

Alexander James Dallas to Andrew Jackson, May 22, 1815, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY DALLAS TO JACKSON.

Department of War, May 22, 1815.

. . . . You observe, sir, that you are appointed to the command of the Division of the South,¹ under the new organization of the Army. It was proper, in the first instance, to apportion and distribute the troops at military stations, in order to facilitate the formation of the corps and regiments; but you will consider the present apportionment and distribution in your division, as subject to any alterations that your observation and judgment may suggest, for the benefit of the service.

¹ The Division of the South included the Southern states, and most of the Northwest.

The defence and security of New Orleans and Mobile are objects of primary interest and importance. The recent events in Europe, and the conflicting claims of the United States and Spain, to a part of the territory of West Florida, recommend every precaution, that can be taken to protect our own rights, without infringing the rights of others; and I will thank you to favor the Department with an early statement of your views on that subject, extending your care to the protection of Charleston, Savannah, and other exposed situations of the Southern coast.

The preservation of peace with the Indians, and, indeed, with our neighbours in Canada, whether acting as a company of merchants, or as a government, will essentially depend upon the positions, which are now to be occupied in the Indian country. The object contemplated, in that respect, is to establish posts along the course of the British traders,

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from Michilimackinac, by Green Bay, the Fox River, and the Ouisconsin river, to Prairie du Chein, and thence up the Mississippi to St. Anthony's Falls. Commissioners have been appointed to hold a treaty with the Indians at St. Louis; and Col. Miller with a detachment of men, attending the commissioners, will take position at Prairie du Chein, whence he will be eventually ordered into the Division of the North, to which his regiment is assigned. Major general Brown will be requested to correspond with you on the measures taken for the establishment of the posts falling within his division, and to avail himself of your information and experience.

The object of preserving peace may be united with the policy of improving the country, and civilizing the Indians, by the establishment of competent posts on a lower route, from Chicago along the Illinois river, to St. Louis. This object is committed to your special care, as falling within the duties of your command; but besides communicating your views upon it to this Department, you will be pleased to make it the subject of a correspondence with Major general Brown, so that the measures taken in each division may be known in both, and be the result of a beneficial concert and cooperation. . . .