

JOINT OCCUPATION OF SAN JUAN ISLAND

*Exchanges of notes October 25 and 29 and November 2, 3, 5, 7, and
9, 1859, and March 20 and 23, 1860
Terminated November 25, 1872¹*

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*The General in Chief of the United States Army to the Governor
of the Colony of Vancouver Island*

HEAD QUARTERS OF THE ARMY
FORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON TERRITORY

OCTOBER 25, 1859

To His Excellency JAMES DOUGLAS, Esq.: C.B.

Governor of the Colony of Vancouver and its dependencies,

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The undersigned, Lieutenant General, and Commanding in Chief the Army of the United States, having been drawn to this frontier by the apprehension of some untoward collision of arms between the forces of the United States and those of Great Britain in and about the Island of San Juan—the sovereignty of which is claimed by both nations—does not hesitate in the great interests of peace, assumed to be as important to one party as to the other, at once to submit for the consideration of His Excellency the following proposition to serve as a basis for the temporary adjustment of any present difficulty, until the two governments shall have had time to settle the question of title diplomatically:

Without prejudice to the claim of either nation to the sovereignty of the entire Island of San Juan, now in dispute, it is proposed that each shall occupy a separate portion of the same by a detachment of Infantry, Riflemen or Marines, not exceeding one hundred men, with their appropriate arms, only, for the equal protection of their respective countrymen in their persons and property, and to repel any descent on the part of hostile Indians.

In modification of this basis, any suggestion his Excellency may think

¹ Date of British withdrawal. The controversy over the northwest water boundary was referred to the arbitration of the German Emperor pursuant to arts. XXXIV-XLII of treaty signed at Washington May 8, 1871 (TS 133, *post*, p. 170). On Oct. 21, 1872, the Emperor rendered an award in favor of the U.S. claim that the boundary should run through Haro Strait.