

1783, Nov. 16

Dear Sir

Washington Nov. 16. 1783.

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I have not written to you since the 21st & 22nd of July since which
 yours of July 22nd 23rd Sept. 24th & Oct. 11th have been received. The present
 has been long delayed by an expectation I had of getting the enclosed copies
 of Louisiana through the press. The materials are received from different
 sources of good authority. I inclose you also copies of the Treaties for
 Louisiana. The act for taking possession, a letter from Sr. Vidar, & some
 information obtained by myself from Bontems's journal in 1772, all of which
 may be useful to you. The act for taking possession passes ^{through} some
 small verbal corrections from that enclosed, of no consequence, orders sent
 from here, signed by the King of Spain & the first Consul of France, so
 as to arrive at New Orleans yesterday evening, and we expect the delivery of
 the province at New Orleans will take place about the close of the month
 next, say about the 25th inst. Gov^r. Claiborne is appointed to execute
 the powers of Government & Intendant, until a regular government
 shall be organized here, at the moment of delivering over the posts in
 the vicinity of N. Orleans, orders will be dispatched from hence to those
 in Louisiana to evacuate & deliver them immediately. you
 can judge better than I can when they may be expected to arrive at
 those posts, considering how much you have been detained by the low
 water, how late it will be before you can leave Cahokia, how little progress
 up the Mississippi you can make before the freezing of the river, that you
 might be pressed in gaining such information by making Cahokia
 your head quarters, & going to St. Louis & the other Spanish posts that
 your stores &c. would thereby be exposed for the winter, all danger of
 Spanish opposition avoided, we are strongly of opinion here that you had
 better not enter the Mississipi till the spring, but as you have a view of all circumstances
 on the spot, we do not pretend to enjoin it, but leave it to your own judgment in
 which we have entire confidence. we think however we are decided in: that you must
 not

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Capt Lewis