

**James Madison to Mann Butler, October 11, 1834.  
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**TO MANN BUTLER. MAD. MSS.**

Oct. 11, 1834.

Dr Sir I have recd your letter of the 21 ult. in which you wish to obtain my recollection of what passed between Mr. John Brown and me on the overtures of Gardoqui "that if the people of Kentucky would erect themselves into an independent State, and appoint a proper person to negotiate with him, he had authority for that purpose and would enter into an arrangement with them for the exportation of their produce to New Orleans."

My recollection, with which, references in my manuscript papers accord, leaves no doubt that the overture was communicated to me by Mr. Brown. Nor can I doubt, that, as stated by him, I expressed the opinion and apprehension, that a knowledge of it in Kentucky might in the excitements there, be mischievously employed. This view of the subject evidently resulted from the natural and known impatience of the W people on the waters of the Mississippi for a market for the products of their exuberant soil; from the distrust of the Federal policy produced by the project of surrendering the use of that river for a term of many years; and from a coincidence of the overture, in point of time, with the plan on foot, for consolidating the Union by arming it with new powers, an object, to embarrass & defeat which the dismembering aims of Spain would not fail to make the most tempting sacrifices, and to spare no intrigues.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Madison's advices concerning affairs in Kentucky had come chiefly from John Brown, George Muter, and John Campbell. See *ante*, Vol. II.

I owe it to Mr. Brown, with whom I was in intimate friendship, when we were associates in public life, to observe that I always regarded him whilst steadily attentive to the interests of his constituents, as duly impressed with the importance of the Union and anxious for its prosperity.

Of the other particular enquiries in your letter my great age now in its 84th year, and with more than the usual infirmities, will I hope absolve me from undertaking to speak, without more authoritative aids to my memory than I can avail myself of. In what relates to Genl. Wilkinson, official investigations in the archives of the War Department, and the files of Mr. Jefferson, must of course be among the important sources of light you wish for.

It would afford me pleasure to aid the interesting work which occupies your pen by materials worthy of it. But I know not that I could point to any which are not in print or in public offices, and which if not already known to you are accessible to your researches. I can only therefore wish for your historical task all the success which the subject merits, and which is promised by the qualifications ascribed to the author.

I regret the tardiness of this acknowledgment of your letter. My feeble condition and frequent interruptions are the apology, which I pray you to accept with my respects & my cordial salutation.