

## Gilbert C. Russell to Thomas Jefferson, 1-31-10

Fort Pickering, Chickesaw Bluffs,

31st January 1810

Sir,

I have lately been informed that James Neely the Agt. to the Chickasaws with whom Govr Lewis set off from this place has detained his pistols & perhaps some other of his effects for some claim he pretends to have upon his estate. He can have no just claim for any thing more than the expenses of his interment unless he makes a charge for packing his two Trunks from the nation. And for that he cannot have the audacity to make a charge after tendering the use of a loose horse or two which he said he had to take from the nation & also the aid of his servant. He seem'd happy to have it in his power to serve the Govr & but for making the offer which I accepted I should have employ'd the man who packed the trunk to the Nation to have them taken to Nashville & accompany the Govr. Unfortunately for him this arrangement did not take place, or I hesitate not to say he would this day be living. The fact is which you may yet be ignorant of that his untimely death may be attributed solely to the free use of liquor which he acknowledged verry candidly to me after he recovered & expressed a firm determination to never drink any more spirits or use snuff again both of which I deprived him of for several days & confined him to claret & a little white wine. But after leaving this place by some means or other his resolution left him & this Agt. being extremely fond of liquor, instead of preventing the Govr from drinking or keeping him under any restraint advised him to it & from every thing I can learn gave the man every chance to seek an opportunity to destroy himself. Also from the statement of Grinder's wife where he killed himself I cannot help to believe that Purney was rather aiding & abeting in the murder than otherwise.

This Neely also says he lent the Govr money which cannot be so as he had none himself & the Govr had more than one hund. \$ in notes & specie besides a check I let him have of 99.58 none of which it is said could be found. I have wrote to the Cashier of the branch bank of Orleans as whom the check was drawn in favor of myself or order to stop payt. when presented. I have this day authorized a gentleman to pay the pretended claim of Neely & take the pistols which will be held sacred to the order of any of the friends of M. Lewis free from encumbrance.

I am Sir with great respect your Obt Servt.

Gilbert C. Russell

Tho. Jefferson Esq.

(Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers>)