

Jackson, Miss Sept 20th 1862

Hon. J.J. Pettus

Gov. State Miss.

[Ed. Note: After this "translation" of Dr. Vaiden's letter to Gov. Pettus, you will see the images of the actual letter. One might always wonder how a Doctor can spend so much time becoming educated in manners of medicine, but forget his penmanship. Patients will, no doubt, wonder at the skill of his hands during surgery, after seeing the lack of skill in cursive writing. Although it is now June 6, 2002, a highly-skilled doctor's penmanship can still be compared to that of a toddler.]

Sir in compliance with your request for obedience to your instructions & process es to the State of Ala with the view of investigating the claims of the salt works & if practicable to carry out your design to select a suitable location for the State of Miss to commence the operation of salt making

I visited the works in Washington County _____ as now developed & found nothing worthy such an under taking. I thus repaired to the works in Clarke County seeing for myself & _____ all the information from parties well posted and reliable in this county & found an inexhaustible quantity of brine in surface wells varying in depth from 5 to 15 feet yielding an average of one bushel of salt to 300 gallons of water. The loca tion of these wells being in overflowed lands makes it objectionable for such an enterprise as the State should embark in as such could only be operated in dry weather & would have to be suspended upon an overflow from the Tombigbee River & adjacent creeks But in close proximity to these lands are lands owned

by private individuals upon which wells can be bored above all overflow at a depth of 75 to 100 feet yielding any quantity of brine with as great a per centage of salt as those of less depth already

_____ to. Amongst the owners of these lands is a Mr Wilson who very generously has tendered [?] to the State through you his lands for this purpose free of charge such high minded patriotism & liberality, I

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met with in no other instance & for it I tendered him the thanks of your Excellency & that of the people of Miss. The depth of the wells will vary from 75 to 100 feet & will cost on an average about one hundred dollars. Mr Wilson only owns about 30 acres of high land suitable for boring with an insufficiency of timber but any quantity is equally convenient owned by the State of Alabama which I presume under existing circumstances the authorities of Ala would cheerfully yield to Miss an interest adequate to its wants

Labourers teams Kettles & all other fixtures necessary to carry on the enterprise would have to be carried from this State for they could not be obtained in Ala

I would advise your Excellency to proceed at once to the procurement of Wilson's claim to the 30 acres of

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CM Vaiden

Upland with the use of his timber on low or over Flowed lands approving [?] and establish at an early day one or more wells to prove the practicability of the enterprise and as public works are generally expensive from negligence & inattention I would suggest the propriety [?] of yielding at least in part the privilege [?] of making salt to individuals of enterprise and capital they obligating themselves to sell all the salt made to the Citizens of Miss. Your Excellency will receive my thanks for the honour bestowed & believe that so far as I have been able to discharge my duty nothing has been omitted.

Very Respectfully
CM Vaiden

Jackson Miss Sept 20th 1862
From J D Pettus
Gov State Miss

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