

James Wilkinson to Andrew Jackson, January 22, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JAMES WILKINSON TO JACKSON.

Head Quarters, New Orleans, January 22, 1813.

Sir, Understanding casually that you are approaching Natchez with a body of Dragoons, Infantry and mounted Gun Men, destined to this city, it becomes my duty to request you to halt in that vicinity, to report to me your instructions and your force, and, in concert with colonel Covington, the officer in command at Washington, to provide the most comfortable accommodation, for the citizen soldiers of your command, which the country can afford and the regulations of the government may permit.

The only advice I have received from the War Department, or elsewhere, respecting the auxiliary force under your command, excepting your letter of the 5th. instant to the Assistant Deputy Quarter Master, bears date the 21st. and 23d. October, and is now transmitted to colonel Covington to be submitted to you.

There are several reasons which will prevent my calling you lower down the river than Baton Rouge, if the enemy should not invade the country. Vizt. the impracticability of providing for your horses, for any length of time; the monstrous expense of such provision, if to be had; the health of the troops and the stipulation of the government not to keep them in this low country during the warm season: To these may be added the policy of holding your corps on the alert at a suitable point, for giving succor to the feeble and exposed settlements on the Mobile, should the enemy make their first landing there, or at Pensacola, which is very probable.

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Although I had received no certain advice of the levy of your corps, I sometime since took the precaution, to warn the contractor to be prepared with a competent supply of provisions, and the Brigade Inspector, Captain Hughes, and the District Paymaster, Lieut: Knight, were ordered to Natchez, the first to muster and inspect, and the last to pay the Volunteers and militia which the Government had required from the state of Tennessee: You will find those officers at their posts, ready to give every aid and facility to your subordinates, in the formation of their Returns, Musters and Abstracts; and if it is in my power to add to the comfort and accommodation of the band of patriots under your orders, it is only necessary to point out the mode to me.

I expect you may find quarters for a great part of your corps, in the late cantonment built by the Second Regiment near Washington, and at that place: Any defect must be supplied by billeting your men, or by encamping or huting. Should you, however, be pressed for quarters, and have only 4 or 500 Infantry, you may order them on at once to Baton Rouge; and, to make room for them, the troops there will be ordered lower down. I shall be anxious to hear from you, and in the mean time, have the honor to be, respectfully, Sir,

Your obedt Servant