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Notes furnished by
Doct. Thos G. Holmes
about the Kemper Party in Alabama
in 1810 and other things

Poplar Grove Baldwin County Alabama March the 15th 1848

Dear friend

Your friendly letter of the 20th ultimo, I have before me; contents observed, first permit me in reply to your many request that Colnl Reuben Kemper of West Florid in the Summer of 1810, under the command of Genl Thomas and many other officers of distinguished character set on foot to revolute nere the then province of West Florida after they had raised an army some fourre thousand strong with an armament of Artilerly, provision transportation &c. Major Genl Thomas ordered Colnl R. Kemper in advance to the Tombigbee then Washington County Missippi Teretory with letters to Colnl James Callier informing Callier the object of Kempers visit which was by the by to get Colnl James Callier as a prominent individual to aid in raiseing Volunteers in the country to joine Thomas in 1st tattering ~~Pensicola~~ Mobile & then Pensicola Colnl Callier & Kemper visited Major Joseph P. Kennady & in a verry short time quite a formidable force enroled them selves to march at a moments warning whenever Genl Thomas should be reported in the visiunity of Mobile Colnl Kemper was premature in his movements & required a movement of a part of the Volunteers to fall down the River, below the then Spanish line, in obedeance to his request Major Hargrove with some 150 men well armed with good rifles provisions were reviewed by Colnl James Callier were ordered to rendezvose at Mr Smiths on the east margin of Tuscaw River just below the said Spanish line, where Colnl R. Kemper Major Joseph P. Kennady Doctr John Pollard and myself met them by Land with many others as volunteer troopers in a verry few days Kemper was reinforced by a fine company of Horse commanded by John Barnard after remaining there for some two weeks Kemper determined upon chaingeing his position accordingly about the 1st of November the flat boats with the foot men were ordered to drop down to [illegible] while House one mile above the cit[illegible] where Blakely now stands, the Ho[illegible] were ordered by La[illegible] to meet them there accompanyed by Kemper & Kenn[illegible] [illegible]en I was ordered to take command of a scouting party [illegible] men to get all the armes and amunitio[illegible]

that I could find in the possession of the Florideans, being it observed here that they were unwilling to joine the Kemper party as it was then called by reason that they were afraid of a failure of the undertakeing & they be made responsible by the Spanish authorities I succeeded with many of the inhabitants in capturing arms and ammunition the most important occurrence of all I marched up on a plantation of Innerarritis by the by they got wind of my approach & had succeeded in the removal of every thing before my approach, I was not awere of that fact, I approached the premises with my command with much caution I placed my command arround the premises with orders not to permit any man to pass them, when I approached the House alone I taped at the door, behold to my grate astonishment it was appeared and in much haist by one of the most buitaful females my eyes had ever been permitted to behold the Lady suddenly exclaimed you seem much amaised, sir, can you most buitaful of your sex for a moment be at loss for the cause, I am a strainger she instantly replied: I was then young) and had to reply that I trusted good fortune would soon make us better acquainted - She soon enquired my name and buisaness (oh she exclaimed I have much wished an acquaintence with you haveing from my friends a friendly report of you, in reply to my enquirey for arms and ammunition, in the most bewitching manner nay with such a heavenly smile that I remembered long nay old as I am I recollect it as tho it was yesterday - and informed first that there was not a solitary person about the premises but our two selves againe with all the magic powers of her beautiful self assured me that there none other arms or ammunition about the place except what were attached to her person (can you sir for a moment doubt my feelings at that propisey moment = she was a widow with one child and from 18 to 20 years old = circumstances forbid me from giving her name, from thence I went to the white house situated on the Mobile bay 12 miles from the town & garrison there I reported to Colnl. Kemper, my success we there remained several days when a flat boat arrived with provision & forrage, when the order was given for the flotilla the footmen ten miles below blakely onboard to drop down to the mouth of the bimminet Creek emtying into the bay Kemper and his horse by Land after remaining for ten days Kemper thought proper to brake up his encampment ordering the flotilla with the foot men under the command of that old and brave revolutionary officer Major Hargrove to the command; Kemper & Kennady took the command of the Horse, with orders to proceed to the saw mill creek on the western side of the Mobile River = just as the encampment were to be broken up Kempers orderly came with an order ordering [illegible] to head quarters I forthwith repaired & just as I was in the act of entering Colnl. Ke[illegible] marker I was accosted by Doctr. John Pollard with he was dambed if he did not [illegible] at the same time levelling a double barrel gun at me I was aware

that there was no time to loose, I instantly snatched with my left hand from my belt a pistol
cocked it as I drew it leveled and fired before the Sct. Pollard as his gun discharged over my head
my fire taking effect under this right nipple coming out under his left sholder, I mention
this circumstance with reluctance, but it was an important incident Pollard recovered of his
wound, Colnl. Kemper & Major Kennedy marched with the mounted men up on the
eastern margin of the Tensaw River arriveing at the house of George Weekley Esqr. a sumptuous
dinner was provided for the whole party Weekley lived 6 miles above the old Spanish
line of deterkation on the American side he was friendly to Kempers party but not one
of them just after dinner as I was standing in front of Weekleys House in the shed
in company with several others, a long lane leading to the House a Gentleman mounted
on Horse back approached the House when near as one hundred yards it was discovered
by a silver star in front of the crown of his hat that he was a recruite for Kempers
Horse, a man by name John Barnard swore by his maker that he could strike the
star and offered a bet of a dime John of whiskey this offer was made to George
Weekley Esqr. before he could reply Barnard up Rifle and when Taylor for
that was the mans name was aboute 60 yards from him crack went the Rifle
Taylor dodged his head wheeled his horse stuck spurs to his horse & away
he went dogeing as far as we could see him, the next day I fell in with Taylor &
the ball had taken one of the points of the star & scraped the top of Taylor head it
ended Taylors curiosity for fighting the Spanards -

Kemper Took up his line of march for Mems's ferry on the Alabama
River passing through Nanna hubba island the next day arrived and camped
with a large reinforcement of men while there makeing preparation, the Spanish
commandant finding from his spies the week condition of Major Hargrove
and his command & no sort of fortification to defend them put off from Mobile a
strong force by land & water & came upon the Majr. Hargrove & his command undiscovered
his centinal was killed near the house a very sharp fight ensued Hargrove
fought desperately and no doubt remains that he killed some ten or 12 of the enemy & kep kill
as long as he could raise his old revolutionary sord at last the brave old hero exclaim
that he never could or would surrender they finally captured this brave man yet they
never conkerred him & assured commandant Parridus the Spanish commander that
he Hargroves could of had ten men such as him self that he would of whipped the
4 or 5 hundred Spanish Soldiers the brave old man was soon loaded with Irons tho
he was bleeding as it were from every pore yet they [illegible] for a set of
cowardly spanards for they [illegible] afraid that [illegible]
burst his [illegible] night as [illegible]

snatch some of there weapons & commence againe the work of death on board the boat they were transporting him to fort Charlot they took several of his men prisoners who fought bravely by the by the Spaniards must of lost some fifty killed & if the Kemper party had kept a proper scouting party out to of enabled them to of discovered the approach of the Spaniards the result would of been different = when the report came to Colnl Kemper it set him frantic his men were where he could not relieve them Major Genl Thomas was on his march met by a commissioner from the President of the United States informing him that he had ordered Major Genl James Wilkinson to take all the Country East of the Missippi River & West of the Perdido known as West Florida Towns & Cts & for him Genl Thomas forthwith to disband his troops or they would be made to so claiming all the country under the Louisiana purchase & express from Genl Thomas informing Colnl R Kemper these startling facts and commanding Kemper to disband his army if not for this fact Mobile in a very few days would paid dearly for all of the laurels they obtained by the capture of Major Hargrove = for there was no mistake in the bravery cool determination of Colnl Kemper & he had a party that would of charged to the mouth of the Spanish cannon nay he would of lay the town of Mobile & Pensacola under contribution if the American government had only remained neutrial in the the premises for ten more days = that brave & good man had to submit to the american marshal disbanding his forces Hargrove & the prisoners taken with him was very soon sent to the black Hole in the fortress on island of Cubea = my memory could of given you many more occurrences attending this fatal nay mismanaged Kemper expedition, as it was then called, I have written & you must read, if you can a haisty scewl written with one of the steel pens you gave me

End of Kemper at least for the present

You have requested me to give you the end of the illfated Lieutnt Callwel from South Carolina as brave a spirit as ever graced the American Army - Colnl George H. Nixon commanding the Escambia Expedition as it was called ordered his army to encamp near Bailey's Creek on the trail leading from Millers Bluff at the head of the Escambia bay to John Farvins Bluff 30 miles on the river Escambia while at Marshals one mile from Mill on the bay - Colnl Nixon from some indian traders received information that there were a party of hostile creeks and Semmenoley Indian expected that night to arrive on a tradeing expedition to Pensacola and advised a detachment of men to lay [illegible] weight for [illegible] indians on the trail & where they had to cross a large creek, that the [illegible] they could [illegible] [illegible]sed killed and there packs pack Horses & Cs captured consequently [illegible] Nixon [illegible] observing a perfect silence to this information of his

determination) to encamp soon after crossing Baileys Creek, and about 3 miles from Millers Bluff - soon after night, a strong detachment was organised and placed under the command of Major Peacock of the 39th Regiment United States Infantry, a brave and worthy officer, orders were given him and the line of march taken early in the night, they only 7 or 8 miles to march to there place of destination, unfortunately for Calwell, Major Peacock issued an order for his men to fire upon any object approaching without first hailing some time after arriveing at the place assigned & there positions taken, silenced observed an object approaching Major Peacock he feered & the contents lodged in the most vital part of the body of the illfated Callwell, he was instantly killed, a retrograde mach was taken, when they returned to camp with the corpes of Callwell there was much lamant by the army for the loss of this brave young officer all that could be done was forthwith done for him, he was soon put in a deep pit dug in the trail covered up level and a large pile of lightwood burnt over the place where the corpes was deposited, for all this precaution the Indians hovering arround the encampment dug him up before Colnl Nixon & his army was ten miles from him, stripped him of his clothes scalped him and in less than 24 hours had british gold in there pockets received from Henry Clays friends Ambrister and arbuthnot that the brave nay grate Major Genl Andrew Jackson had afterwards executed at or near St Marks which event produced from Mr H Clay his far famed seminola speeches against the man second only to the emortal Washington I mean the brave nay grate and worthy Jackson = for this act alone Clay can never do better than to get a Whig nomination for President = the ballot box never can ratify by there vote such an outrage upon the grate American Character.

Permit me next to give you the occurrence of Major Genl Andrew Jackson and the Wagons of Genl Coffees brigade stated nay boged down in the road leading from Carsons ferry on the Tombigbe river and Mims Ferry on the Allabama river about halfway between the two said ferries in Nanuhubba island Genl Jackson & his suite crossed the Tombigbe river the same day the wagons crossed on the road to the command of his large forces concentrating at the then fort montgomery on the east side of the Alabama river the Genl in advance of his military family came up to the wagons stalled as was useial with him in such cases, he dismounted letting his

old war horse shift for him self- boys said he to the waggonners you are badly stated
yes replyed the wagoners with much indifference for they new not the man they were
addressing the Genl had on no vestige of uniform nay he was roped in a Tennisee
drabed over coat and a large brim Tenisee made Hat and his jaws envelopped
in some several folds of red flannel for at the time he was much exceeted by
mercurey nay at the time in a high state of salivation, with all these extraneary
fixings the East Tennisee Waggoners, by some magic discovered that some verry grat
man was giving them orders for they went a head by his orders altho not one of them had
ever seen him before & was much pleased to find there wagons fast getting from there
difficultey by the effect of there new order each one of the waggoners wondering in the
name of God what manner of man can this be, when lo to behold a young and fine looking
gentleman and officer mounted on a beautiful roane mare rode up & with much pomp
declaring by God if you do not get them wagons oute he would have them every one
severly punished, the old hero listened to him, and replied by mildly requesting him to
dismount and help the wagoners oute of there difficulty the young officer higly offended
that any man of his ashabby appearence should take any liberty replyed by God sir
Iam Major Rose, assistant deputity quarter master Genl to Genl Coffees
brigade sir - ah Major Rose assistant deputity quarter master Genl to Genl Coffees
brigade = Iam Genl Jackson and my shoulder is to the wheel, Rose waited not for
a formal introduction discarding in a moment all of his own grateness as
if by magic in a moment he was dismounted and his shoulder to the wheel of
the wagon knee deep in mud and the wagons soon relieved, when a personal introduction
took place between the old hero & the major who by the by was a young officer of
much merrit & respect - for days after when the arrney were encamped around fort
montgomery whenever the Major would rive out the soldier would salute him
with Iam Major Rose assistant deputy quarter master Genl to Genl Coffees brigade
another batch of soldiers in the line Iam Genl Jackson another how quick the major
dismounted & another how quick his shoulder was at the wheel so on the Rep it up
until the major applyed to the Genl Jackson to permit him to return to Tenisee the
old Genl was too good a judge of man to loose so promising a young officer and

replied to him that he hoped the occurrence would be of service to him he certainly was an officer of much merrit=

I am pressed for time by reason that I have again taken up my practice and am called this morning to visit several sick persons= my friend R. McDonald Esqr was with me yesterday= my daughter begs to remind you of the promise you made to send them pamphlets= the news papers you were to send me my daughter Hannah has been much pressed in her loom she will very soon have your coverlid ready to send to you permit me in much haist to remain your fast friend

Thomas G. Holmes

☞ when a more leisure time I wish to give you something more from my old heads and I hope will have more time

To Tensaw Ala
March 18 1818 box 333.

A. J. Pickett Esqr

Montgomery

Mail

Alabama