

John Coffee to Andrew Jackson, April 28, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL COFFEE TO JACKSON.

Nashville, April 28, 1831.

Dear Genl. I come to this place ten days ago, and intended writing you sooner, but having my family with me we went up to the Old Ladies; and among the connection, and at the Hermitage, I did not return here untill yesterday, and last evening I went out to see Judge Overton and have just returned into town. I left home rather in a hurry to see Andrew Donelson and family before they would leave here for Washington, as it was understood they were going in this month, indeed our daughter Mary had been here some time, and had asked us leave to accompany her Aunt to the City, which had been agreed to, on condition of her and Mr. McLemores daughter going together, and after stoping a short time to see you, they were to go to Philadelphia to school untill next winter or Spring when one or both of us would go on and bring them by you, and on home etc. But when we reached here we find that Andrew and Emily had declined going, as I understand on account of you, and them, not agreeing in your views, as to the proper course of conduct for them to pursue. this I regreted, as I had fondly hoped that all those things had been properly understood by Andrew before he left you, but which it seems he did not.

I have talked fully and freely with him, he says that your letter bears a construction that would injure both him and wife, as well as yourself. I read your letter to him, it certainly breaths the spirit of friendship and kindness throughout, and I am confident that you could not be induced to require of them to do any act that would tarnish their reputation. this they are willing to admit chearfully that you would not knowingly do it, but under the

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excitement of feelings which has been aroused in you, they fear that you require more than they can consistently comply with, to wit, they understand you to mean, that Emily must become the intimate and social friendly visitor of Mrs. Eaton, which they think under all past circumstances would be degrading to them. they acknowledge their readiness to act as you wish them to do, at all times, and with all company that shall visit your house by your invitation or permission, that they will at all times, and all places where they meet with Mrs. E. treat her politely and respectfully. this is what they are willing to do, and I believe this is all you want them to do, as I think I understood you so, when we conversed on this subject last summer.

Andrew declares a willingness to render you any aid or assistance in his power now and at all times consistently with his views of propriety and he speaks with deep regret and concern of your being left at the present moment without suitable assistance, in the drugery of your business, and that is an other source of uneasiness with me, for there are so few men of suitable qualifications, to fill that place who are confidential, that I fear the employment of one who is not well known, and well tried, and in that Andrew has advantages that are possessed by very few. I believe his sence of honor is excelled by no man although he may differ in opinion with you, yet he is confidential and will not disclose what is intended by you to be known only by you and him, or any other person. he also has more knowledge of your business, and of your views generally than any other person. And above all I hope he has a proper feeling towards you.

With all these reflections I feel mortified, nay I feel humiliated, at the idea of his leaving you under any circumstances whatever. you have reared him with parental affections, and he aught never to seperate from you. I still have a gleam of hope that he may remain with you, and I would not urge it, if I did not believe you wished him to remain with you, and that he would be useful to you. I hope my dear Genl. what I have said on this subject, will be received by you, in the same spirit, which I offer it, and if so I am sure no harm will have

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been done. I know your capability to meet all emergencies be them ever so difficult, and in this case as in all others, you can determine what ought to be done.

I have mentioned before that we had visited the Hermitage. Mr. Steel politely requested me to go over and look at the farm stock etc. etc. and give him my opinion and advice on any thing I might think proper to suggest to him. I did so, and I found his farm in good order, and the stock in better condition than any that, I have seen this spring. your colts are in good growing order all doing well, and your horse Boliver is in fine condition. I think Dinwiddie has done him full justice. Your mechanics were at work on the improvement making on the mansion house. I took the liberty of suggesting some immaterial alterations in the addition, which was approved of, by the proje[c]tor of the building who said he would consult you about it. I mention it now, that you may not be surprised at the suggestion when you see it. Most of the family had met at Mrs. Donelsons to greet us on our arrival with them, where I proposed to Polley and her sisters to visit the Hermitage, which they cheerfully agreed to. We went over and spent half the day, and dined. Mr. Steel was kind and provided an excellent dinner—the ladies visited the tomb of their beloved, and departed Aunt, and asked Mr. Steel to open her ward robe, which he done, and they opened and looked at the Robes which they had so often seen their dear Aunt clothed in, that it revived goneby times and feelings, and filled us all with mingled grief and Joy—grief to know that she who was beloved and idolised by all who knew her and more particularly her relatives, was now no more, and Joy to see the robes and Jewelry which she usually wore when mixing with us in social life in this world, but above all that she is now enjoying that bliss, which is provided for the just and righteous, and which will have no end, and where we all one day hope to Join her in immortality. My dear Genl. this was a visit of great interest to us all, and we left it with mingled feelings.