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JEFFERSON DAVIS (1808-1889) LETTERS

The collection includes a letter from S. FIFE, of London, England, to Jefferson DAVIS, of Memphis, Tennessee, dated 13 December 1875, a letter from Charles G. JOHNSON, of Liverpool, England, to W. Thompson GARDNER, of London, England, dated 27 August 1875, and a letter from Jefferson DAVIS, of New Orleans, Louisiana, to W. Thompson GARDNER, of London, dated 29 March 1876, all concerning the Mississippi Valley Society and the International Chamber of Commerce.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY SOCIETY

The Mississippi Valley Society (or Association) was a British company organized to "induce European immigration into Mississippi by grants of virgin lands." The Society also planned to collect large amounts of capital from individuals "to build merchant ships to develop direct trade connections between the Mississippi River region and both England and South America." These ships were to be designed to transport large quantities of cotton.

The idea for this trading association was first presented in November 1872 in St. Louis, Missouri. S. FIFE was appointed Secretary of the American Department, with the head office located in St. Louis.

In 1875, the Mississippi Valley Association asked Jefferson DAVIS, former President of the Confederate States of America, to head the movement. DAVIS agreed and was appointed President of the American Department. The needed capital was not secured, however, and the plan eventually failed.

[Jefferson Davis Letters, Mss., MS1220, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA; Hudson Strode, *Jefferson Davis: Tragic Hero* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), pp. 404, 415-419.]