

Andrew Jackson to Mary Caffery, February 8, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO MRS. MARY CAFFERY.

Hermitage, February 8, 1812.

Dr Madam . Your letter of the 11th. of January is now before me, I have closely observed its contents, and am sorry indeed that an illiberal world has prevented you from buying in Jacob.

The negro fellows that I brought through with me owing to their exposure in the wilderness have all been sick and were the[y] *well* neither of them is such that I could recommend to you.¹ Nor could I think of selling such to you. I have delayed one week answering your letter to see whether I could meet with a fellow to buy that would suit you, as yet I can hear of none for sale that I could buy, and had I such a Negro, I am fearfull, it would (from the convulsed state of the Earth and water from the frequent shocks of Earthquake) be difficult to obtain a passage for him down the river. few Boats will venture the passage of the Mississippi this Spring, and from the last shocks here, being so violent it is to be feared, that a vast many of the Boats that are on the river is lost. I am therefore fearfull, that it will not be in my power shortly to send you one down, but I have a fellow, that ranaway from the Natchez, in last Novbr called Jessee, he is a valluable fellow, at least such he ought to be he cost \$500 here. he is in the neighbourhood of the Natchez. Capt Hunter, Mr. Trigg, or Mr. Hardin who live in the Natchez, knows him, also Mr. Fleming if Jackey² will go down it is highly probable he can be got, and if so take him and keep him. if he should prove to be such a negro as you want you can buy him if not you can keep him untill another can be got.

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1 It was the bringing of these slaves from Natchez to Nashville, through the wilderness of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, that brought on Jackson's quarrel, with Silas Dinsmore (Parton, Jackson, I. 349–360). Mrs. Caffery was Mrs. Jackson's sister. She lived near Natchez and her daughter married Ralph E. W. Earl, who spent much of his life as a member of Jackson's household.

2 John Hutchings, Jackson's partner in the store at Clover Bottom, and in other trading ventures.

Mr. Fleming of Natchez (Tavern Keeper,) Told Mr. Hutchings that he had heard that such a Negro had been taken up by a boat, on the bank of the Mississippi, some where above Natchez. he promised to go and see the Negro, if it was him that he would take him into Possession for me. If Jacky goes down for him and can find him this letter will be full authority for taking him into possession. Capt Hunter Mr Trigg or Mr Fleming will give him any aid in their power in regaining him and I have no doubt but he can be got if Jacky will make search for him, and I will freely pay any expense that may accrue in getting him. Your daughter Kitty is well, she is a fine traveller. She passed the wilderness without a complaint or murmur. She is now at school in good health and spirits. from a letter I have recd. from Donelson since I reached home, I expect he is with you. if so tell him to write me. I wish much to see him, and say to him when there he can easily ride here, and I shall expect him to come up, at any rate to write me that I may know where to write him.

Your sister and all your friends are well, but very much alarmed, with the frequent shocks of Earthquakes, some of which have been so severe as to throw down chimneys, and to crack brick walls, but I hope these alarms will subside, and the shocks cease here but I am fearfull, that the inhabitants on the west side of the Mississippi, in the neighbourhood of New Madrid and the little prairie have suffered.