

John Coffee to Andrew Jackson, October 1, 1826, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL JOHN COFFEE TO JACKSON.

Coxes Creek, October 1, 1826.

D'r Genl. By Mr. Camper I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 25th Ult. and also my mare in fine order. I hope she is in foal. I thank you for this additional service, to the many heretofore recd. from you. About a week ago I went down to A. J. Hutchings farm and went through the crop and examined it well, the Cotton is indifferent owing to the droughts, it seems to have been very well cultivated, but most of it in the oldest land is very small and badly bowled, and the wet season had started it to a second growth, that was also injuring it very much, it was forward and they were picking it very fast. Winburn informed me that he had out at that time 35 thousand, since which he had a week, s picking he must have by this time 45 thousand out. his calculations were from what he had picked that he would gather in about six hundred to the acre, when all done—he had at that time Gined his packing room full and was waiting to get Baging and rope to begin to bail. he will be done baleing as soon as he is done picking, or very soon thereafter, as he carries on both branches of business at the same time, he says his hands pick remarkably well, so much so, that he himself attends the Gin, and keeps all hands in the field. I bought Baling and rope, and sent it to him the day after I was there, say on yesterday was a week ago. he would bale on monday last all that he had picked, and continue Gining—the Scotch Baging (which was the same price with the other) cost 30 cents a yard, and Rope 12½ cents p lb. I omitted to purchase for myself or that farm, untill very lately, when that was the best bargain I could get, taking enough for both farms.

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The old ground corn was also rather light, but the new ground was very fine with a good crop of Pumpkins, the Corn Crop will abundantly supply the place but nothing more. he could not tell how many hogs he could command to make pork, but he said there would not be enough to supply the place, the hogs were very much scattered, running after the whiteoak mast that had begun to fall, and which is in great abundance this year. I think it unnecessary to make any provision about the pork untill it is known the quantity that may be wanted, as it is likely to be very low here this year, I can get delivered at the place, at that season upon better terms than a contract can be made, or to have it driven out, and I hope to be here and will attend to it in due time.

Winburn is very desireous to remain on the place at his old wages say \$200. he is about to Marry one of Old Mr. Scrug,s daughters, a young girl of 16 or 17 years of age, and that is the reason his sister Mrs. Nicholson is about to move away, another of her brothers and herself are about to settle a new place in the woods and carry on afarm. I am at a loss to determine whether Winburn ought to be continued or not, he is very anxious to do so, and I believe he is doing the very best he can with his judgment, but both him and his wife are young and will necessarily be at some loss to manage the young negroe family—in reply to that objection, her Mother is very near and possibly would counsel when called on for the purpose, this might be somewhat of a palliative, but not a compleat removal of the objection, and I would not consider him equal to such a man as Nicholson was yet he will do the best he can I beleive.

The man you mentioned in your letter who had written to you, and who had overseed for Booker, has I am told engaged with James Jackson. But if it should be determined to turn away Winburn, and get another, I can employ a man by the name of Hudson in this neighbourhood at \$300. and his family found, who is an old overseer under an excellent name. he applied to me last year before Winburn had been engaged, and I mentioned him to you by letter, I think I should have then employed him but he was under a partial engagement with John Craig and could not get off. he has about as much family as

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Nickerson had, is a man about 35 years old from appearance is said to be a first rate overseer, he is a very decent man and so is his family as I learn, I think he would be able to manage affairs better than the other, and would be a more responsible person, but his family would be a little more expence, and his wages is \$100. higher than the other—both of them seems desireous to continue on the place if employed, untill Andrew would arrive at age to take charge himself—under all circumstances possibly it would be better to empl[o]y Hudson, as he certainly would have more judgment in the management of the negroes and every thing else appertaining to the plantation, and if equal to his reputation as an overseer, he would relieve you measureably of responsibility.

I have given you as near as I can the history of the two men with the prospects before them, you can better determine which to employ than I can. If Winburn is to be employed you need not say so positively to him yet untill he brings his crop nearer to a close, and if he is not employed it will [be] more necessary to keep the information from him least he relax in his duty—therefore if you should wish to employ Hudson you may instruct me to that effect by a line and I will do it without giving the other notice of it, at least untill he progresses further with the Crop, As I expect to set out to the treaty on the 11 or at furthest the 12th of the month, the sooner you determine and write me the better, and if you conclude to employ Hudson, write such a letter as would do to shew to my Neighbour Major Allen, that in the event I should have started from home before it came to hand, I would request Mrs. Coffee to send for the Major and get him to see Hudson and close the contract for me. he is well acquainted with Hudson, and recomm[en]ds his being employed, I will speak to Major Allen on the subject before I leave home, provided I do not receive your instructions before I start.