my dear Sir,
Your most humble servant and friend,

MANUEL GAYOSO DE LEMOS.The Hon. Andrew Ellicott. (No. 14.)From Andrew Ellicott, Esq. to Lieutenant Pope. Natchez, March 25 '97.

DEAR SIR, This will be handed you by Maj. Minor, a friend of mine, an officer in the service of his Catholic majesty ; your polite attention to him will be considered as a particular favor conferred upon me. By order of Governor Gayoso, his letter to you of this day has been shewn to me, his request for you, and the troops under your command, to remain for an indefinite time above this place, appears to me a very extraordinary one ; sufficient time has already been given by the United States for the evacuation of all the posts on the east side of the Mississippi above the 31st degree of north latitude ; and from the troops of his Catholic majesty carrying up, and remounting the cannon at this place, I cannot pretend to say that an evacuation is really intended in any reasonable time. From this circumstance I should conclude that the sooner you are here the better. However, as I have no control over the destination of the troops of the United States except my own escort, I shall take it for granted that your instructions are sufficiently pointed to direct your conduct. Pease to accept of my sincere wishes for the safe and speedy arrival of yourself and troops at this place ; and am, dear sir, your friend an humble servant,

ANDREW ELLICOTT.Lieut. Pope.
(No. 15.)

Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, Brigadier in the Royal Arms, Governor Military and Civil of the Natchez and independencies, c. c. c. Whereas the political situation of this country offers a large field to busy and malignant minds to disturb the tranquility of its inhabitants, it is therefore my duty, and the continuation of that vigilance which I have constantly exerted, not only to promote the happiness of every individual of this government, but likewise so support their interest and secure their tranquility,

that I step forth to warn the public against being led by their innocent credulity against nay measure that my be productive of ill consequences, and frustrate all the advantages they have a right to expect : And by the present I assure to them if they continue as they have always done, with strict attachment to the welfare of this Catholic Majesty's Government, from which will depend the following favorable eventsviz. His Majesty has offered to support the rights of the inhabitants to the real property, and until that is ascertained, I am bound to keep possession of this country, as likewise until we are sure the Indians will be pacific.

Contrary to the general expectation, the same indulgence that until now protected the inhabitants in distress, will be continued during his Majesty's sovereignty in this country ; and this being the season in which the planters are employed in preparing for an ensuing crop, none shall be disturbed from that important object on account of their depending debts. The misconstruction of what is the enjoyment of the liberty of conscience is hereby positively explained to be, that no individual of this government shall be molested on account of religious principles, and that they shall not be hindered in their private meetings, but no the public worship will be allowed but that generally established in all majesty's dominions, which is the Catholic Religion.

These important objects, that until now have not been published, though resolved, I acquaint the public with, apprehensive of the dangerous infatuations of several persons that have made it their business to dazzle the public with false notion to serve their own purpose in the speculation of lands that are lawfully held by all the inhabitants of this government, therefore I firmly rely that no person will deviate from the principles of adhesion to our government until the negotiations that are now on foot between his majesty and the United States of America, are concluded, and thereby the real property of the inhabitants secured.

Given under my hand and the seal of my arms, and countersigned by the secretary of this government, by H.M. at the Government House, Natchez.

MANUEL GAYOSO DE LEMOS.JH. VIDAL.29th March 1797. (No. 16.)

WHEREAS the alarming circumstances that prevailed for a while in this government, obliged me to circulate proclamations, wherein I warned the people of their immediate danger. Now, that these troubles have subsided, I cannot but publish my approbation, and applaud that upright sense of duty that the inhabitants have shown to the laws of our gracious Sovereign, by seconding his representative, the right they have so justly acquired of being considered the most loyal subjects of his majesty. In my last publication I mentioned that until the real property should be secured to the inhabitants, this country show be considered in the same situation as before, as like wise while the pacific disposition of the Indians was not ascertained. I find it my duty to explain that a negociation is now carrying on to secure the right of the said real property. As that right cannot be secured but by an additional article of the late treaty, and until that article is officially communicated to me, I am bound to keep possession of the country, and continue to its inhabitants the same indulgence and the same anxious protection as until now. The negotiations with the Indians will produce the same effects, as it is impossible for his Majesty to leave unprotected so many of his faithful subjects, and expose other settlements to the revengeful disposition of discontented Indians ; these important objects are of the greatest moment to every person in this government; their interest and all glance to his majesty binds them to keep treaty in their, principles of loyalty, until by the definitive arrangements of both nations a change takes place. Being informed that some persons are apprehensive and that violent measures will be taken against those that seemed pleased with the prospects of becoming citizens of the United States, I declare that such a notion is unfounded, as likewise the suspicion, that individuals would be prevented from moving to any party they please, either within his majesty's dominions elsewhere, as it is notorious that no such obstacle was ever offered to any body, it being contrary to one of the greatest prerogatives that are enjoyed by his Majesty's subjects.

Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, March 29, 1797. (No.17)From Andrew Ellicott, Esq. to his Excellency

Manuel Gayoso de Lemos. Natchez, March 31, 1797.

My dear Sir, I WAS last evening addressed by a number of respectable inhabitants on the district of

Natchez. They are very much alarmed for their situation, in consequence of having expressed their pleasure, since my arrival at this place, in speedily becoming citizens of United States. Your proclamation of the 28th inst. they conceive renders that event doubtful. They have therefore from consideration of personal safety, and to avoid the insults which many of them have experienced from one for more officers of a small grade in this district, have called upon me to use my influence with your excellency to grant them and all others who incline to leave, this country, the privilege of disposing of their properties, and passports to enable them to reach the frontiers of such states as they may be inclined to remove to. I have now stated the substance of their application, and assure your excellency, from the respectability of the applicants, it is a subject in which I feel myself interested, and to which I request your Excellency's attention.

Ever since I arrived in this district, I have uniformly recommended to the inhabitants a quiet submission to the Government now in force ; at the same time they have been in the most explicit manner assured, that the period would not be far distant when the jurisdiction of the United States would be extended to them. But they are not satisfied ; they have their suspicions ; and it is your Excellency alone that can quiet them. Let the cannon and military stores be again taken out of the fort ; withdraw your objections to the arrival of the American troops, and their apprehensions will subside. I do not pretend to say that their apprehensions are well founded ; it is possible they are not, but your objection to my escort's being stationed with me, your hauling back and remounting the cannon at this place, your dispatching major Minor to delay the arrival of the United States at this post, added to your Excellency's proclamation, however well meant, have had a contrary effect, by increasing their fears.

I have enclosed two paragraphs of the address which was handed to me last evening.

I am, c. c. ANDREW ELLICOTT. (No.18.)

(COPY.)

Many whose ideas of allegiance had been preponderant from the treaty until the time of your arrival at this place, thought themselves at full liberty to announce, their sentiments in any ways that might not affect the operations of peace and good order in society. But the result is melancholy contrast to the construction. Some have been already torn away from the bottom of agricultural life, and conveyed to prison with every indignant epithet that malevolence could invent. Scouts are crossing the country in various directions, breathing threats of vengeance against those who had unguardedly thrown aside the mask of duplicity ; and a number are waiting with solicitude the moment of their fate.

There are many in this country to whose exertions American is much indebted for her political existence. We call upon you in the name of such ; we call upon you in the name of every friend to that emblem of peace and science which has been recently displayed to us : to stand forth with a confidence suitable to the dignity of your commission, and demand of the governor, passports with leave for all such as would dispose of their property and avail themselves of a change of situations by withdrawing to the United States.

(To be Continued.)