

Correspondence of  
JAMES K. POLK  
Transcriptions, April 1848–June 1849  
MICHAEL DAVID COHEN Bradley J. Nichols  
2017 Newfound Press Knoxville, Tennessee

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1 Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this Web resource do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

## Introduction

James K. Polk presided over four years of rapid scientific innovation. New technologies transformed the ways Americans preserved and disseminated information.

Daguerreotypists captured the earliest known photographs of the White House and the earliest that survive of a sitting president. Polk used an ancestor of the photocopier to duplicate his outgoing letters. Railroads crisscrossed the land and steamboats sped through the water. The first U.S. postage stamp enabled Americans to pay to send, rather than to receive, their mail.<sup>2</sup>

Few inventions impacted Americans' lives as much as the telegraph. Samuel F. B. Morse had demonstrated his electrical system of communication in 1838. After receiving a federal grant in 1843, he built a forty-mile line between Baltimore and the nation's capital. The first major news item conveyed through the completed line, in May 1844, was Polk's nomination by the Democratic party for the presidency. Morse and other entrepreneurs proceeded to lay lines across the country.<sup>3</sup>

For the first time in history, humans could communicate instantaneously beyond the range of sight or sound. Polk telegraphed federal appointments as far as Illinois and Kentucky.<sup>4</sup> Through the telegraph and other media, he received updates from and sent orders to a

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- 2 On photography, see Clifford Krainik, "A 'Dark Horse' in Sunlight and Shadow: Daguerreotypes of President James K. Polk," *White House History*, 2 (June 1997), pp. 44–47; on press copies, which are marked as such in this series' headnotes, see Barbara Rhodes and William Wells Streeter, *Before Photocopying: The Art & History of Mechanical Copying, 1780–1938* (New Castle, Del. : Oak Knoll Press; Northampton, Mass.: Heraldry Bindery, 1999), pp. 193–96; on rail and water routes, see Jerry Musich, "Mapping a Transcontinental Nation: Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century American Rail Travel Cartography," in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 99–100, 109, 116–18, 121–23, and Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 32–52 and pp. 644–45, table 2; on the stamp, see Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 160–61.
  - 3 Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), pp. 158, 161–62, 166, 169–71.
  - 4 See, herein, Polk to Joseph Lane, August 21, 1848; Polk to William L. Marcy, August 23, 1848; and Joseph Knox Walker to Polk, August 23, 1848.

distant war front faster than any prior commander-in-chief. He thus could direct military activities from the White House to an unprecedented degree.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, newspapers reported stories from Washington, Mexico City, and elsewhere using the new technology. Thanks to the decade-old “penny press”—papers sold for a mere cent—information became both current and affordable for millions of Americans.<sup>6</sup>

Today, too, is an age of technological revolution. Our computers, smartphones, and Internet lie many inventive steps beyond the fanciest devices of the 1840s. Much like the telegraph and the penny press, though, they enable us to share information instantaneously and, increasingly, affordably with a large audience. James K. Polk and his contemporaries, one inventor told him in 1848, had entered a “great Era of Improvement.”<sup>7</sup> Now the James K. Polk Project enters the twenty-first century. Between 1958 and 2017, the Polk Project produced thirteen hardcover volumes of the Correspondence of James K. Polk. Published by Vanderbilt University Press and, since 1993, the University of Tennessee Press, they render accessible Polk’s incoming and outgoing letters from July 1817 to March 1848. No longer do students, scholars, or history enthusiasts need to obtain Library of Congress microfilm, travel to other libraries and archives, contact private collectors, decipher faint handwriting, and research people and topics mentioned in letters. Thousands of transcribed and annotated letters, plus summaries of all other known extant correspondence, can be found on a single bookshelf. Now we go further. Working with Newfound Press, the digital imprint of the University of Tennessee Libraries, the Polk Project is making the eleventh president’s letters even easier to find. As of January 2016, the first twelve volumes of the Correspondence are available, at no charge to the user, at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_polk/](http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_polk/). (They also can be found through our project website, <http://polkproject.utk.edu>.) Volume 13, only recently published in hardcover, will join them in late 2018. These PDF volumes include all contents of the hardcover ones, plus they are full-text searchable. Users can download them to any device with access to the World Wide Web.

The volume you are now reading represents a step further still. Work continues on Volume 14 of the Correspondence, which will complete the series. In the meantime, as we prepare that volume’s annotation and letter summaries, we see no reason not to share the transcriptions. Here you can read 104 letters that Polk wrote and 260 that he received between April 1, 1848, and his death on June 15, 1849. They contain few notes, chiefly describing the texts, identifying enclosures, and citing other Polk letters referenced. But they are accurate, carefully proofread reproductions of the primary documents. Newfound Press publishes this early edition of Correspondence of James K. Polk, volume 14, April 1848–June 1849, with sophisticated technology to maximize its usability and sustainability. Not only are the letters on this XML-based website easily navigable,

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5 See, for example, Thomas Ritchie to Polk, June 14, 1848, herein, and Polk to Gideon J. Pillow, April 14, 1847, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 12, January–July 1847, ed. Tom Chaffin and Michael David Cohen (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2013), pp. 176–78.

6 Starr, *Creation of the Media*, pp. 131–34, 174.

7 George C. Wheeler to Polk, August 28, 1848, herein.

searchable, and copy-and-paste friendly. They also are encoded, by Backstage Library Works under Newfound Press's direction, according to the standards of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). TEI, since its publication in 1994, has become a widely accepted set of guidelines for the presentation of texts in digital format. The standard used by publishers, libraries, museums, and scholars, it ensures the continued usability and consistent presentation of Polk's letters both across devices and applications and over time as technology develops.

We hope you enjoy our most advanced digital product to date. Thanks to the generosity of Newfound Press and of the Polk Project's sponsors, this electronic volume is—and will remain—completely free to the user. Historians and others can begin learning from these important documents of the final year of Polk's administration and his three-month retirement. We, meanwhile, are hard at work preparing the annotations, briefs, and calendar for the complete Volume 14, to be published by the University of Tennessee Press and, later, by Newfound Press. That volume also will include a calendar summarizing letters from earlier periods that we have located since publishing their chronologically appropriate volumes. Soon the Correspondence of James K. Polk, with all the annotations and supplementary materials that readers have come to expect, will be complete in both print and digital formats.

So please dive in. The letters on this site help to illuminate the aftermath of the Mexican War, including Polk's unsuccessful effort to establish territorial governments for the lands acquired from Mexico; the election of Polk's successor, in which Whig and Mexican War general Zachary Taylor defeated Democrat and Polk friend Lewis Cass; and renewed concern over Polk's having misled senators in 1845 about his intentions regarding Texas annexation. They discuss the heated debate over slavery in the United States, the spreading revolutionary activity in Europe, and American interest in purchasing Cuba. Correspondents include California gold seekers, India's poet laureate, and the wives of John Quincy Adams and Robert E. Lee. Polk exchanged personal letters with friends and relatives including three of his siblings; his nephew and ward; and his wife, Sarah Childress Polk. Letters from the last months of his presidency and from his brief retirement address the final illness and the anticipated legacy of one of the most consequential presidents in U.S. history.

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN EDITOR, CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK

## Editorial Practice

The current editor of the Correspondence of James K. Polk has, in most regards, retained the editorial policies of his predecessors. Beginning with Volume 12, however, the editors have modified policies to enhance completeness, conciseness, or clarity. The guiding purpose has remained the clear and accurate presentation of Polk's correspondence. This digital volume consists of selected letters transcribed in full and annotated, to a limited extent, with endnotes. I define Polk's correspondence as all letters written by or to him.

These include circulars (letters sent to multiple recipients) and notes (letters written in the third person), but not other documents sent by mail (such as newspaper clippings, meeting proceedings, or bills). I do not include anything published in James D. Richardson's *Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* or any reports published in John Bassett Moore's *Works of James Buchanan*; though some of these messages and reports begin with a date and salutation, they are letters in form only and can be found in those volumes.<sup>8</sup> Nor do I include Polk's other messages to Congress or the reports by cabinet members, structured as letters to Polk, that he enclosed in and Congress published with his annual messages.<sup>9</sup>

This early edition of Volume 14 differs from the letterpress volumes not only in its digital format but also in the absence of most annotation and of summaries of unpublished letters. Those will appear in the final hardcover and digital editions. Annotation herein is restricted to information about the texts and, where necessary to avoid confusion, very limited context. Endnotes provide neither identifications of people and topics nor full names for people mentioned in letters. As always, though, readers can assume that a reference to "Polk" in the annotation is to James K. Polk. In the annotation I refer to the war fought by the United States and Mexico by the succinct term that Polk and many of his correspondents used, "the Mexican War."

In general, the editor and the editorial assistant have transcribed the letters faithfully with a strict regard for original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and text placement. To improve clarity and to accommodate the demands of printed and digital type, however, we have yielded to a few standard rules of normalization. We have capitalized initial words of sentences and supplied sentence-ending punctuation if sentence divisions are clear; if sentence divisions are unclear, we have indicated so in notes. If a word in a manuscript can be read with equal ease as either the conventional or an unconventional spelling, we have transcribed it as the former. Similarly, if a word's capitalization is ambiguous, we have followed conventional upper- or lower-case usage. We have incorporated authors' interlineations and cancellations into the texts without comment, except where an explanation or the retention of struck-out text (in brackets) is necessary for readers' comprehension. Unintentional consecutive word repetitions have been omitted.

We have transcribed short dashes on the base of the line as commas or periods where the authors used them as such. We have ignored redundant punctuation and meaningless flourishes or ink marks. We have brought superscripts down to the line and transcribed markings beneath or beside superscripts as periods. We have omitted punctuation

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8 The volumes of those series covering the months included in this volume are James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C. : GPO, 1897), and John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan: Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, vol. 8 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1909).

9 Polk's Fourth Annual Message to Congress, dated December 5, 1848, and accompanying documents including reports by Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker, Secretary of War William L. Marcy, Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason, and Postmaster General Cave Johnson can be found in House Executive Document No. 1, 30th Congress, 2nd Session.

following the abbreviations "st," "nd," "rd," and "th"; punctuation after "s" if an author used it with every plural noun; and punctuation after a letter's date or signature. We have replaced colons or flourishes used to end abbreviations or initials with periods. We have standardized quotation marks, using double marks for a quotation and single marks for a quotation within a quotation, and have placed periods and commas before closing quotation marks. We have replaced nonstandard punctuation (such as a comma below a dash) with the most similar punctuation available that retains the author's meaning. Underlined text is represented by italics.

Regardless of their position in the manuscript, we have set a letter's salutation and its place and date of composition on one line (or more if necessary) immediately below the letter's heading. In a letter written over two days, the second date appears at its place in the manuscript. Except in rare cases where they are particularly illuminating, we have omitted complimentary closings; an ellipsis at the end of a letter indicates a closing that either appears in the manuscript's final paragraph or, though positioned separately, continues the final sentence of that paragraph. We have rendered each author's signature in capitals and small capitals on its own line, but have placed the signature to a postscript in upper- and lower-case letters at the end of the last paragraph of the postscript. We have omitted professional titles that follow signatures. We have set each postscript at the end of its letter; a note indicates if it appears elsewhere in the manuscript.

Most of the transcriptions are based on extant letters held in archives or private collections. In rare cases, they derive from publications of letters or from original manuscripts of which the project has obtained copies but whose current locations are unknown. Three letters in this volume were originally written in languages besides English. The only version of a German letter that has been found, though, is the English translation that was presented to Polk and is transcribed herein. For the French and Spanish letters that the president received, I publish English translations by French historian Margaret Cook Anderson and by Mexican War historian John C. Pinheiro and myself.

Each letter's headnote includes the physical description and location of the version transcribed, along with identifications of other known extant versions or publications of the letter. We have noted the city or other location to which a published letter was addressed, whether written inside the letter or on its cover-the envelope if one was used or the exterior of the folded letter if one was not-in the headnote; we have noted probable addresses for letters whose covers are missing. Also in the headnote, we have included information from the recipient's or another's endorsement if it adds to readers' understanding of the letter (Polk and his secretaries often summarized letters on their covers, but we generally have not included those summaries). In two cases, where Polk wrote an important endorsement in letter form, we have transcribed it in full above the headnote. We have quoted, in the headnote, the author's notation of "private" or other such stipulation; this text is from the top of the letter unless otherwise indicated. We have included delivery information such as the names of couriers, but mentioned postmarks only if they reveal significant information such as a delay in mailing or the route of an international letter.

Brackets within a letter indicate text that we have inserted to complete a probable meaning, text whose transcription is uncertain, cancelled text that we have retained, or text that we have transcribed from a different version of the letter. A note indicates

the nature of the bracketed text. The letters include many errors and unconventional spellings; bracketed text to complete meanings, or notes with corrected spellings, have been inserted only where confusion is likely otherwise. Bracketed ellipses indicate text that is illegible, usually owing to damage, archival tape, or poor ink transfer in Polk's copy press; a note indicates the problem. Brackets also surround supplied places or dates of composition (if omitted from or incorrectly stated in a manuscript), supplied signatures (if omitted from or cut out of a manuscript), and supplied postscript headings.

Although this volume contains relatively little annotation, in crafting it I have consulted numerous primary and secondary sources. These include many well-known reference books and monographs. To ensure accuracy, only facts for which I have at least one reliable primary source or two reliable secondary sources have been included. Owing to these considerations and pursuant to my desire that, in the final edition of the volume, the notes not overwhelm the letters, I have foregone the naming of sources in the notes except in rare cases where confusion may result otherwise.

Letters often refer to other letters to or from Polk. In general, readers may find such letters in this series. Some remain to be summarized for the final edition of this volume. I have noted if a mentioned letter has not been found. If an author refers to a letter in this series without giving the correspondent and date, I have supplied that information.

I have identified in notes, with archival locations, all documents enclosed within letters published in this volume. Notes also indicate enclosures mentioned in the correspondence that have not been found. A letter's headnote indicates if the letter is itself an enclosure. I include notes for enclosed objects only if they have been found; most have not.

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

## Symbols

### Document Classifications

ADS, copy

Autograph Document Signed, copied by writer

ADS, fragment

Autograph Document Signed, fragment

ADsS

Autograph Documents Signed

AE

Autograph Endorsement

AE, facsimile

Autograph Endorsement, published facsimile copy

AEI

Autograph Endorsement Initialed

AES

Autograph Endorsement Signed

AEs

Autograph Endorsements

AEsS

Autograph Endorsements, Signed

AL

Autograph Letter

AL, draft

Autograph Letter, drafted by writer

ALI, copy

Autograph Letter Initialed, copied by writer



ALI, fragment	Autograph Letter Initialed, fragment
ALS	Autograph Letter Signed
ALS, copy	Autograph Letter Signed, copied by writer
ALS, draft	Autograph Letter Signed, drafted by writer
ALS, facsimile	Autograph Letter Signed, published facsimile copy
ALS, fragment	Autograph Letter Signed, fragment
ALS, microfilm	Autograph Letter Signed, microfilm copy
ALS, photocopy	Autograph Letter Signed, photocopy
ALS, press copy	Autograph Letter Signed, press copy
ALS, press copy of copy	Autograph Letter Signed, copied by writer, press copy
ALS, probably press copy	Autograph Letter Signed, probably press copy
ALs, drafts	Autograph Letters, drafted by writer
ALsS	Autograph Letters Signed
AN	Autograph Note
AN, press copy	Autograph Note, press copy
ANS	Autograph Note Signed
ANS, copy	Autograph Note Signed, copied by writer
D, copy	Document, authorship attributed or unknown, copy
DS	Document Signed
Ds, copies	Documents, copies
E	Endorsement, authorship attributed or unknown
Es	Endorsements
L	Letter, authorship attributed or unknown
L, copy	Letter, copy
L, draft	Letter, draft
L, translation	Letter, English translation
L, typed copy	Letter, typed copy
LS	Letter Signed
LS, copy	Letter Signed, copy
Ls, drafts	Letters, drafts
N	Note, authorship attributed or unknown
NS	Note Signed
PC	Published Circular, authorship attributed or unknown
PD	Published Document, authorship attributed or unknown
PDs	Published Documents
PL	Published Letter, authorship attributed or unknown

PLs	Published Letters
PNs	Published Notes, authorship attributed or unknown
Partly printed ACS	Partly printed Autograph Circular Signed
Partly printed AL	Partly printed Autograph Letter
Partly printed ALS	Partly printed Autograph Letter Signed
Partly printed DS	Partly printed Document Signed
Partly printed L, telegram	Partly printed Letter, authorship attributed, telegram
Repository Designations	
CBevSMF	Shapell Manuscript Foundation, Beverly Hills, Calif.
Ct	Connecticut State Library, Hartford
CtY	Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
DLC-AJD	Library of Congress, Andrew Jackson Donelson Papers
DLC-EB	Library of Congress, Edmund Burke Papers
DLC-FP	Library of Congress, Franklin Pierce Papers
DLC-JKP	Library of Congress, James K. Polk Papers
DLC-JKPor	Library of Congress, John K. Porter Autograph Collection
DLC-MVB	Library of Congress, Martin Van Buren Papers
DLC-WLM	Library of Congress, William L. Marcy Papers
DLC-ZT	Library of Congress, Zachary Taylor Papers
DNA-RG 42	National Archives, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital
DNA-RG 45	National Archives, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library
DNA-RG 48	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior
DNA-RG 59	National Archives, General Records of the Department of State
DNA-RG 76	National Archives, Records of Boundary and Claims Commissions and Arbitrations
DNA-RG 107	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War
IHi	Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Ill.
InU-Li	Indiana University, Bloomington, Lilly Library
KyU	University of Kentucky, Lexington
MB	Boston Public Library
MBU	Boston University

MH-H-A	Harvard University, Houghton Library, Autograph File, Cambridge, Mass.
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
MiU-C	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, William L. Clements Library
MnHi-AKF	Minnesota Historical Society, Allyn Kellogg Ford Collection of Historical Manuscripts, St. Paul
MoSHi-P	Missouri History Museum, Presidents Collection, St. Louis
NHi	New-York Historical Society, New York City
NN	New York Public Library
Nc-Ar	North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh
NcU	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
NjP	Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
NjP-RF	Princeton University, Rush Family Papers, Princeton, N.J.
PHi-CF	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Cadwalader Family Papers, Philadelphia
PHi-JB	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, James Buchanan Papers, Philadelphia
T-AH	Tennessee State Library and Archives, Adam Huntsman Papers, Nashville
ViHi-MF25	Virginia Historical Society, Mason Family Papers, 1825–1902, Richmond
Published Sources	
88YSP	Jimmie Lou Sparkman Claxton, 88 Years with Sarah Polk (New York: Vantage Press, 1972)
BP	M. A. DeWolfe Howe, communicator, "Bancroft Papers on the Mecklenburg Declaration, 1775, and on the Annexation of Texas, 1848," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 43 (October 1909–June 1910)
DYF	Rodelle Weintraub and Stanley Weintraub, Dear Young Friend: Letters from American Presidents to Children (Mechanicsburg, Penn.: Stackpole, 2000)
EIWO	Frances Fuller Victor, The Early Indian Wars of Oregon Compiled from the Oregon Archives and Other Original Sources with

	Muster Rolls (Salem, Ore.: Frank C. Baker, 1894)
LTT	Lyon Gardiner Tyler, <i>The Letters and Times of the Tylers</i> , vol. 3 (Williamsburg, Va., 1896)
MSCP	Anson Nelson and Fanny Nelson, <i>Memorials of Sarah Childress Polk: Wife of the Eleventh President of the United States</i> (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1892)
PJD-3	James T. McIntosh, ed., <i>The Papers of Jefferson Davis</i> , vol. 3, July 1846–December 1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981)
SCP	John Reed Bumgarner, <i>Sarah Childress Polk: A Biography of the Remarkable First Lady</i> (Jefferson, N.C. : McFarland & Co., 1997)
SL	<i>Statutes at Large</i>
TIP-3	Dorman H. Winfrey, ed., <i>Texas Indian Papers, 1846–1859</i> (Austin: Texas State Library, 1960)
TR	John Robert Irelan, <i>The Republic; or, A History of the United States of America in the Administrations, From the Monarchic Colonial Days to the Present Times</i> , vol. 11 (Chicago: Fairbanks & Palmer, 1888)
ULNCP-Ju	Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed., "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Polk," <i>North Carolina Historical Review</i> , 17 (July 1940)
WJB-8	John Bassett Moore, ed., <i>The Works of James Buchanan: Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence</i> , vol. 8, 1848–1853 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1909)

## Chronology

1795 Nov. 2  
1806 Fall

Born in Mecklenburg County, N.C.  
Moved to Williamson County, Tenn. (Dec. 1807, area became Maury County)

1812 Fall	Underwent major surgery by Dr. Ephraim McDowell in Danville, Ky.
1813 July	Began study under Robert Henderson at Zion Church Academy
1816 Jan.	Entered University of North Carolina as sophomore
1818 June Fall	Graduated from University of North Carolina Began reading law in office of Felix Grundy of Nashville
1819 Sept.	Elected clerk of Tennessee Senate
1820 June	Admitted to the bar
1823 Aug.	Elected to Tennessee House
1824 Jan. 1	Married Sarah Childress of Murfreesboro
1825 Aug.	Elected to U.S. House
1827 Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
Nov. 5	Death of his father, Samuel Polk
1829 Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
1831 Jan. 21	Death of his brother Franklin, aged 28
Apr. 12	Death of his brother Marshall, aged 26
Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
Sept. 28	Death of his brother John, aged 24
1831–32 Winter	Sent slaves to clear land for his Fayette County, Tenn., plantation
1833 Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
Dec.	Chosen to chair U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means
1834 June	Defeated by John Bell for Speaker of the U.S. House
Fall	Sells Fayette County plantation and purchases, with Silas Caldwell, Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation
1835 Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
Dec. 7	Elected Speaker of the U.S. House
1836 Aug. 6	Death of his sister Naomi, wife of Adlai O. Harris, aged 27
1837 Aug.	Reelected to U.S. House
Sept. 4	Reelected Speaker of the U.S. House
1839 Feb. 24	Death of his brother Samuel Washington, aged 21
Aug.	Elected governor of Tennessee over Newton Cannon
1840 May	Withdrew candidacy for Democratic vice-presidential nomination

1841 Aug.	Defeated in gubernatorial election by James C. Jones
1843 Aug.	Defeated in gubernatorial election by James C. Jones
Nov.	Recommended by Tennessee Democratic State Convention to be party's 1844 vice-presidential nominee
1844 May	Nominated for presidency by Democratic National Convention
Nov.	Elected president of the United States over Henry Clay
1845 Mar. 4	Inaugurated president of the United States
1846 Apr. 25	Start of Mexican War
June 15	Signing of Buchanan-Pakenham (Oregon) Treaty
July 30	Signed Walker Tariff bill
Aug. 3	Vetoed Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1846
Aug. 6	Signed Independent Treasury bill
Oct.	Purchased the late Felix Grundy's home in Nashville
1847 Dec. 15	Submitted reasons for not signing Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847
1848 Feb. 2	Signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending Mexican War
1849 Mar.4–1849 Mar.5	Yielded office to his successor, Zachary Taylor
June 15	Died in Nashville, likely of cholera

## Letters

- From William McLain, April 1, 1848
- To Andrew J. Donelson, April 2, 1848
- To Jacob L. Martin, April 2, 1848
- To Richard Rush, April 2, 1848
- From George Abernethy, April 3, 1848
- To William Moore, April 3, 1848
- From John Thomas, April 5, 1848
- From Vanbrugh Livingston, April 6, 1848
- From Jesse E. Dow, April 8, 1848
- From James Buchanan, April 9, 1848

- To Zachary Taylor, April 11, 1848
- From Jefferson Davis, April 13, 1848
- To G. & C. Merriam, April 15, 1848
- To Richard Rush, April 15, 1848
- From Ralph I. Ingersoll, April 19, 1848
- From Mitchel H. Miller to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk, April 19, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, April 20, 1848
- From Cave Johnson, April 21, 1848
- From Abraham McClellan, April 21, 1848
- From Samuel H. Huntington, April 22, 1848
- From Adam Huntsman, April 23, 1848
- From Vernon K. Stevenson, April 23, 1848
- From Edward Anthony, April 26, 1848
- From Jacob L. Martin, April 27, 1848
- From Paige & Beach, April 28, 1848
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., April 30, 1848
- To John T. Leigh, May 1, 1848
- To John A. Mairs, May 1, 1848
- From Ransom H. Gillet, May 2, 1848
- From Zachary Taylor, May 3, 1848
- From John McPherson, May 4, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, May 4, 1848
- From Robert B. Reynolds, May 5, 1848
- From William T. Sprole, May 6, 1848
- From Sarah Smith Stafford, May 6, 1848
- To Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams, May 8, 1848
- From Andrew J. Donelson, May 8, 1848
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., May 8, 1848
- From James Porter Brawley, May 9, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, May 9, 1848
- From John L. O'Sullivan, May 10, 1848
- From John Catron, May 12, 1848
- From Jacob L. Martin, May 12, 1848
- From James Wirick, May 12, 1848
- From John B. Hays, May 14, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, May 15, 1848
- From Charles J. Ingersoll, May 17, 1848
- From George W. Hopkins, May 18, 1848
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., May 18, 1848
- From Richard Rush, May 18, 1848
- From Henry Simpson, May 18, 1848
- From Robert Armstrong, May 19, 1848
- To James G. M. Ramsey, May 20, 1848
- From James Buchanan, May 22, 1848

- To John Catron, May 22, 1848
- From Walter Lowrie, May 22, 1848
- From Joseph Knox Walker, May 22, 1848
- From Abraham W. Venable, May 23, 1848
- From Joseph Knox Walker, May 24, 1848
- From Thomas H. Benton, May 28, 1848
- To Peter D. Vroom, May 30, 1848
- From Anonymous, signed "Two Democrats," June 2, 1848
- To Franklin Pierce, June 3, 1848
- From John K. Kane, June 5, 1848
- To John A. Mairs, June 5, 1848
- From Peter D. Vroom, June 5, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, June 6, 1848
- To Zachary Taylor, June 8, 1848
- To Isaac Toucey, June 8, 1848
- From John L. Brown, June 10, 1848
- From Isaac Toucey, June 12, 1848
- From Daniel Webster et al., June 13, 1848
- From Peter Parker, June 14, 1848
- To George Bancroft, June 17, 1848
- To Ralph I. Ingersoll, June 17, 1848
- To John T. Leigh, June 17, 1848
- From Walter Lenox et al. to James K. Polk et al., June 17, 1848
- From Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee, June 18, 1848
- From John C. Hays, June 20, 1848
- From Edward C. Delavan to James K. Polk et al., June 21, 1848
- From Gideon J. Pillow, June 23, 1848
- From Elisha Whittlesey to James K. Polk et al., June 23, 1848
- From John Anderson, June 26, 1848
- From Thomas G. Clinton, June 26, 1848
- From Thomas Ritchie, June 28, 1848
- From John S. Barbour, June 29, 1848
- From James Buchanan, June 29, 1848
- From John P. Helfenstein, June 29, 1848
- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., July 3, 1848
- To Zachary Taylor, July 3, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, July 6, 1848
- From Robert B. Campbell, July 7, 1848
- From Thomas G. Clinton, July 8, 1848
- From Daniel S. Dickinson, July 8, 1848
- From Thomas E. S. Russwurm, July 10, 1848
- From Jesse D. Bright, July 11, 1848
- From Thomas G. Clinton, July 11, 1848
- From Aaron V. Brown, July 12 and c. July 25, 1848



- From William Patterson, July 15, 1848
- From Thomas G. Clinton, July 17, 1848
- To Robert J. Walker, July 17, 1848
- From Robert J. Walker, July 19, 1848
- From William T. and Martha Ambrose Smith, July 22, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, July 23, 1848
- From Archibald W. Burns, July 24, 1848
- From John Catron, c. July 24, 1848
- To John Catron, July 24, 1848
- From James Lee, July 24, 1848
- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., July 24, 1848
- From Joel B. Sutherland, July 27, 1848
- From Sarah Mytton Hughes Maury, July 28, 1848
- From William O. Butler, July 29, 1848
- From Leslie Combs, July 31, 1848
- From George Bancroft, August 5, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, August 10, 1848
- From Joseph R. Underwood, August 10, 1848
- From Jacob Gould, August 12, 1848
- From Cave Johnson, August 17, 1848
- From William J. Brown, August 19, 1848
- From Sarah Childress Polk, August 19, 1848
- From Joseph Knox Walker, August 19, 1848
- To Joseph Lane, August 21, 1848
- From Sarah Childress Polk, August 21, 1848
- From Albert Gallup, August 22, 1848
- From Robert Williams et al., August 22, 1848
- To William L. Marcy, August 23, 1848
- From Joseph Knox Walker, August 23, 1848
- To Aaron V. Brown, August 24, 1848
- From J. Carmichael, August 24, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, August 24, 1848
- From O'Ferrall & Co., c. August 24, 1848
- To Sarah Childress Polk, August 25, 1848
- From Cave Johnson, August 27, 1848
- To Sarah Childress Polk, August 27, 1848
- From George C. Wheeler, August 28, 1848
- To John Y. Mason, September 2, 1848
- From George T. Wood, September 2, 1848
- To Aaron V. Brown, September 6, 1848
- To Aaron V. Brown, September 6, 1848
- To John Catron, September 7, 1848
- From Benjamin B. French, September 7, 1848
- From Anonymous, September 9, 1848

- To George Bancroft, September 9, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, September 9, 1848
- From Elexius Simms et al., September 9, 1848
- To William H. Polk, September 14, 1848
- From Benjamin Silliman, September 14, 1848
- To George Bancroft, September 15, 1848
- From James Buchanan, September 15, 1848
- From Anonymous, signed "a New York Loco Foco," September 18, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, September 18, 1848
- To James H. Thomas, September 18, 1848
- From James H. Thomas, September 19, 1848
- From John D. Carroll, September 20, 1848
- To Robert J. Walker, September 20, 1848
- To William H. Winder, September 20, 1848
- From Robert J. Walker, September 21, 1848
- To John A. Mairs, September 22, 1848
- To Robert J. Walker, September 22, 1848
- From John Norvell, September 25, 1848
- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., September 25, 1848
- From Zachary Taylor, September 28, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, September 29, 1848
- To William L. Marcy, September 30, 1848
- From Robert Armstrong, October 2, 1848
- From William H. Polk, October 3, 1848
- From Andrew Lane, signed "Amor Patriæ," October 4, 1848
- From Gideon J. Pillow, October 4, 1848
- From Cave Johnson, October 6, 1848
- From William L. Helfenstein, October 10, 1848
- From Philip T. Tyson, October 10, 1848
- From George Bancroft, October 13, 1848
- From George Bancroft, October 13, 1848
- To Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, October 14, 1848
- To George M. Dallas, October 14, 1848
- To Samuel P. Walker, October 14, 1848
- To John A. Mairs, October 15, 1848
- To James Buchanan, October 16, 1848
- To James G. M. Ramsey, October 17, 1848
- To James G. M. Ramsey, October 17, 1848
- From Simon Cameron, October 19, 1848
- From George Bancroft, October 20, 1848
- From Folliot T. Lally, October 20, 1848
- From William H. Polk, October 21, 1848
- From John, Archduke of Austria and Vicaire of the German Empire, October 22, 1848
- To George Bancroft, October 27, 1848

- To John K. Kane, October 27, 1848
- From William A. Wyse, October 27, 1848
- From Andrew J. Donelson, October 30, 1848
- From James D. Wasson, October 31, 1848
- From Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, November 1, 1848
- From Samuel P. Walker, November 1, 1848
- From Vernon K. Stevenson, November 3, 1848
- From Joseph L. Williams, November 3, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, November 4, 1848
- From Robert J. Walker, November 6, 1848
- From John A. Mairs, November 8, 1848
- From James Buchanan, November 9, 1848
- From Jacob Bigelow, c. November 10, 1848
- From George M. Bright, November 10, 1848
- From James Crutchett, c. November 10, 1848
- To Sarah Childress Polk, November 11, 1848
- From John Y. Mason, November 12, 1848
- To Vernon K. Stevenson, November 12, 1848
- To Sarah Childress Polk, November 13, 1848
- From Henry Simpson, November 13, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, November 14, 1848
- From William M. Missemen, November 14, 1848
- From Joseph L. Williams, November 14, 1848
- From Stephen Adams, November 15, 1848
- From William D. Moseley, November 17, 1848
- From Alfred O. P. Nicholson, November 17, 1848
- From Franklin Pierce, November 17, 1848
- From Thomas Brownell, November 18, 1848
- From Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, November 20, 1848
- From William L. Marcy, November 20, 1848
- From Vernon K. Stevenson, November 22, 1848
- From Charles Douglas, November 24, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, November 26, 1848
- From William H. Polk, November 29, 1848
- From Lewis Cass, December 5, 1848
- To John Y. Mason, December 5, 1848
- From Jonathan F. Fenn, December 11, 1848
- To William L. Marcy, December 11, 1848
- From Ophelia Clarissa Polk Hays to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk, December 12, 1848
- From Robert J. Walker, December 12, 1848
- From Rafael Acevedo, December 14, 1848
- To Lewis Cass, December 15, 1848
- From Richard M. Johnson, December 17, 1848

- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., December 18, 1848
- To Robert Campbell, Jr., December 19, 1848
- From James A. Gregg, December 19, 1848
- To William T. Sprole, December 19, 1848
- From Aaron V. Brown, December 20, 1848
- From John M. Patton, December 25, 1848
- From Vernon K. Stevenson, December 26, 1848
- From Asa Biggs, December 27, 1848
- To John M. Patton, December 27, 1848
- From George Bancroft, December 29, 1848
- From Timothy Corbin, December 30, 1848
- From Jonathan B. Cory, December 31, 1848
- From William W. Lea, January 1, 1849
- From Elisha Whittlesey, January 1, 1849
- From William T. Sprole, January 3, 1849
- From Henry Hollingsworth, January 4, 1849
- To Robert Armstrong, January 5, 1849
- To George Bancroft, January 5, 1849
- From Joseph E. Bell, January 5, 1849
- From Gwinn Harris Heap, January 8, 1849
- To Apurva Krishna, January 8, 1849
- To Horatio A. Loomis, January 8, 1849
- To Aaron V. Brown, January 9, 1849
- To Lewis Cass, January 9, 1849
- To Aaron V. Brown, January 10, 1849
- From Charles Hochgesang, January 10, 1849
- From John Duffy, January 12, 1849
- From James M. Hughes, January 13, 1849
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., January 13, 1849
- From John McKeon, January 14, 1849
- From William D. Moseley, January 16, 1849
- To William H. Haywood, Jr., January 17, 1849
- From Ether Shepley, January 17, 1849
- From Henry S. Wheaton, January 18, 1849
- From Aaron V. Brown, January 19, 1849
- To Gwinn Harris Heap, January 19, 1849
- To George Bancroft, January 22, 1849
- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., January 24, 1849
- From George W. Thompson, January 24, 1849
- From Elisha Whittlesey, January 24, 1849
- From George Bancroft, January 26, 1849
- From James Buchanan, January 26, 1849
- From David R. Mitchell, January 27, 1849
- To George W. Thompson, January 27, 1849

- From John Y. Mason, January 29, 1849
- From Hugh P. Neilson, January 29, 1849
- From George W. Thompson, January 31, 1849
- From John Y. Mason, February 1, 1849
- To Charles Manly, February 2, 1849
- From William L. Marcy, February 2, 1849
- To George W. Thompson, February 2, 1849
- From Andrew J. Donelson, February 4, 1849
- From Charles Manly, February 5, 1849
- To Aaron V. Brown, February 6, 1849
- From Ezekiel P. McNeal, February 6, 1849
- From John A. Mairs, February 8, 1849
- From Andrew J. Donelson, February 12, 1849
- To Jane Knox Polk, February 14, 1849
- From Aaron V. Brown, February 15, 1849
- To Walter T. Colquitt, February 17, 1849
- From Auguste G. V. Davezac, February 20, 1849
- To Ezekiel P. McNeal, February 20, 1849
- From James T. Miller et al., February 20, 1849
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., February 21, 1849
- From Henry W. Conner, February 22, 1849
- From Henry W. Conner, February 22, 1849
- From George Bancroft, February 23, 1849
- From Walter T. and Harriet Matilda Ross Colquitt, February 24, 1849
- To James T. Miller et al., February 24, 1849
- To Henry W. Conner, February 26, 1849
- To Walter T. Colquitt et al., March 1, 1849
- From Reverdy Johnson, March 2, 1849
- From Moses G. Leonard, March 2, 1849
- From Nathaniel R. Snowden, March 2, 1849
- From Simon Cameron, March 3, 1849
- From John Y. Mason, March 3, 1849
- From Thomas Ritchie, March 3, 1849
- From Joseph B. Tate, March 3, 1849
- From Ambrosio J. Gonzalez, March 4, 1849
- From Mrs. Rogers, March 6, 1849
- From Thomas L. Hamner, March 9, 1849
- From John W. Forney, March 12, 1849
- From Palatia Harrison Wilson Stewart, March 12, 1849
- From John Duncan, March 15, 1849
- From Cave Johnson, March 17, 1849
- From John Duncan, March 18, 1849
- From Joseph Knox Walker, March 18, 1849
- From Chauncey Barnes to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk, March 19, 1849

- From John W. Dodge to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk, March 19, 1849
- From John H. C. Campbell, March 20, 1849
- From Cave Johnson, March 20, 1849
- From T. Cailly and Maurice Strakosch, March 21, 1849
- From Auguste de Châtillon, March 21, 1849
- From William O. Butler, March 22, 1849
- From Cave Johnson, March 22, 1849
- From William L. Marcy, March 25, 1849
- From Marcus B. Winchester, March 27, 1849
- From Samuel P. Walker, April 4, 1849
- From Samuel P. Walker, April 4, 1849
- From Nathan Green, Jr., and Edward I. Golladay, April 12, 1849
- From Ezekiel P. McNeal, April 17, 1849
- From George Payn Quackenbos, April 18, 1849
- From Joseph Trotter, April 18, 1849
- From John A. Mairs, April 19, 1849
- From Archibald Carmichael et al., April 25, 1849
- From Henry W. Ellsworth, April 26, 1849
- From Benjamin P. Johnson, April 26, 1849
- From Marshall T. Polk, Jr., May 1, 1849
- To George Payn Quackenbos, May 1, 1849
- From Joseph Knox Walker, May 1, 1849
- From John A. Mairs, May 5, 1849
- From Henry W. Ellsworth, May 7, 1849
- To John W. Forney, May 9, 1849
- To William L. Marcy, May 9, 1849
- To Robert J. Walker, May 9, 1849
- From George B. Augustus, May 10, 1849
- To William H. Polk, May 16, 1849
- From William C. Dibrell, May 17, 1849
- To John Y. Mason, May 17, 1849
- To Isaac Toucey, May 17, 1849
- From Cave Johnson, May 23, 1849
- To Marshall T. Polk, Jr., May 25, 1849
- To William T. Sprole, May 25, 1849
- To Joseph G. Totten, May 25, 1849
- To William C. Dibrell, May 28, 1849
- To Benjamin P. Johnson, May 28, 1849
- To Cave Johnson, May 28, 1849
- To Joseph Knox Walker, May 28, 1849
- To John H. C. Campbell, May 29, 1849
- From Howell Cobb, June 2, 1849
- From John C. Darby, June 2, 1849
- From John A. Mairs, June 4, 1849

- From James Walker, June 5, 1849
- From James Walker, June 7, 1849
- From James Harris, June 8, 1849





From William McLain  
 Colo. Rooms 1 April 1848  
 My Dear Sir

I was very anxious to have an interview with you, this morning, but could not. It is very important that I should see you to day, for a few minutes, on a matter connected with the operations of the Colonization Society.

I am sorry to trouble you in this way, but I will be under lasting obligations for the favor of a few words.

W. MCLAIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received April 1, 1848.

TO ANDREW J. DONELSON

Washington City

April 2nd 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 22nd of February, requesting leave of absence, for a short period in order to enable you to visit the United States. Upon conferring with Mr Buchanan I had determined to accede to your wishes, and would have done so, but for the sudden revolution which has occurred in France. That great event, renders, it highly necessary, if not indispensable, that all our diplomatic representatives in Europe, should remain at their posts, that they should vigilently watch, its effects upon the Governments to which they are respectively accredited, their policy in reference to it, and that they should keep their own Government regularly & minutely informed, of whatever may transpire. For these reasons I have felt constrained to decline accepting a request made by Mr Ingersoll to be recalled from St. Petersburg.<sup>10</sup> If in the course of the next summer the condition of affairs in Europe should be such as to permit it, it will give me pleasure, to grant the leave which you ask. At present I do not think that the U. States should be without a Diplomatic Representative of the first rank, at Berlin.

The news of the sudden overthrow of the French Monarchy, and the establishment of a Provisional Government, based on Republican principles, in its stead, has been received with general joy, throughout our country. The National Intelligencer and a few Federal leadeers, true to their instinctive hatred of free principles constitute the exception to the general rule. On tomorrow I will send a Message to Congress, communicating a despatch recived from Mr Rush,<sup>11</sup> in which I will express my full and unqualified approbation of his

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10 Ralph I. Ingersoll requested his recall in Ingersoll to Polk, February 11, 1848. He also did so in a February 11 dispatch, no. 8, to James Buchanan. LS, duplicate, in Colin M. Ingersoll's hand. DNA–RG 59. Buchanan relayed Polk's denial of the request in a letter of April 1. WJB–8, pp. 38–39.

11 Polk refers to Richard Rush's dispatch no. 17 to Buchanan, dated March 4, 1848, in which Rush describes the February 24 revolution in Paris and Rush's interactions with the provisional republican government. Rush enclosed an address that he had presented to that government on February 28, a letter of February 27 from Minister of Foreign Relations Alphonse-Marie-Louis de Prat de Lamartine to Rush, and Rush's response of February 28. See all these documents in Senate Executive Document No. 32, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 2–6.

prompt recognition of the new Government. Your despatch, written after you had received the news of the revolution<sup>12</sup> has been received.

I have postponed writing this hasty note, until I have but a few minutes left, in order to be in time for the mail by the next steamer. With the kinds regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Donelson : . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to Berlin and marked “(Private & unofficial).” See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Published in St. George L. Sioussat, ed., “Letters of James K. Polk to Andrew J. Donelson, 1843–1848,” *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, 3 (March 1917), pp. 72–73.

TO JACOB L. MARTIN

Washington City

April 2nd 1848

My Dear Sir:

In pursuance of the recommendation contained in my last annual messag[e]<sup>13</sup> Congress has made the necessary appropriation fo[r] the outfit and salary of a charge d' affaires of the United States to the Papal States. Imm[e]diately after the act was passed, it gave me pleasure to nominate you to the Senate for t[his] important mission, and the nomination wa[s] promptly confirmed by that body. You will receive your commission and instructions by th[e] Steamer which will convey to you this letter. [In] view of the great events, which have just transpi[red] in France, and of the advance of liberal princip[les] in other countries of Europe, it is desirable that you should proceed to Rome and enter upon the duties of your mission with the least practicable delay. Being the first diplomatic rep[re]sentative of your country, accredited to the Pope's Government, your duties, will be delicate and highly important. The United States recognizes the Government to which you are sent, as that of one of the States of Europe, with which it is proper to initiate Diplomatic relations, but without any reference to the fact that the Sovereign is also the Head of a church. Queen Victoria is also the Head of church. More detailed instructions than those which the Secretary of state has had time to prepare, during the brief interval which has elapsed, since, your nomination was confirmed by the Senate, will be forwarded to you by the next steamer for Europe. After your arrival at your post, and after you have been recognized as the Representative of your Government, I deem it important, that you should take an early opportunity, to intimate in a proper manner and in the proper quarter, that the Diplomatic Representative whom the Pope may commission to the United States, should be a layman and not a Priest. You will readily understand the reasons for this suggestion.

I will send a message to Congress on tomorrow, transmitting Mr Rush 's despatch,<sup>14</sup> and expressing my full and unqualified approbation of his prompt recognition of the Provisional Government of France. The news of the Revolution, by which the Monarchy

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12 Polk probably refers to a dispatch from Donelson to Buchanan, possibly no. 62, dated March 10, 1848. ALS. DNA–RG 59.

13 Text here and below cut off side of page.

14 See letter and notes in Polk to Andrew J. Donelson, April 2, 1848.

was overthrown, and a Government based on liberal republican principles, established in its stead, has been received with general rejoicing throughout our country. The National Intelligencer and a few Federal leaders, may entertain sentiments and opinions, which constitute exceptions, to the general rule].

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Paris and marked "(Private & unofficial)."

TO RICHARD RUSH

Washington City

April 2nd 1848

My Dear Sir:

Your despatch giving official information of the sudden overthrow of the French Monarchy, and the establishment of a Provisional Government, based on Republican principles in its stead, was received at the Department of State two days ago. You will learn by a despatch which you will receive from the Secretary of State, by the Steamer which will convey to you this letter, that it has given me pleasure to approve your prompt recognition of the new Government. On tomorrow I will send a message to Congress, communicating a copy of your despatch, and expressing my unqualified approval of your conduct. Your position, upon the sudden emergency which occurred, was delicate and highly responsible. You met the occasion as became the Representative of the greatest Republic on earth. It affords me great pleasure, to express to you these sentiments. The news of the revolution in France, and the establishment of free Government, has been received with general joy, throughout our country. The National Intelligencer & a few Federal leaders, true to their instinctive hatred of liberal principles, constitute the exceptions to the general rule.

You will learn that I have appointed Dr. Martin, your Secretary of Legation, to be charged with affairs to the Papal States. It is desirable that he should proceed to Rome, and enter on the duties of his mission, with as little delay as may be consistent, with his convenience, and the necessary arrangements, which he has to make. His appointment, leaves a vacancy in the office of Secretary of Legation, and I request that you will inform me, whom you may desire to have appointed. It is usual to consult the minister in regard to his Secretary of legation, and to accord to his wishes in the selection.

I have postponed writing this hasty note, until I have but a few minutes left, in order to be in time for the mail by the next Steamer

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NjP-RF. Addressed to Paris and marked "(Private & unofficial)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

FROM GEORGE ABERNETHY

Oregon City

3d April, 1848

Sir,

I am aware that much of your time is occupied, and shall be brief in my remarks, hoping the importance of the case, will excuse this liberty. A copy of the memorial passed by the Legislature, at its last session, together with papers containing the account of the massacre of Dr. Whitman, and others, at Waulatper by the Cayuse Indians, were

forwarded to Congress by Mr. J. Meek. I also forwarded duplicates via California, as Mr. Meek left Walla Walla on the 4th ult. he will no doubt reach you in May. I send with this a file of the Spectator, and an Extra issued to-day, together with a Copy of my last Proclamation<sup>15</sup> by which you will perceive that we are carrying on a War with the Indians of the interior.

Sometime since Commissioners were sent up to treat with the different tribes, and endeavour to detach them from the Cayuse; they effected a great deal; the Walla Walla's, Nez Perce's, and other tribes, accepted presents and declared they would remain friendly with the whites. Still there are a great many that will unite with the murderers, all the restless and turbulent spirits among the different tribes, those that were guilty of robbing the immigrants last fall, many who look with a jealous eye on the inroads of the white man, So that it is to be feared a large party will take the field against us. Our settlers are scattered through the different vallies, many of them isolated and lying in such a position, that they could be swept off in a night, and the Indians be in the mountains out of reach next morning. Our policy is the keep the Indians busy in protecting their families and stock in their own Country, and by this means keep them out of the valley and we hope we shall succeed, but we have no money, no munitions of War, our patriotic Volunteers are destitute of clothing, tents and provisions even while in the field, still they are in good spirits and determined to fight to the last. Our powder we gather up by half pounds, pounds and parcels as the settlers have brought more or less in for their own use. This will soon be gone. I have written to Genl. Mason of California for a supply of powder and lead, which I hope will come by the first opportunity. I have also written to Commodore Shubrick to send us a sloop of war to be in our river, to shew the Indians that we have force that can be brought into this Country if necessary.

Fear and fear only rules and controls Indians-knowing this, they have been informed that we expected a Man of War here this summer, and that as soon as our Great Chief heard, that his people had been murdered, he would send his War Chief here, to punish the murderers—should this pass off, and we receive no visit, from our Men of War, and no troops be sent into this Territory, our situation will not be an enviable one. The Indians will say, all this has been said to frighten us, see, their War Ships have not come, their soldiers have not come, they have none, do not let us be afraid any longer. Probably a large Immigration will be on their way to this Territory this summer. I hope that troops will accompany them, for the Indians are well aware of their route and the time of their coming and if not protected they will very likely go on to meet them and rob, plunder, and murder all parties not strong enough to resist them. They robbed them last year, and they will I fear proceed farther this year. I hope sincerely that whether Congress passes a Bill extending the jurisdiction of the United States over us or not, that at least One Regt. of Dragoons will be sent into Oregon to protect us from the Indians, and protect immigrants

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15 Enclosures, including the Oregon City Oregon Spectator, not found. In his proclamation of April 1, 1848, Abernethy called for three hundred troops to join Col. Henry A. G. Lee's Oregon regiment for six months. He stressed the need, through the threat of force, to maintain the goodwill of peaceful Indians and to keep unfriendly Indians out of the Willamette Valley. See the proclamation in EIWO , pp. 196-97.

on their way hither. Col. Gillian as you will perceive by the extra accompanying this, was accidentally shot on his way from Waūlatper to the Dalles; the Col. was a brave man and his loss is much regretted. He was appointed by your Excellency to the office of "Agent of the Post office Department." Nothing was ever effected in that department. An advertisement was put in the paper offering to let Contracts, but as the Contractor was only to get his pay out of the proceeds of the office, and even that could not be guaranteed to him for four years, no one would enter into a Contract to carry the Mail. Consequently no mail has been started in the Territory under the Authority of the United States.

Feeling confident that you will aid us in our difficulties, I have placed before you briefly our situation, merely stating in conclusion, we have told the Indians in order to prevent their uniting against us, that troops and vessels of War would soon be here.

GEO. ABERNETHEY

ALS. Location unknown. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's diary: received October 10, 1848. Polk enclosed this letter, or a copy of it, with his Fourth Annual Message to Congress, December 5, 1848. It thus was published in House Executive Document No. 1, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1003-4. Also published in EIWO, pp. 236-38.

TO WILLIAM MOORE

Washington City

April 3rd 1848

My Dear Sir:

The Hon. Robt. W. Johnson, the Representative in Congress from Arkansas, has submitted to me a letter addressed by you to him, on the 20th of February last, in which you inform him that Dewitt Clinton Yell, the son of my old friend Col. Yell, had decided to decline accepting the appointment of Cadet at West Point. So great was my regard for the father, and so great is my anxiety for the w[e]lfare<sup>16</sup> of the son, that I feel it to be my d[u]ty, to say to you, that I think the latter will make a great mistake if he declines to a[c]cept, the appointment to West Point. [Unyielding]<sup>17</sup> In this convictio[n] and believing that upon proper explanations being made to him, he might reconsider his decision, I have directed his appointment, and transmit to you herewith his warrant, signed by the Secretary of War,<sup>18</sup> with a request that you will cause it to be forwarded to him. I know as you state in your letter, that Col. Yell was in his lifetime opposed to the Institution at West Point, but that is no sufficient reason why his son should decline to receive the benefits of an education conferred at it. If he declines the Institution will still exist, and some other young man will be appointed in his place. I think he should accept, because being limited in his circumstance, he will be enabled without expense, to acquire as good an education, as can be conferred at any college or University in the Union. When he graduates, if he wishes to continue in the Military service, he will have a respectable profession for life, or if he prefers to resign and engage in other pursuits, he will be permitted to do so. His

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16 Letter here and below missing, light ink transfer.

17 Word uncertain, light ink transfer. Polk inserted this word with a caret, hence the capitalized "In."

18 Enclosure, signed by William L. Marcy, not found.

father fell in battle in the heroic discharge of his duty, and it is approtiate, that the son should be educated at the public expense. I am sure if his father was alive he would advise him to accept, and you know that I would not do so, if I did not believe, that it was for his best interest. The truth is, I take an unusual interest in Clinton 's welfare, and desire to see him a well-educated, respectable and useful citizen, and it is because I do so, that I now address you on the subject. I request that you will forward to him, the enclosed cadet warrant, and make known to him my views. Whether he declines or accepts he should without delay, make known his final decision to the Secetary of War. I shall be pleased to hear from you on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Lincoln County, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”  
FROM JOHN THOMAS

Richmond, Virg.

April 5th, 1848

Sir,

I feel assured, that you will favorably regard the liberty I take, in making this application, (not for office) to you, without the ceremony of a personal introduction. I am deputed by an Institution chartered by the Legislature of this State to visit Europe, in order to obtain aid to enable it to erect suitable buildings and to procure philosophical apparatus. In order to facilitate operations there, it has been deemed advisable, that I should obtain from Your Excellency, letters of introduction to our Ambassadors in London and Paris. In conformity, therefore, with this view, I respectfully solicit from you letters to these gentlemen, inviting them to accord to my mission such facilities as they may think expedient to grant.

That you may have some knowledge of the person you introduce, I present to you the following testimony from a letter of introduction from Mr. M. M. Nosh to the Chief Rabbi of the Israelites in London; also the accompanying phrenograph.<sup>19</sup>

“Revd. & Dr Sir,

Permit me to introduce to your friendly notice the bearer of this letter, Doctor John Thomas, President of the Scientific and Eclectic Medical Institute of Virginia, who visits England on Professional Business.

Dr. Thomas is also Editor of a paper entitled ‘The Herald of the Future Age,’ and is one of the most ardent friends of the Jewish Nation, & a firm believer in the literal predictions of the Prophets in relation to our people.

Independent of his excellent character, he is learned in the law, & possesses a deep & philosophical, as well as searching mind. He expressed a great desire to be known to you & I could not forego the pleasure of making you acquainted with him as an intelligent American and a liberal citizen.

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19 Thomas enclosed Lorenzo N. Fowler’s “Phrenological Description of John Thomas, M.D.,” dated October 5, 1847, from an 1847 or 1848 issue of the *Herald of the Future Age*, pp. 179–80. Fowler identifies Thomas’s chief character traits as “energy, perseverance, determination, independence, strength of intellect, moral courage, and vividness of imagination.” DLC–JKP.

With my best wishes for the continued success of your labors, which we all highly value in the New World, believe me, . . . .

M. M. Nosh"

As I wish to set out in about three weeks, a response to this as early as possible will confer a favor on, Sir, . . . .

JOHN THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover.

FROM VANBRUGH LIVINGSTON

New York

April 6th 1848

Sir,

I beg leave to apprise your Excellency that I have, this moment, been informed by some friends at Washington that you had not, up to the 5th Inst, been made acquainted by me of my acceptance of the mission to Ecuador.

Under these circumstances, I avail myself of the present occasion of saying that I had the honor of addressing you on friday last by mail expressing my acceptance of this mission.<sup>20</sup>

Fearing, moreover, that my letter has miscarried, I hereby renew the expression of my acceptance of the same.

VANBRUGH LIVINGSTON

ALS. DNA–RG59. Probably addressed to Washington City. From William Hunter, Jr.'s

AES: received May 4, 1848.

FROM JESSE E. DOW

Washington

April 3rd 1848

Sir

The Executive Committee of the Democratic Association intend celebrating the glorious events that have so lately occurred in France by a public meeting and a torch light procession on Wednesday afternoon at 5 pm and I have been instructed to invite your Excellency to be present on that occasion and unite with your fellow citizens in resolutions becoming the independent citizens of our revered Republic.

J. E. DOW

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]

Sunday Morning. [April 9, 1848]<sup>21</sup>

Dear Sir/

I did myself the pleasure of calling last evening & this morning to bid you good bye; but not finding any person about I now do this in writing. I shall not be gone more than a week or ten days. If any necessity should exist for my presence sooner you can direct me to be telegraphed at Lancaster where I shall go first or Chambersburg.

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20 Livingston to Polk, March 31, 1848, not found.

21 Place identified through content analysis; date identified from Polk's AE.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Possibly delivered by hand. From Polk’s AE: received April 9, 1848.

TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Washington City

April 11th 1848

Sir:

In pursuance of a Joint Resolution of Congress, entitled “A Joint Resolution presenting the thanks of Congress to Major General Taylor, his officers and men,” approved July 16th 1846, I present to you herewith, through Major Bliss of the United States army, “in the name of the Republic, as a tribute due to your good conduct, valour and generosity to the vanquished,” a medal of gold, “with appropriate devices and inscriptions thereon.”

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to “U.S. Army” and delivered by William W. S. Bliss.

FROM JEFFERSON DAVIS

Washington

13th april 1848

Sir,

In conformity with the understanding of this day I have the honor submit the following statement and opinion in relation to the claim of Brig. Genl. Twiggs for a brevet on account of services in the battle of “Monterey.”

On the 21st of Sept. being the first day of active operations against the Town of Monterey, I was with the party who carried the first fort taken, and on passing through the fort in pursuit of the retreating enemy, I saw Genl. D. E. Twiggs in a position of great personal exposure and heard him cheering our men to active pursuit. My orders and duties soon summoned me to another part of the field and I did not again see Genl. Twiggs during the day. For the estimate placed upon his services by the Comdg. Genl. I refer to the commendation bestowed on Genl. Twiggs in the official report of the investment and reduction of Monterey.

On the morning of the 21st Sept 1846, when the Troops were marched against the east end of Monterey, the purpose was not understood to be an attack, but only to make such demonstration as would enable Genl. Worth’s command to pass round to the position selected for it at the West end of the Town. Upon such assurance Genl. Twiggs who was quite ill turned over his command to the second officer (Col. Garland) and as I was informed at the time retired by advice of Genl. Taylor to his tent, but fearing that an attack might be made or combat otherwise occur he returned to the field and went direct to the point on which his division had marched. He found the volunteers storming the Fort, and I found him close behind the retreating enemy. It has been stated that Genl. Twiggs was not with his division and therefore not entitled to a brevet, to which I answer, he went to the place against which his division had been marched but before he arrived that division had been withdrawn from the attack and was in fractions, in and on houses, behind fences, and in the corn; the Volunteers who had been brought forward to sustain the attack on the first fort, renewed the assault and carried it by storm. Immediately after passing through the fort



thus taken I saw Genl. Twiggs and he was the only Genl. officer I did see with the advance of the assailants.

In conclusion I will say that according to the principle upon which other brevets were granted I consider it just and due to Genl. Twiggs that he should be breveted, for services at Monterey on the first day of the attack, and that Genl. Taylor's report is sufficient warrant for such brevet.

JEFFER. DAVIS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 14, 1848. Published in PJD –3, pp. 293–95.

TO G. & C. MERRIAM

Washington City

April 15th 1848

Gentlemen:

The Hon. Edmund Burke has delivered to me, the copy of Webster's Dictionary, which you have done me the honour to present to me. It is the great work of an American citizen, accomplished after a life of indefatigable study and labour, and merits the public favour.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Springfield, Mass.

TO RICHARD RUSH

Washington City

April 15th 1848

Sir:

I transmit to you herewith a copy of A Joint Resolution passed by the two Houses of Congress, "tendering the congratulations of the American to the French people, upon the success of their recent efforts to consolidate the principles of liberty in a Republican form of Government."<sup>22</sup> You will present this Resolution in a suitable manner to the French Government.

I transmit to you also, a copy of a message on the same subject, which I communicated to Congress on the 3rd Instant.<sup>23</sup>

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22 Enclosure not found. Polk refers to a joint resolution that he had signed on April 13, 1848. "A Resolution tendering the Congratulations of the American to the French People." SL, 20th Congress, 1st Session, Number 5.

23 Enclosure not found. In his message sending Rush's dispatch to James Buchanan of March 4, 1848, and its enclosures (see letter and notes in Polk to Andrew J. Donelson, April 2, 1848) to Congress, Polk approves Rush's recognition of the new French government, expresses the United States' "congratulations" toward the French people, affirms America's "policy . . . of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries" but its support for "free government" everywhere, and asserts, "The world has seldom witnessed a more interesting or sublime spectacle than the peaceful rising of the French people, resolved to secure for themselves enlarged liberty, and to assert . . . the great truth, that in this enlightened age man is capable of governing himself." Senate Executive Document No. 32, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1–2.

These expressions of congratulation and of sympathy, on the part of the Legislative and Executive Departments of the Government, but reflect the general sentiment and feeling of their constituents. The people of the United States can never receive with indifference, the progress of civil liberty in any portion of the world; but they witness its advances with peculiar interest, in the Nation which must ever be associated in their memories with the struggles and the triumphs of their own Revolution. The great principles of popular sovereignty which were proclaimed in 1776, by the immortal author of our Declaration of Independence, seem now to be in the course of rapid developement throughout the world. It was especially fit, that they should receive their noblest illustration abroad, among the countrymen of La Fayette. The sudden achievement of their freedom, which has been recently accomplished by the French people, is no less remarkable for the spirit of order, by which it has been attended, than it is, for the magnitude of the results to which it has led. In the further pursuit of the great objects in view, it is hoped that the people and Government of France, may preserve the same law of social order, and the same regard for the public peace, which now distinguish them; that they may be spared the necessity of wars with neighbouring nations, so uncongenial with Republican Government; that they may successfully restrain all tendencies to anarchy and bloodshed within their own borders, and that they may, by thus adding strength to their new institutions, increase their claims to the admiration of mankind.

The United States extend to France, their warm congratulations and their ardent sympathy, and rejoice to anticipate for their ancient ally, under the benign sway of enlightened freedom, a long career of peace, prosperity and happiness.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NjP–RF. Addressed to Paris. From Rush's AE: "Official." See also three ALs, drafts (two of them dated April 14, 1848); ALS, draft; ALS, copy; and ALS, press copy of that copy. DLC–JKP.

FROM RALPH I. INGERSOLL

Legation of the United States

St. Petersburg

19h of April 1848

My dear sir

Having an opportunity by the British Courier to send a letter safely to our despatch agent in London, who will forward it to the United States, I avail myself of the occasion to communicate with you on a subject that may not be new, but concerning which, any information from a reliable source cannot but be of interest. I allude to the condition of Cuba. I have lately had a conversation with a very intelligent officer of Engineers in the Russian service, who returned early in the winter from America where he had been making a tour, taking Cuba, on his return route. His position & intelligence are such as would secure to him access to the most respectable and influential circles in that island, and his cool judgment and well balanced intellect are the surest guarantees that he does not overstate what he observed, or over-rate its importance. He informs me that the feeling was universal among those with whom he mixed, to separate from the Mother country, and put that fine island to use his own expression "under the protection of the United States." What was meant by "under the protection" of our country, whether after maintaining a separate

independence, to become annexed as a state of the confederacy, or whether that our interests would lead us to protect them from European interference, should they affect their independence, I am unable to say, though I infer the former. He further added that in the present agitated condition of the southern and western portion of this Continent, he should expect soon to hear of a demonstration in Cuba, having reference to an entire separation from the old country, which holds to the colony but by very feeble hands. Although I have not made this subject the topic of a formal despatch, yet I have felt it my duty to communicate the facts confidentially to you, for so deeply have I been impressed by them, that I cannot but apprehend that you may have to meet questions from that quarter, much earlier than any one could have anticipated two months ago.

You are of course more accurately, and earlier, advised of the popular movements in different parts of Europe and of their tendency to free institutions, than you could be by any communications from so distant a point as that, from which I address you. Here, every thing rests, and will undoubtedly continue to rest, on the old foundations. Russia however will not interfere with the struggles for popular governments in other countries, and as each will have as much as it can attend to, in its own internal affairs, without attending to its neighbors, we have pretty good security against international wars, though some of the domestic conflicts may be sanguinary. Poland, is the only point, where the popular movement will press upon Russia; and there, it is very probable, the contest will be fierce. That however would be but a border conflict, and be the result as it may, would not affect perceptibly the Empire of Russia proper.

Turning from what is taking place in Europe to our own more favored land, I cannot but congratulate you on the peace with Mexico. It comes at the right time, as if the hand of Providence had helped us to it. It is a circumstance somewhat remarkable, that the steamer which brought to Europe the news of our peace, ratified by the Senate, should have passed the one on its passage from this side, conveying to you the thrilling news from Paris taking its first date from the "twenty second of february." It is fortunate too that the exemplar republic should repose in honorable peace, when we have so much reason to inculcate by precept and example, pacific views on others, who are shaping their institutions like ours. I will also add, that there are no four years that will tell more prominently in the history of our country than those of the present administration, irrespective of the influence of our example.

The annexation of Texas perfected—the Oregon question settled—the tariff re-constructed, and showing in its practical results, that lowering the taxes largely increases the treasury receipts—the constitutional treasury re-established, and its safety self vindicated by its successful working in peace and war—the war brought on by Mexico, rolled back from our frontier to the enemys capital, and peace obtained on terms prescribed by ourselves—California and New Mexico added to our territory—and now Bankers foreign and domestic, rivalling each other in their offers of easy loans, to any amount the administration may desire. These are laurels that any President might be proud to wear.

In my despatch to the secretary of state of the 11<sup>th</sup> of february, and in a private letter to yourself of the same date, I requested a recall from this Mission to take effect, early in the ensuing summer. Although it is not yet time to expect a reply from the Department,

yet I hope you will pardon me from repeating here the same request and for the reasons there particularly explained. I am very desirous to avoid an autumnal passage home, my health having suffered almost irreparably long after my arrival in Europe from the effects of my passage over at that season. There is no important question pending or likely to be pending, between the two governments rendering it necessary for me to remain here, till relieved by the arrival of a new Minister.

R. I. INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "(Private)" at the top of the letter and "By steamer from Liverpool" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received May 24, 1848; "Gives information concerning Cuba; and of the progress of free Government in Europe." From E possibly in William S. Derrick's hand: received at State Department May 24, 1848. FROM MITCHEL H. MILLER TO JAMES K. AND SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

[Washington City]<sup>24</sup>

April 19th, 1848

The undersigned, Secretary of the Bible Society of this city, takes the liberty of handing to the President and his Lady the accompanying copy of the last Annual Report of the American Bible Society, and a statement of the proceedings at the semi-annual meeting of the Bible Society of this city, held on the 20th of Decr. last.<sup>25</sup>

The liberty is also taken of adding a few extracts from Communications recently received from different Officers of the American Bible Society, illustrative of its present condition and wants, as follow:

"It is unpleasant for us to call upon the benevolent public for money—much less pleasant than to speak of the extensive distribution of the Word of God. But the truth is, we cannot speak long on the latter topic unless due regard is in some way paid to the former. I say long, for we are now and have been for some weeks making extensive distributions, far exceeding in value our income, but must soon curtail, unless funds are more amply furnished. It must be borne in mind that we have now some three hundred hands employed daily in the manufacture of Bibles and Testaments, and print up seven or eight tons of paper per week. Here is a heavy expenditure which must be promptly met. It is too a needful expenditure and cannot be diminished without hazard to the best interests of our country; for while our issues exceed 2000 copies per day, we do not in any measure supply our population, nor meet demands for the Bible as fast as they come upon us. A large number of orders are now unexecuted & must remain so for some days.

"We have then in addition to these home wants, numerous calls from abroad—some of them urgent.

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24 Place identified through content analysis.

25 Enclosures not found. These were Thirty-first Annual Report of the American Bible Society, Presented May 13, 1847, with an Appendix, Containing the Addresses at the Anniversary, and Extracts of Correspondence, Together with a List of Auxiliary Societies, Life Directors, and Members (New York: American Bible Society, 1847) and Semi-Annual Meeting of the Bible Society of Washington City, Held December 20th, 1847. with constitution, names of officers, and list of life members (Washington, D.C. : J. & G. S. Gideon, 1848).

“Those who can become Life Directors and Life Members, and let the funds there furnished go to the foreign field, will render a service which cannot be over estimated.”

On this last point the following resolution was some time since adopted by the Board of Managers of the Bible Society of this city:

Resolved, That we respectfully invite our fellow citizens, who have the means, to constitute themselves and their friends Life Members of the American Bible Society by the payment of \$30 at one time, or Life Directors by the payment of \$150., which may be made in three equal annual payments; or Life Members of the city Society by the payment of \$15 at one time or \$20 at two payments.

The number of books issued from the Depository of the Am. Bible Society during the first eight months of the current year of the Society is 180.922 Bibles & 338.708 Testaments or 519.630 volumes, and yet the demands are not met, and the appeal of the Corresponding Secretary for funds to prepare copies is “Try to aid us all you can.”

Other extracts from letters recently received from the Secretaries of the Parent Society might be added, but they are deemed, in this connection, wholly unnecessary.

The Agent of the Society, or the Secretary, will take the liberty of calling at the Presidential Mansion next Monday; when he will be happy to receive, for the Society, such donations as the President and his family may be pleased to make, and to give such direction respecting the amount received as may be most agreeable to the donors, unless the President should prefer to transmit, in the interim, a donation to the Society.

M. H. MILLER

P.S. The Annual Meeting of the Society occurs next Monday evening in the 1st Presbyterian Church, where the Officers would be happy to welcome the President and any members of his family. M H Miller

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

[Washington City]<sup>26</sup>

April 20th 1848

My dear Sir.

It may become important to you, to have it in your power to show, exactly what you have directed, and what has been done, in reference to the existing state of things here. I have caused the notice of which I send you a copy,<sup>27</sup> to be communicated by the chief Clerk, and the several Heads of Bureau, to the persons officially employed or connected with the Navy Dept. as Clerks, Messengers, Watchmen &c, and I send it to you, that you may preserve it amongst your private papers if you deem it worthy of such a disposition. It is

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26 Place identified through content analysis.

27 Mason enclosed an order signed by him and dated April 20, 1848: “The President has been informed, that a meeting is apprehended, this evening, for purposes of violence, and he directs, that clerks and others, in the public service connected with the Navy Department, abstain from participation in all scenes of riot or violence on the rights or property of others. The law will be vindicated by its own officers, and those who disregard this injunction, will be left to the disposition which the Law will make of their cases.”  
ADS, copy. DLC–JKP.

to be regretted, that the infamous acts of Abolitionists & their abettors, should provoke to scenes of violence which may withdraw public attention from their own iniquity, & actually tend to promote their unholy cause.

J. Y. MASON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: "Transmits a copy of an order issued to the clerks & other employees of the Navy Department; directing them not to engage in the apprehended riot in Washington, produced by, the arrest & imprisonment of three persons, detected in taking off in a vessel 50 or 60. slaves from their owners./It is supposed that an attempt will be made to night to destroy the abolition paper called the New Era, in this City./April 20th 1848."

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

P. O Dep

Apl [21st]<sup>28</sup> 1848

Dear Sir,

Mr. Towls has just suggested the importance of making a Marshall. Col Hunter will perhaps never be able again to attend to the duties & the disturbed spirit now existing in the city, in the opinion of many of the leading citizens requires the service of an active energetic peace officer. The crowd is said to have been very large before the New Era office last night but no disturbance.

I promised Mr. Towls to write you this note making the suggestion.

C JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received April 21, 1848.

FROM ABRAHAM McCLELLAN

White Top [Tenn.]<sup>29</sup>

April 21st 1848

Dear Sir

I write you a few lines to say to you that I expecte to be at Washington by the 19 or 20 of May if well and do my self the pleasure of seeing you in the White hous. I had not expected ever to have had that pleasure untill of late our friends seem to think it might be to the intrest of our principals for me to attend the Baltimore Convention. I sincerely hope that the Treaty may be ratifyed and peace made before that time. It will be at considerable sacrafise that I can attend the Convention, but I have at all times laid aside my own Individel intrest for the saeake of my friends & our principals. I will be oppen to acte acording to the [excenchencis]<sup>30</sup> of the occation when I get theire.

I understand the difficalty about the transportation of the troops from Jonesbor to Knoxville has been transered to Washington for decition. Theire is considerable excitement about it at Jonesborough and hear two. So far as I have heard aney expression of opinion there is at least four fifth of the public condemns Blars corse in interfering with the contracte after he Knewe it existed and the Democracy think eaquelly strong of the assosiation of

28 Johnson erroneously wrote "22nd." Correct date identified from Polk's AE and through content analysis.

29 State identified from postmark of Blountsville, Tenn.

30 Word uncertain; McClellan may have meant to write "exigencies."

Blairs & Browlos but I suppose Blair relied upon his influence with the Departement and his power of makeing the rong appeare the wright side. My dear sir my oppinion is that Blairs Browlos & Co ought not to have aney pay for taking what troops they did to Knoxville for they knew they was doing rong and trying to injer innosent men that had bee at great expence & troble to comply with theere contracte. Gammons most certianly ought to be paid.

Some of us think that a state of may exist at our Convention that make it nessary for us to nominat[e]<sup>31</sup> you agane for a second tirm. I for one was vary sorry four years ago when I heard you say that you would not be our candidate for a second tirm. I was glad to hear from Cave Johnsons letter that your health was vary good at this time.

The last letter I had from sons in Mexico they was both reather unwell George had the Jondeis & S. G. I suppose had the measels.

Excuse my bad wrting for I have been at work and my fingers cramps so that I cant write so it can be read.

Give my best respest to Mrstrs President . . . .

A. McCLELLAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Privet.” From Polk’s AE: received April 28, 1848.

FROM SAMUEL H. HUNTINGTON

Hartford [Conn.]<sup>32</sup>

April 22d 1848

Sir

I have recently learnt by a letter from Washington, that you design to make a selection from New England to fill the vacant office of Attorney General, and that the two most prominent candidates presented for your consideration, are Governor Toucey of this State and Mr Rantoul of Massachusetts.

Without disparaging Mr Rantoul, I think I can with safety say that few gentlemen of ours in New England, rank higher, than does Mr Toucey as a lawyer. Your personal acquaintance with him, renders it unnecessary that I should say anything of him as a man and a gentleman. As a politician hee has ever been firm and consistent, and upon a question which is, or may now become, one of vital importance as touching our Union, Mr Toucey has always been frank and decided, as well as correct, while Mr Rantoul, has at times taken a course, in reference to it, calculated to compromise the best interests of our country. I refer to political abolitionism. When Mr Toucey was last a candidate for congress, he was interogated, upon this subject; and I take the liberty of enclosing to you a paper containing his answer.<sup>33</sup>

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31 Letter either absent or cut off side of page.

32 State identified from postmark and Polk’s AE.

33 In the enclosed newspaper clipping of Isaac Toucey to Amos M. Collins and Waterman Roberts, March 16, 1839, Toucey responds to two questions from the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society. Asked whether he supports “the immediate abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia,” he answers that such an act of Congress “would be unconstitutional and void, because it bears no analogy to the taking of private

He has ever since maintained the same ground and has of late done much to establish a correct public opinion upon the question in Connecticut.

SAML. H. HUNTINGTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 1848.

FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Jackson Ten

April 23d 1848

Dear Sir

I have written to you but seldom because I expect you have business up to the Chin, to attend to for the nation of far greater importance, than I have to write, about. But unless you can get them Newyork folks united, the chances are two to one against us, in the next election for President, & they consist of such d—d compounds that I have but very little hope of it. As Clay is to be the candidate, of the whigs I think we can beat him in Tennessee, the next canvass, but what will that avail us Since some of our best headed Southern states has pledged the democracy to vote for no man who will not come out Broadly vs the Willmot proviso. This was throwing stumbling Blocks in the way of the Northern democracy Which they dare not approach in an election for President. Now my Dear Sir Unless this is a diplomatic movement in the South with a view to fall down to the Missouri Compromise line as an Ultimatum, I think it was impolitick in our friends to start it. If the Willmot P comes up legitimately either in the establishment of a territorial Government or in the admission of a state we must meet it as well as we can, but to start it in the canvass for President, we may loose but cannot gain. Our prospects does not appear to me to be flattering.

In relation to yourself you have fought the good fight, and kept the faith amidst such storms and persecutions as I thought was wholly improbable would be heaped upon a man, who was not a candidate for reelection. But the whigs Satan like had rather "reign in Hell than serve in heaven" and there is no respite from their malice But the completing the Texas question, the Settlement of the Oregon Controversy, the brilliant campaigns in mexico, the establishment of all the democratic measures, has placed you upon such ground as to be wholly at Whig defiance, now and forever.

We will give a good account of the whigs in Ten, and vote for any good democrat, tho I am in favour of Buchanan first, yet cass, Dallas, Woodbury Dix, and others will do.

I have married a woman of suitable age, respectable property, no children of her own, and do not practice law out of Madison County. I have not applied either to the State or general

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property for public use." Asked whether he is "opposed to the admission to the Union of any new State whose constitution tolerates slavery," he answers that Congress must never refuse to admit a state, for doing so would render it either "a foreign State" or "a vassal province, [governed] by despotic power sustained by physical force." Each new state, he asserts, has the right to decide for itself about slavery. Toucey adds that Northerners have no "right to interfere with" slavery in the South and that abolitionist control of Northern state governments would spell the end of the United States: "America would be drenched in the blood of our countrymen slain by each other's hands, and the last hope of African emancipation . . . would be extinguished forever." DLC—JKP.



government for any sort of an appointment heretofore and confidently ask now for one at your hands (towit), That you will send me a commission under the great seal of the United States, to stay at home and sleep with my wife and tell Mrs. Polk to countersign it as your private Secretary, and if you dont send it, I will sleep with her without it.

Present me kindly to Mrs Polk and accept for yourself my esteem &c.

ADAM HUNTSMAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 6, 1848. See also ALS, photocopy. T–AH. Published in Emma Inman Williams, ed., "Letters of Adam Huntsman to James K. Polk," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 6 (December 1947), pp. 368–69.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville

Apl. 23rd 1848

Dear sir

I have just closed a contrat with Mr Hughs leaving Mr Smith out of it. This is best because Mr H is I think much the most faithful workman. I have made your letter & Plans & the drawings exhibited of plan & front by Mr Hughs <sup>34</sup> a part of this contract & have made no alteration except to widen the front Hall 3 feet making 18. & 9 feet wide where it passes the dining room where it was 6 & too narrow. The Hall for the back stairs has been changed into a pantry in front 10 x 10 & a china closet to open into the eastern dining room 10 x 10 both to be shelved & properly arranged & two dressing rooms one for each bedroom over dining rooms each 10 x 10. feet square &c &c. The ballance is all to be as pr plan & letter from you of 12th Feby which I have made a part of contract all to be complete & dry & keys delivered 1st Jany 1849.

I returned Monday night from Carolina & Ga. where I got 1.000.000.\$ subscribed to our Railroad & the last to make the stock complete.

V. K. STEVENSON

[P.S.] Any little conveniences that may suggest themselves to your self or Mrs. Polk if advised of I will have added & you may think of many that would escape me as I shall be much ingaged, this summer. V.K.S <sup>35</sup>

[P.S.] I shall draw on you for the 1.000.\$ in a few days, as I have no money but that pd by Young. VKS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered May 10, 1848.

FROM EDWARD ANTHONY

Newyork

April 26 1848

Dear Sir

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34 Stevenson refers to Polk to Stevenson, February 12, 1848; probably the pencil drawing enclosed in that letter; and possibly the drawing by Hughes & Smith, not found, on which the pencil drawing was based.

35 Stevenson wrote his postscripts sideways on the back of the letter.

Being desirous of getting up superior steel engravings of a few of the distinguished men of our country,<sup>36</sup> I have the honor to request that you will allow Messrs Paige & Beach of the Plumbe Daguerrean Gallery to take for me such a Daguerreotype of yourself as may be suitable for that purpose.

Should the arduous duties which must necessarily occupy you allow of your affording the short time necessary for complying with my request you will oblige many friends who have called upon me for copies of your likeness and confer a distinguished favor upon myself.

E. ANTHONY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Paige & Beach to Polk, April 28, 1848.

FROM JACOB L. MARTIN

Paris

27 April 1848

My dear Sir—

An unavoidable interruption of business, prevents me from saying anything more to day, than thanking you which I do from the bottom of my heart, for the signal honor & kindness which you have confer[r]ed<sup>37</sup> upon me by appointing me to the important post of Chargé d' Affaires at Rome. It was a favor as great as it was unexpected, and will be an incentive to me to prove myself worthy of your confidence & kindness. If I attempted to express all the gratitude I feel, my language would perhaps appear too warm, for this act has plucked me from the slough of despond in which I was fast sinking, with disappointed hopes & broken health. I am sorry for the accident which prevents me from referring to the topics in your kind letter<sup>38</sup> but should I attempt to do so now, all my letters for the Steamer would fail, and I must reserve what I have to say, for the opportunity next week, even the official acknowledgement of my commission &c. I will only add now, that your prompt & cordial approbation of the course of Mr. Rush, was in the highest degree gratifying to us all, & produced the happiest effect in our new sister republic, the prospects of which are now very encouraging, as the elections have just gone off, very quietly & will probably result in the choice of an overwhelming majority, pledged equally to order & to liberty. . . .

J L MARTIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City via “Liverpool Steamer.” Postmarked April 28, no location; Paris, date illegible; and New York City, May 14. From Polk’s AE: received May 16, 1848.

FROM PAIGE & BEACH

Plumbe Gallery Washington

April 28/48

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36 Anthony enclosed a printed advertisement, with his printed signature, for an “Engraving of the United States Senate Chamber,” originally released in 1846 by Anthony, Clark & Co. (since defunct) using mezzotint technology and now rereleased by Anthony using “a combination of line and mezzotint.”

The image, though based on the Senate of 1842, portrays ninety-seven individuals who include many besides the members of that house—among them James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. DLC–JKP.

37 Letter obscured by wax seal.

38 Polk to Martin, April 2, 1848.

Sir

Enclosed please find a letter from Mr. E Anthony of New York requesting the favour of a sitting from you, for your Daguerreotype for the purpose of making a fine engraving.<sup>39</sup>

As our facilities for producing perfect pictures are perhaps as great as there are enjoyed by any other artist in the United States, and as we are enabled by our peculiar advantages to produce better pictures at our gallery than we can possibly take elsewhere, we shall deem it a special favour, if you will honor us with a sitting at as early a date as it may suit your convenience to appoint.

PAIGE & BEACH

L. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Joseph Knox Walker's AE: "Anthony & Co./want the President's Daguerreotype./May 1. 1848."

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Salisbury [N.C.]<sup>40</sup>

April 30th 1848

Dear uncle,

I reached Salisbury this morning about 4 o'clock and found no stage departing for Morganton and I have to stay here until Tuesday morning. I hear mother is worse and I am very anxious to get home. It has taken me twenty eight dollars to come this far and it will take the remainder of the \$75 which I had in my pocket when I started to pay my bill when I leave here. I am unwell myself and I am afraid I will take sick before I reach home. If nothing happens I will be home Wednesday & I will write you from there. Give my love to aunt Sarah. Excuse my writing for I have a bad pen & my head aches miserably.

Your affectionate nephew

MARSHALL T. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From James K. Polk's AE: received May 6, 1848.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

Washington City

May 1st 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your kind letter of the 14th ultimo, informing me that another piece of my land had been sold for the taxes in 1844.<sup>41</sup> You state that Mr Rayburn who claims it under the tax sale demands \$50. for a relinquishment of his title. It is better to pay the \$50. than to engage in litigation or to have further trouble about it. I request that you will do me the favour to pay it, & draw on me for the same. When you do so you will of course take a relinquishment of title from Mr Rayburn. I am under the belief that the taxes on this as well as the other lands which were returned last year were paid, and it is probable that the receipts may be among my private papers, in Tennessee, but of this I am not certain. When you make the payment to Mr Rayburn, perhaps he will agree to refund, provided,

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39 Edward Anthony to Polk, April 26, 1848.

40 State identified from postmark.

41 Letter not found.

the receipts are hereafter produced. But whether he agrees [to]<sup>42</sup> this or not, it is best to pay, him the \$50. which he claims, though I think he does not deal with me, as I would with him under similar circumstances. He must know that I intended to have the tax paid, and that if it was not done by my overseer, it was the result, of accid[ent] or ignorance on his part. It is annoying to me to be thus troubled, and to be compelled to put you to trouble on so small a matter. To prevent like errors hereafter, I must ask the favour of you to examine the receipts for taxes, for subsequent years which Mr Marrs, may have [in] his possession; and if Col. Campbell has taken them home with him, that you see the Sheriff or collector, and ascertain upon an examination of his Books, that all my taxes have been paid. I will write to Col. Campbell & request him to enclose to you, all my tax [receipts]<sup>43</sup> which he may have in his possession. Mr Marrs writes to me that he has purchased a mule at \$80. and may have to purchase another.<sup>44</sup> Unless he has collected Harry's hire, he has no money to pay for these. When you draw on me for the \$50. to be paid to Mr Rayburn, &<sup>45</sup> will thank you to draw also for the price of the mules, and hand it over to Mr Marrs. Your draft will be paid at sight. I hope I may have it in my power, some day, to reciprocate the kindness you have done me in attending to my business. I have not yet sold my cotton crop of last year, and will not do so, at present prices.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Washington City

May 1st 1848

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 8th of the last month, and am glad to learn that you were nearly done planting. Mr Leigh writes to me, that some more of my land has been sold for the taxes.<sup>46</sup> I have written to Mr Leigh on the subject to day & have requested him to attend to it. Mr Leigh writes to me that the boy Joe who was taken down by Col. Campbell, left you in February. I hope you have got him back before this time. I have not yet sold my cotton crop of last year, and will not do so at present prices. As soon as it is sold, I will pay the hands for the bags which were set apart for them, and you may so inform them. You inform me that you have purchased a mule at \$80. and that you may need another. If so you must purchase one. I have written to Mr Leigh to draw on me for the price of them, and to hand the money over to you to pay for them, if he can do so. The Bill which he drew in your favour will be paid, at any moment when it is presented.

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42 Word or letters here and below missing, light ink transfer.

43 Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

44 Mairs to Polk, April 8, 1848.

45 Polk probably meant to write "I."

46 Reference is to John T. Leigh to Polk, April 14, 1848, not found but answered in Polk to Leigh, May 1, 1848.

I wish you to be particular in paying my taxes, and in order to be sure that the land is properly described in the Receipts, from the Sheriff, shew them to Mr Leigh, as I do not wish to have any further trouble about the taxes.

You must continue to write to me at the beginning of every month how you are getting on with my business.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET

[Washington City]<sup>47</sup>

May 2. 1848

My Dear Sir,

I suspect "Rivers & Harbors" are soon to be discussed in Congress if not at Baltimore. If so, it is important that your veto message & the documents should be printed & laid upon the tables of members. Though almost five months have elapsed, I have not seen this document, & from what I learn it has not been printed. If this is so, I think it due to you & the country that it be printed & distributed instanter. Goodmen in Congress & in the Press do not understand this matter & will not until they "see the documents."

R H Gillet

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: "Private."

FROM ZACHARY TAYLOR

B. Rouge. [La.]

May 3. 48

Sir,

I have had the honor to receive, at the hands of Major Bliss, U.S. Army, the Medal of gold, which, pursuant to a Joint Resolution of Congress dated July 16. 1846, you were requested to present to me "in the name of the Republic."

Your letter of transmittal<sup>48</sup> was also received at the same moment.

In acknowledging the receipt of this Medal, I desire also, most gratefully to express my profound sense of the distinguished honor conferred upon me by the Republic, together with my great gratification that my efforts to serve the country have been received with national favor and approval.

(Z T)

L, copy, in William W. S. Bliss's hand. DLC–ZT. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM JOHN McPHERSON

Genoa Sardinia Italy

May 4 1848

When I accepted this office you were so kind as to say to me I should have the first good vacancy that might occur in the Consular department, and you authorized me to remind you of any such vacancy. Mr. H Sprague late Consul at Gibraltar, is no more; that Consulate would be acceptable to me; the English language is spoken there, and I am

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47 Probable place identified through external research.

48 Polk to Taylor, April 11, 1848.

much at a loss here in social intercourse with the natives as I do not understand their language; To one who understands the Italian, or who is young enough to learn it, Genoa to such a gentleman, would be more acceptable than the Rock of Gibraltar.

JOHN MCPHERSON

P.S. The king of Sardinia, with a force of 75000. Italians, has besieged the Fortress of Pischiera, Verona, & Mantua, in Lombardy. A detachment of 25.000, Austrians, sallied out from Verona & they were driven back with a loss of 500. killed & 1200. Prisoners.

The Forts must surrender for want of provisions, or come to a general battle in a few days; the Italian states, are United, including Naples, Sardinia, Rome, Venice, Tuscany & Lombardy.

Russia, has withdrawn her Minister from Turin. The Russian Consul is still in this City, and the Commercial Relations between the two countries, has not yet been interrupted.

Our Commerce is safe at present, though our Naval force should be increased. There is a large English and French Fleet in this Sea, besides the Sardinian, and our own Fleet.

Commodore Reid, U.S. Frigate, last acc't. at Naples. The Taney Cap Hunter, at Civitavecchia, near Rome. Princeton at Toulon. The Elections in France have gone off peaceably, and Contrary to the prediction of the English, and Royalists in France.

No Regular Troops in this city, all gone to join the King of Sardinia: the 10.000. that were here, their place has been filled by 8000. National Guards, who perform the duty of soldiers.

The Elections to the lower House, under the New Constitution of Sardinia, took place here last week for 7 Members, which Genoa is entitled to all peaceable and orderly.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. On letterhead of eagle bearing shield, olive branch, and arrows, with text "E PLURIBUS UNUM/CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES AT GENOA/Lito. Armanino." From Polk's AE: received June 1, 1848.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>49</sup>

May 4th 1848

Dear sire

Received your Letter April 4th. Sir your people are all well & sir all your Groceries has come safe to hand that your Bill called for.

Sir we are getting on with the crop tolerable. We have had a dry spell of weather made the cotton late coming up. We have a good stand of cotton & corn.

I am in hopes we will have a good crop year. I want to make a good crop of cotton.

The hands all work fine but the boy Joe he behaves Bad. I have just got him home. It appears he won't stay at home. I have taken him out of jail 3 times. I will keep him ironed until I hear from you. It will not prevent him from work.

The stock all looks well. We have a fine chance of stock hogs.

Mr J. T. Leigh told me that Roben claims 2 more forty's of your land on the half section you bought of your Brother. I have not got the tax receipt of 1844 Col Campbell has them. They will show I think it not so.

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49 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

I have nothing more only Remane . . . .

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 1848; answered June 5, 1848.

FROM ROBERT B. REYNOLDS

Puebla Mexico

May 5. 1848

Sir

I beg leave to invite your attention to the subject of clothing for Volunteers. The recent order of the Adj. Genl. Jones on the subject, has produced a deep murmur throughout the Volunteer corps. I see nothing in the law of Congress to authorise the construction given to that law (the one authorising clothing in kind to be issued to the Volunteers) by the secretary of war. The Volunteers came into the service, expecting \$3.50 per month for commutation of clothing and great dissatisfaction will prevail, if it is not allowed them, of course deducting from that sum, all issues in kind. Gen. Towson is of opinion that they are entitled to \$3.50 per month, deducting issues of clothing in kind. I shall not argue this question to you, but merely call your attention to it, that if you agree with me, that \$3.50 per month should be paid the soldier for clothing, that you can give the necessary order, in time to meet the discharged soldier, at New Orleans, where, the war being ended, I understand they will be discharged. Most of the vol'trs are of the right faith & I would greatly dislike to see them go home soured with the Democratic Administration for the small sum of one dollar per month, by an order which I most sincerely believe not to be warranted by law.

R B REYNOLDS

P.S. I hope your Excellency will remember Col W. A. Gorman of the 4th Inda. Regt. & give him some situation worthy of a brave & gallant soldier. Col Brough 4 Ohio vol'trs is equally worthy.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 20, 1848.

FROM WILLIAM T. SPROLE

Military Academy West Point

May 6. 1848

Dear Sir,

Providence has deprived us during the last few hours, of one of the Academic Staff. The Professor of French is dead. He has been cut down with his harness on, and at the post of duty. Mr Berard was suddenly prostrated in his section room yesterday about noon, and continued speechless till this morning when his spirit left us, we trust for a better world. He has been a faithful servant of the Military Academy for more than thirty years, and has left behind him the best impressions of his worth as a man, a father, husband friend, and of his fidelity, in the discharge of his duty. He has left a large family, who are now destitute, and who are illy prepared to sustain themselves by their own exertions.

Professor Berard held the office of Post-Master at the Point, the proceeds of which with his pay for teaching enabled him to maintain his family. Now what we earnestly desire is, that the office may be given to his wife Mrs. Berard, who is amply qualified for its

duties, and who could employ his oldest daughter as clerk. This would enable her to keep her children together, and meet the hearty approbation of all, I am satisfied, connected with the Institution. If necessary we could forward a petition signed by the Military and Academic Staff. Of one thing your Excellency may be assured that the duties will be faithfully performed and an important service rendered a deserving widow and her family. I do hope, Sir, that this request will meet with your kind consideration. It will be a popular and gratefully recd. act by all in our own community.

W. T. SPROLE

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE, the candidate's title erroneous: "Recommends Mr Berard as Dept. P.M. at West Point N.Y. /Recd. May 8th 1848."

FROM SARAH SMITH STAFFORD

Washington City

May 6th 1848

Sir

I have just received from New Jersey, three letters containing the sad intelligence of the Total defeat of the Democratic party in old Nottingham (the name it has been termed) "the salt of Mercer," in the words of one person, who has written to me, "we are routed, Horse, foot, & dragoons." Every one, in the Borough of South Trenton have been defeated by a large majority, and one of the most bitter Whigs has been elected in my Brothers place. A son, of the late defaulting Treasurer of New Jersey (Isaac Southard Brother of Saml. L. Southard, formerly a Senator) James W. Southard, has been elected one of Whig-Burgesses of that Borough.

The night before the Election, my Brother wrote to me. "I shall be re-elected to the Responsible Office, which I now hold there is no doubt, as I have seen Mr. John Phares, and he says, there will be no opposition Ticket, he is a Whig and you know a great Politician, and our party have nominated me, for Chief Burgess, unanimously." Here I think, can be seen the course of their defeat, they were lulled into security, and in that way was captured by their Enemies, but Sir, I think it is "all for the best." I have written several letters to our friends, earnestly entreating them, to array themselves and prepare for the Presidential campaign with renewed vigour and energy, & not to mind this paltry defeat, but prepare for the great contest. They say, "we are humbled to the very dust" and bitterly do they lament their Apathy. Never were men more discouraged, and are really despairing at the result, as the other party are so much elevated by this "first Gun from New Jersey, the very strong hold of Democracy has surrendered to them." It is hailed as the grand Signal of Defeat to the Democratic party, but what if they gain the whole state, it will be no loss to us, for it has been theirs for years.

I know, stump Orators, will sound the alarm, that the Democracy of N. Jersey in one of their strongest holds, have been vanquished in Consequence of the present administration, the war &c.

I know it will be used for effect, by them, but although humbled, they should not be so disheartened, their cause is good, for when the present Chief Burgess came into power, the Borough was in Debt, which has been paid off, by his means and influence. Old



Nottingham has been defeated, by a great loss, totally so, but it is "All for the best,[""]<sup>50</sup> they have now been taught a wise lesson, I trust for the future.

SARAH SMITH STAFFORD

P.S. You may think it singular, that a female should feel, so interested in regard to the political situation of our Country, but my Parents, brought us up Politicians, they belonged to the old Jeffersonian party, and were Whigs in our Revolutionary Contest.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 8, 1848.

TO LOUISA CATHERINE JOHNSON ADAMS

Washington

8th May 1848

The President of the United States presents his respects to Mrs. Adams, and thanks her for the copy of a Discourse delivered by the Revd. Mr Lunt of Quincy, on the Melancholy occasion of the interment of the mortal remains of her husband, the late John Quincy

Adams,<sup>51</sup> which Mrs. A. has done him the honour to present to him.

[JAMES K. POLK]

AN, press copy. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Berlin

May 8'. 1848

My dear Sir,

Your favor of the 2d April reached me in due time, and I was not disappointed that you did not grant me leave of absence. Indeed if you had granted it I should not have availed myself of it, for ever since that period every moment has been one of the deepest responsibility to the Minister here. This will appear from my despatches, in which I have endeavored to keep the Department advised of the progress of the various movements that are threatening the general peace of Europe.

To day the votes are being counted which will decide who are to be the Delegates to Frankfort and to the constituent assembly here. I have been in daily intercourse with some of the leading candidates. One of them in anticipation of his Election has just addressed me a note asking me for a sketch of our Constitution and my opinion of its applicability to the German States. I will give it in writing but in such a manner as to avoid making myself a partizan of a political question foreign to us, yet at the same time encouraging the effort to found the proposed Government on our Republican basis. After being furnished with Mr. Buchanans despatch to Mr. Rush I can scarcely go wrong.

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50 Closing quotation mark missing.

51 On March 11, 1848, William P. Lunt spoke in the First Congregational Church, Quincy, Mass., before John Quincy Adams's burial in the Adams family vault at the town cemetery. Lunt's oration, with other details of the proceedings, was published in 1848 as *A Discourse Delivered in Quincy, March 11, 1848, at the Interment of John Quincy Adams, Sixth President of the United States* by Charles C. Little & James Brown and by Dutton & Wentworth, both of Boston. Neither the copy that Louisa Adams sent Polk nor any accompanying letter has been found.

There is every probability that the proceedings at Frankfort will result in the adoption of a constitution which will transfer to the new Government all the Diplomatic functions of the several states. To be prepared for this event I wish to be furnished with powers to this new Government. As matters are now working the United states will be the nation upon which Germany will chiefly rely in making its first national demonstration. Its whole policy will be changed in commercial matters. To build up a Navy, to acquire a custom house jurisdiction like ours, and to counteract the restrictive and selfish legislation of other countries, will be its leading aim at first. Whilst getting rid of dependence on England, and creating a commercial marine, she will encourage our shipping rather than that of any European competitor.

It seems that this King does not yet shrink from the support of the New Government. Possibly he looks to his election as the Emperor. But my idea is that neither he nor his friends see the real drift of that work. Whatever may be its features in regard to the Dynastic character of the Executive, whilst it presumes to the people Universal suffrage, it will gradually undermine and destroy the Monarchic principle. It will centralise Germany in the first place, until it gets rid of the old remnants of feudalism, when all will be subjected to the checks and ballances of our system. Louis Phillip fell because he owed his crown to the election of the people. So will it be with the next Emperor here if one is taken. Germany tends as inevitably to a republic, as Universal suffrage does to extirpate whatever opposes political equality.

Before this reaches you the Democratic convention will have acted. Cut off from all correspondence with my friends, who seem to have forgotten me, I have no means of judging of the public temper in the U States. I have however a sort of instinct in such matters which has seldom deceived me. This tells me that you must be much stronger than any other member of the Democratic party, yet I know not how to wish that you may be burdened with the cares of the Presidency another 4 years. How often have I wondered when rising from Genl Jacksons table full of applications for office, and of notes for letters or messages, that great men will struggle, so hard for the privilege of being President. Yet it seemed a part of his life to wear the harness of the public servant. You have more health than he had and can therefore carry the burdens with more ease: but doubtless if left to yourself you will seek to avoid another term of the office.

You have had a most eventful administration—the admission of Texas, the settlement of the Oregon, the present Tariff, and the conquest of Mexico, will fill many pages in our history. Whatever may be the issue of the next Presidency these pages will forever justify the choice of your friends in running you in 1844. Whether the next four years are to give you or to some one else, the helm of state, the ship must advance in the direction you have given it, and it will be fortunate if it escapes the dangers through which you have steered it so successfully.

With our kind regards to Mrs. Polk & to Mr. & Mrs. Walker believe me . . . .

A J DONELSON

[P.S.] My son Jackson will graduate in June. May I ask you to speak to Mr Marcy for a furlough sufficient to enable him to visit me. He has been a hard student and deserves some relaxation to strengthen his constitution. I am too poor to do any thing for him,

besides giving him his education and stimulating his good intentions & habits. Can he not be made a bearer of despatches? AJD

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 30, 1848.

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Morganton [N.C.]<sup>52</sup>

May 8th 1848

Dear Uncle,

I could not write to you by the last mail, because I had no pen but I have one now and I will let hear from me. Mother is a great deal better but she is by no means out of danger, and no person knows how long she will live. By this mail I send you my acceptance of the appointment you give me signed and fixed to the best of my ability.<sup>53</sup> I think I will be in Washington about the 25th. Morganton has improved vastly, it is quite a large town. The crops are very good about here except the wheat which was greatly injured by the frost. All the fruit is killed. Give my love to aunt Sally. Mama & father send their love to you.

Yours truly

MARSHALL T. POLK

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover. From James K. Polk's AE: received May 15, 1848.

FROM JAMES PORTER BRAWLEY

New York City

May, 9, 1848

dear Sir,

Permit me, to intrude upon your patients and time, by asking you to read a letter from a humble friend, given what he believes to be a true state of the factions of the democratic party, as it now stands in the state of New York. I, have been in the city ever since the 15th of April, during which time, I have had opportunities of mixen and conversing with the leading men of both factions of the party, in this state, with a view to learn, if possiable, what would unite the party in the great, state of New York, and thus secure certain victory in 1848 to the democratic party, as if we loose New York our success next fall to say the least of it will be doubtfull. There is a very hostile and determind feeling existing between the factions of the party here. Each faction clames to be the regular po[r]tion<sup>54</sup> of the party, or the party itself. The leading men of what is called, the Barnburners, say, that the old Hunkers, cannot muster over 2000. votes in the great city of New York, and cannot carry over from, two to four counties in the whole state, and that the old Hunker faction in the city all went for the whig, candidate for mayor in the late election, &c. while on the other hand, the old Hunker po[r]tion of the party say they have a large majority of the party in the state, and that there delegates must, be admitted into the Baltimore Convention & the others excluded, while the Barnburners say if they are, excluded the democracy of New

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52 State identified from postmark.

53 Marshall's formal acceptance of his appointment to the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. , has not been found.

54 Letter or digit here and below inserted to complete probable meanings.

York State will form a separate, ticket and run their own man, &c. Now this is about the position the two factions stand here, and it is hard for any person to tell what is best to do under the circumstances to get them to gether again, or which is the, strongest po[r]tion of the party. But one thing is as certain as the noon day, if General, Cass, is nominated by the Baltimore Convention, he will lose this state by 35,000[0]–40,000 and what effect this would have upon the final, result of the election next fall, would not be hard to predict. The Barnburners, say that they will never unite upon him upon no consideration. These are willing to unite on your honor, Mr Buchanan or Judge Woodbury (but not on Gen. Cass, for reasons, which I will give you if, I, live to see you next Week). You I, presume are aware that Mr Buchanan is my first choice above all others, under the present condition of affairs. But, sir at the same time I say to you, that you have it in your power, to carry the state of New York, at the next election stronger than any other living man, unless you would throw your energies & influence in favor of Mr Buchanan or Mr Woodbury. You would have but one thing to do & that would, be but right and just, among friends, and that would be simply to recognize, the, Barnburners, as friends and divide the patronage which their state is intitled to be tween the two factions (more of this in detail if I live to see you,) and if this is done, my life for it you can carry this state in the convention & at the polls next fall by 20,000 or 25,000 of a majority & stronger I believe than any other man in the nation, unless, you would use your influence in favor of Mr. Buchanan, then I think he is the next strongest man to your self, and unless some such course is taken, you will see, in all probability, New York State, lost to the party, and that two for years to come, and perhaps, the party defeated in the nation which would be a national calamity at this time as it would be a direct slate at your administration and would be look upon, by the old world as a condemnation of all the great measures, which you have carried out, during your administration. Under all the circumstances you or one of your cabinet should be nominated and let the American people say whether, or not they approve of the great, and glorious measures, which you have carried out & accomplished, during the period of your administration. I, do think that it is important, not only to the great democratic party of the nation but to our whole country & to the world that we should be victorious at the next election and thus sanction the great, achievements which we as a nation have won during the past 4 years. What a calamity it would be, yes the next generation would lament, if we should, by a factious division among ourselves (which can be healed, as well as not) loose our next President, and thus say, that the people of the United States, have said by & through the Ballot box that they disapproved, of the Mexican War, the Oregon Treaty, the anexation of Texas, your noble, patriotic & humane message in favor of protecting the citizens of Yucatan from, destruction, and all other of the important, achievements, of your, administration. The Barnburners, as well as the other po[r]tion of the party approve of your administration, the only thing the Barnburners, complain of, off you, is this, that you, have not gave them as much of your favors, as you bestowed upon the old, Hunker faction, but even this they say, they do not blame you for, it is Gov. Marcy, they blame the most. They complain in the city, about, the appointments, of Post Master and, collector &c. more of this if desired when I see you it is enough to say, that you have it in your power to be the next Presidential candidate, unite & carry New York, or make Mr Buchanan, if you desire. If you will accept of a nomination, in case it is necessary to unite the party, let

some, of your friends know it, confidentially,<sup>55</sup> you are my, first and only choice if Mr B. can not, be nominated and, I think you should permit your friends, in case your name will mean victory use it. I am a personal & a political friend of Gen Casses, and three months ago, he would have been my 2d choice, but candidately,<sup>56</sup> I do think he is not, our strong man just now, & we should run no risks. The old, Hunker delogates meets here in convention on the 17 of this month & the Barnburners on the 18th, to make arrangments before they go to Baltimore. For give me for making so free, as I have, no other motive but, for the success of our party in view.

I believe that, steps, should be taken to heal, the party in New York & now is the time to do, it as if there is a fight, at Baltimore we cannot, save this state after that. I am aware that the great dificulty is how to get both sets of delogates reconsiled at Baltimore, this question I have raised to two or three of the delogates in the city and to several of the leading men of the party and I find, that to exclude both sets will give better satisfaction than to admit one at the exclusion of the other. The Barnburners say if these are admitted these can carry the state & let the old Hunkers, Go with the whigs, or where they please, if, this be true, you at once see that it would be bad policy to admit the old Hunker delegates, howevr as to the truth of this assertion I cannot vouch for. I believe to take the city of New York that 2/3 or 3/4 of the party goes with, the Barnburners, but, I think the safe way is to either exclude both sets, or take both sets into the convention and give them one vote & when the two sets cannot, agree how to vote, then they have no vote, by this course a compromise could be expected upon you (if you will accept of a nomination,) and if not then I believe they would unite upon Mr Buchanan or Woodbury. This would be the course the Barnburners would take and I believe, it would meet with the views of the Hunkers. This course will I believe save the party in state. The Barnburners cares nothing about the "Wilmot proviso" this humbug has completely exploded. This scrawl, is written to you in great haste and in perfect confidence, any thing that may appear improper be kind enough to excuse as it is written by a true friend. I will be compelled, to remain, here in the city until the middle of next week during which time, I would be much pleased to received, an acknowledgement of this line from you and any information that I can impart to you more on the eve of the nomination, I would be pleasd, to give you in strict confidence.

J. PORTER BRAWLEY

[P.S.] Please throw this in the fire when you read it.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Confidential & Private." From James K. Stephens's AE: "Private."

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department

May 9. 1848

Sir.

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55 New sentence may begin before or after "confidentially."

56 Brawley may have meant to write "candidly" or, inventing an adverb, "candidately."

In obedience to your directions<sup>57</sup> I have the honor to transmit copies of communications from Commodore Perry, Commander Bigelow and Lieut Commanding Mason; with the papers which accompanied them, on the subject of the present condition of Yucatán.<sup>58</sup> Commodore Perry's despatch No. 164, of April 15, 1848 was received at the Department on the 5th of May; the others were received prior to the date of your recent message to Congress relative to that country.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, in Robert W. Young's hand. DNA-RG 45. Published in Senate Executive Document No. 43, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1.

FROM JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN

Baltimore

May 10. 1848

Dear Sir

In the paper which I took the liberty of submitting to you this morning, a blank was left, to be filled with an extract from Mr. Hannegan's speech in the Yucatan debate. I herewith enclose it, & beg you to have the goodness to affix it by a wafer in its place, at the top of the 2d page.<sup>59</sup>

Pardon me if I profit by the opportunity to add two remarks further.

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57 Letter, if any, not found.

58 Mason enclosed copies of or extracts from dispatches he had received from Matthew C. Perry, Abraham Bigelow, and Murray Mason, along with received letters and a newspaper extract that they had enclosed to him. The documents, which describe the Caste War of Yucatán and its origins, are dated between January 30 and April 15, 1848. They note that Spanish naval ships supplied Yucatán's government with arms and later, joined by a British ship, transported displaced Hispanics to safety—and that the breakaway Mexican state's government began asking Perry for arms and other supplies on February 1, echoing a request sent to Washington City on December 31, 1847. On February 15, Perry proposed bringing U.S. naval ships to the area to protect the Hispanics by intimidating the Maya. He proceeded to Campeche, Yucatán, with six ships in early March, then departed on March 13, leaving Lieutenant Mason in command of a reduced force. On April 2, Lieutenant Mason reported that a U.S. naval ship had begun taking fleeing whites aboard and that recently resigned Yucatán governor Santiago Méndez Ibarra wished the United States to annex Yucatán and was planning similar requests to France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Polk transmitted these dispatches and enclosures, along with Secretary Mason's letter, to the Senate on May 9. While debating a bill to authorize the military occupation of Yucatán the previous day, the Senate had resolved to ask for all information he had received about events there. See all of Secretary Mason's enclosures in Senate Executive Document No. 43, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 2–31.

59 O'Sullivan enclosed a newspaper clipping of part of Sen. Edward A. Hannegan's speech of May 5, 1848, during debate over a bill to occupy Yucatán and arm its Hispanic residents against the Maya. Hannegan, who supported the bill, warned of a British plan to control the Gulf of Mexico by annexing Yucatán and Cuba. DLC-JKP. The "paper" about purchasing Cuba that O'Sullivan had handed the president earlier in the day, to which Polk evidently did not attach the clipping, is mentioned in Polk's diary but has not been found.

1. Cuba is made to furnish a monopoly market to various considerable Spanish interests at home; as for instance to the farmers in several provinces, whose flour pays a comparatively small duty in Cuba, while ours is taxed \$10 a barrel. Again, there are the mercantile & shipping interests of the several sea-ports of old Spain, which derive great benefit from their restrictive navigation laws, and the existing commercial system between Spain and Cuba. These home influences constitute the chief difficulty, indeed the only serious one, in the way of the purchase. It is highly important that the measure, if done at all, should be done in such a manner as not to arouse the alarm of these interests, until too late for their interference, and too late for the national pride to be appealed to by them, & invoked not to surrender the last lingering glory of Spain's old dominion & trans-Atlantic empire. Hence the mischief of further Congressional discussion; & hence the impolicy of operating at Madrid through any mode of agency likely to draw attention, either of the public, or of English vigilance, to the object in view. Washington Irving would probably not waken much suspicion. Commander Mackenzie, of the Navy, has also twice visited Spain as a tourist, and could probably with ease make an ostensible pretext for another visit to Madrid. There can be no great difficulty in finding a suitable person.

2. In reference to the purchase-money. Assume 100 millions; paid in a 4 or 5 per cent. stock. Cuba would be at first a Territory, and a sufficient amount of its present taxation could be kept up to pay off, say 5 millions a year, with the interest; and on its admission as a State, the condition would be made of its assuming the debt, or providing for it, by its own self-taxation; excepting, of course, such amount as should be covered by the crown lands & other property coming to the United States; and also the excess of the custom receipts which would be collected there by the U.S. over & above the expenses of collection, for a certain period. Such portion the U.S. would rightfully pay. It is at once obvious that the whole amount now paid by Cuba to support the large army of Spanish soldiers kept up there; and the army of voracious Spanish officials of all sorts, could be transferred to the payment of this debt without being felt. Cuba also does the best part of maintaining the Spanish navy, the vessels of which are usually sent there to be repaired. Pardon me if I am obtrusive on this subject; and ascribe it to the earnestness of my convictions, feelings & wishes, all warmly enlisted in behalf of the object. If my interest in it is also somewhat quickened by a natural anxiety respecting the personal safety of some very dear members of my family resident on that island, I beg you to be assured that this motive is wholly subordinate to the higher ones, founded on the public reasons I have laid before you, by which I have been actuated ever since my visit to Cuba.

J. L. O'SULLIVAN

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Nashville, (Friday)

May 12, 1848

Dr. Sir/

I recd. yours of the 1 inst. some days since advising me to employ Mr. Strickland to look after the execution of the work on your building &c. I have thought it over, and come to the conclusion not to act until Mr. Stevenson returns from Augusta (Geo) where he now is, but will soon be home again, and be here more or less during the Summer. Hughes is

the controlling buildor and as Stevenson has set him up pretty much from the point of it's outset, he is exceedingly inclined to do for Stevenson what will be entirely satisfactory—and then he (H.) believes that he got your job through Stevenson, and that he (S.) stands pledged for it's good performance; wherefore, it may be best not to weaken this State of responsibility, by a change to Mr. Strickland: A step that would needs create some jealousy, & I think, from what I learn, ill will on Hughes's part.

As to Mr. Bass complying with the contract in regard to the Avenue, there is no hope for it, and Gov. Brown handed me the papers to place into Mr. Nicholson's hands. I have not done so yet, as N. is in Columbia, but I will act in the matter so soon as Mr N. returns. I saw Jac. McGavock, and got the papers I left with him. He feels no interest in squabbling about the matter, but could not act, I imagine, without incurring the ill will of Mr Bass. Mr. McG. felt much embarrassment when I read to him the Avenue clause, I had left last fall to be inserted in the decree; & I then asked him if there could possibly be any objection to it on part of Mr. Grundy's devisees? He replied, that he could see none: Still, I am prepared to say that Mr. Bass will keep it if he can. Mr. McGavock seemed to be very willing that the chancellor should settle the matter. I will aid Mr. Nicholson to understand the contract, & premises.

It is melancholy to be driven to such a defence as Mr. Secy. Marcy was compelled to make to the charges of Gnl. Scott—and rather wonderful, that a man in Scott's position should so much expose himself (to a conviction of some three undoubted falsehoods,) after assuming command just before Feby. last, with extreme gratitude to all appearance. The "plate of Soup" letter, I deemed a folly of an extremely vain and jealous man, when excited most likely by wine: But this Mexico letter of Feby 24, is a deliberate assault on his superiors, and was intended to blast them if the writer could, with false charges; nor do I think any well ordered man, of grade, in the U.S. will think otherwise who reads the two letters. Marcy's letter displays high vigor, and very uncommon ability to deal with facts. I view Scott as deeply disgraced; but I cannot well see how you are to deal with him on his return other than to keep him at a distance during the remainder of your Term.

P.S. I have been much afflicted at the death of Ashley, to whom I was considerably attached—& in his confidence. J.C.

J. CATRON

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM JACOB L. MARTIN

London

12 May 1848

My dear Sir,

You will hardly be surprised to get a line dated from me in this capital, after what I stated in my last hurried letter.<sup>60</sup> My health & spirits had suffered so much from my long confinement in Paris, which I had not left for twenty four hours in four years, that I resolved to run over to England for a few days, to recruit my constitution, and gather information which may shed light upon the duties of my new mission. I have been here hardly two days, and

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60 Martin to Polk, April 27, 1848.



already have I dined in a very small company with the celebrated Cobden, with whom I had much instruction & interesting conversation & who has kindly promised to procure for me valuable documents & information with reference to Italian commerce and duties. I find that his heart is set upon the formation of a commercial league in Italy & he informed me, for he has lately been in Italy & studied the question, that Tuscany & Lombardy, have tariffs, sufficiently liberal & reasonable, to serve as models & standards for the whole peninsula. I told him that the establishment of such a federation, was an object of general interest, & that the policy of the United States, was that which I hoped would soon be generally adopted as the easiest as well as the fairest, way, to stipulate for no exclusive advantages, but for terms equally advantageous to all who would adopt them. When I left Paris two days ago, all was quiet, though much anxiety was felt about the turn that events would ultimately take. It is a fearful experiment that the French are making, but such have been the moderation & magnanimity displayed by the people hitherto, that I am hopeful that it will succeed, even if the nation has to press yet through many trials & difficulties. Here there has been a reaction in favor of loyalty. The fast-anchored isle seems to strengthen her moorings, as other nations are swinging off. The fact is that the social system here is so artificial & complicated, & the enormous wealth of the country reposes upon such various & delicate springs, that the community shrinks with alarm from every change that threatens confusion. The news from Rome, is interesting but vague. The people are becoming restive under the reluctance, honorable from its motive, of the Pope to declare war against Austria. I trust that liberal and moderate councils will prevail. I shall remain here, but a short time, & proceed through Paris, to my post. I shall not be unmindful of what you say about a layman from Rome for the U. States,<sup>61</sup> though it is a delicate point, on which hinges, by the way, the opening of diplomatic relations with England. I shall be able to find out some thing about it here. Be good enough to present my most cordial compliments to Mrs. Polk, & believe, . . . .

J L MARTIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked New York City, May 18. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 20, 1848.

FROM JAMES WIRICK

Paw Paw Grove [Ill.]

May 12th 1848

Sir

The present is one of the most important periods in the history of Our government. Great and vital questions agitate the mind of the American people. These questions are soon to be decided. The maner in which they are to be Settled is of the first importance, as they will have a great influence upon the future happiness and prosperrity of Our Nation. Sir the Mexican War which the administration have plunged this Republic into for the concealed purpose of propagating the damnable instution Slavery will soon meet a merrited vengeance from the people of this Union. Do you Suppose for One moment that the people is ignorent of the intentions of the South in relation to Mexican Territory when admitted into this Union

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61 Polk to Martin, April 2, 1848.

and the maner in which the South expect to admit Territory? We are well aware the South intend to Exclude the Willmot Proviso from being Extended Over Territory to be acquired from Mexico. Do you Suppose for one moment that the North will be Silent when you Southren do-faces are Striking at the vitals of Expiring Liberty?

One of you Sothern Do-faces has give notice that he is about to introduce a Bill in the House of Representatives for the avowed purpose of Reducing the Press!!! in the Destrict of Columby to a Sencership. Who would have thought that a Representative of the people of the Stars & Stripes would ever be so abandoned and nigardly nobody but a corrupt aspiring Demagogue that is ignorent of the unpopularity of Such a proposition. The North will play you Sothren gentlemen a lively tune Sir, when she is awakened from her Slumbers and compelled to act by asserting her rites.

Do you Suppose North Can be humbuged in that Stile if you do you are verry much mistaking. Sir the next President who will have the Honor to be placed at the Helm of our goverment will be a Willmot Proviso man who is Smart who will lern you things present and teach you things to come.

Sir you have vetoed the River & Harbor Bill and by that mistep you have aroused the feeling of the north to a lively Since of her duty and the most Sollen<sup>62</sup> feelings of pity and contemp[t]<sup>63</sup> for your Obstinacy.

Sir I. whold that whire the Legislature of this government passes a Bill By Such overwhelming majorrrity no Sencible man would conclude that he new more about the Constitutionality of appropriateing moneys than the Senate & house of Representatives. Sir the North pays 3/4 of the Revinue of this Union and Fancy they have Rites and Something to say about the Public Money as well as the South.

Upon the reseption of this write immediately and if you go the suthren doctrine we will have a livily intercourse.

JAS. WIRICK

N.B. Direct your letter to

James Wirick

Paw Paw

Lee County

Ill

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From James K. Stephens's AE: received May 22, 1848; "Private."

FROM JOHN B. HAYS

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>64</sup>

May 14th 1848

Dear Sir

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62 Wirick may have meant to write "sullen" or "solemn."

63 Letter cut off side of page.

64 State identified from postmark.

Inclosed you will find a letter from my old German friend, the object of which you will perceive and appreciate.<sup>65</sup>

I think it probable (no better one applying) that the appointment would be a good one, as regards the first planting of democratic principles, in that region. You will of course, have better information on the subject, than I can impart to you.

Mr. H. will be at Baltimore as a delegate from Wisconsin, representing a Cass constituency, but not instructed. In many of his letters to me, since your Election, he has expressed an opinion, that a "contingency" would occur, that would render it necessary to throw your name again, before the country. In that event he is prepared to act. He has lately passed through N. York, where he was satisfied that your name, gave the only chance to obtain that vote. He made a special request, for the purpose of ascertaining whether you would permit your name voluntarily to be used. On advisement with Mr. Walker & others I did not answer.

On to day I have written him a letter respectfully acknowledging the receipt of his letters—And expressing a hope and expectation that the labors of the convention would result, in the selection of the strongest democratic person in the nation, without regard to localities or any small circumstance.

Supposing that T. Martin will be at Washington, I have written a letter of introduction for him & J H. Thomas to hand to him. They will find him a very intelligent old man and one from whom, they can obtain much N. Western information.

All well. Respects to all.

J. B. HAYS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 22, 1848.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department

May 15, 1848

Sir.

I have the honor, in answer to the Resolution of the Senate of the 13th instant, to transmit a copy of my communication to Comdr. Perry of the 12th instant on the subject of giving protection to the white population of Yucatan, with the Naval Forces, under his command.<sup>66</sup>

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65 Hays enclosed John P. Helfenstein to Hays, April 26, 1848. Helfenstein therein copies a letter from Washington County (Wisc. Terr.) Eagle editor John A. Brown to Helfenstein, noting the territory's growing support for Lewis Cass since the death of Silas Wright, Jr., and Brown's plan for the Eagle to endorse Cass for the Democratic presidential nomination. Helfenstein announces his selection as a Wisconsin delegate to the Democratic National Convention and his desire to end his candidacy for the U.S. Senate. He asks Hays to recommend him to Polk for "the post of Govr. of Minisota" Territory. ALS. DLC–JKP.

66 Mason enclosed, and Polk forwarded to the Senate, Mason's letters to Matthew C. Perry of March 8 and May 12, 1848. In the former, Mason relays James Buchanan's instructions that Yucatán's ships and goods be exempted from U.S. duties at the occupied port of Laguna de Términos, Yucatán; approves of Perry's plan to bring ships to Yucatán to intimidate the Maya; and authorizes Perry to permit a ship carrying gunpowder to dock at Sisal, Yucatán, if he is convinced the Yucatecan Hispanics will use it only against the Maya and not "for other or hostile purposes towards us." In his May 12 letter, Mason

No advices have been received, at this Department from the Commander or officers of the Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico, of a date later than the 15th of April ulto. All the communications on the subject received from any of them, have been already transmitted to the Senate.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, in Robert W. Young's hand. DNA–RG 45. Published in Senate Executive Document No. 45, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1; Washington Daily National Intelligencer, May 18, 1848; Washington Daily Union, May 20, 1848; and Richmond (Va.) Whig and Advertiser, May 23, 1848.

FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

[Washington City]<sup>67</sup>

May 17. '48

Dear Sir

The gout last Evening prevented my having the honor of writing in you as I was about to do when it came on—to report that there is not a word in Napoleon's historical account of his Egyptian campaign of the fiscal and other arrangements by which he subsisted his army there as no doubt he did without aid from home.

I intended also to take the occasion of the enquiry you made of me on this subject to submit with great deference my opinion on the very important question of the legality of contributions levied in Mexico.<sup>68</sup>

I do'nt know whether your attention has ever been drawn to the case of Brown & the US, reported in the 8th Vol. of Cranch page 110. See particularly pages 125, 6 &c for the opinion of the court as delivered by C. J. Marshall and page 149 for Judge Story's.

A system of contributions by taxation levied in Mexico would be, I think, the most signal merit of the very brilliant hostilities waged there under you as commander in chief.

But it is at least doubtful, when Congress are in Session whether without their act the Executive is empowered to do what is necessary. In the case in Cranch the Supreme Court considers the powers of Congress to make rules concerning captures on land a substantive power.

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approves Perry's actions to protect the Hispanic Yucatecans, orders him to send the USS Albany to Venezuela, announces that the USS Germantown and USS Saratoga will soon join him, transmits Polk's message to Congress of April 29, and orders Perry to inform Mason if the neutral Yucatecans appear to support Mexico's military effort against the United States. Noting the U.S. "policy to repel rather than encourage Indian depredations and incursions even on our enemy," Mason instructs Perry, "waiving all belligerent rights against Yucatán as a part of Mexico, . . . [to] permit munitions of war to enter her ports, if you are satisfied they are to be used for the defence of the whites against the savage enemy." Mason advises "strengthen[ing] your forces at El Carmen" and sending the marines at Alvarado to Laguna de Términos "to repel the Indians if they approach that point; but there is not sufficient force, nor have you the necessary equipment to justify a march into the interior." See both letters in Senate Executive Document No. 45, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 2–4.

67 Probable place identified through external research.

68 No letter from Polk to Ingersoll about Napoléon Bonaparte or duties in Mexico has been found.

Should the war continue I submit to your better judgment whether the President ought not to call on Congress for an act regulating contributions, which, in the present state of the two houses there is no reason to apprehend would put a stop to, or do more than legalize what you have been doing and may desire to do in Mexico.

C J INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

FROM GEORGE W. HOPKINS

Lisbon

May 18th 1848

My dear sir.

Although unwilling to add to your labor, or to trespass upon the little time allotted you for repose, I cannot forego the inclination to say a few words to you, and they shall be few on your own account.

I am so fully impressed with the expediency, if not real necessity of our government making some demonstration on this coast, and of enlarging our Naval force in the Mediterranean, for the purpose, first of necessary protection to the citizens and commerce of the United States, and secondly on account of the moral influence which it would exert, that I have thought it a duty to suggest the subject for your consideration. I have made such a recommendation to Mr. Buchanan, and stated the grounds upon which I did so, but that was an official dispatch, and there are some things which may be more freely communicated and perhaps more fully stated in private correspondence.

The Pennsylvania is not in active service, and a more propitious moment than the present has not occurred perhaps since she was launchd for sending her to Europe, and especially to Lisbon, Cadiz, and into the Mediterranean. Of course, none more than heretofore, every thing is said and done in Europe to disparage Republics, and any thing which we could do, consistently with our policy of neutrality, to vindicate our free system of government is commended no less by duty than by sound policy. The masses of Europe have but a very imperfect knowledge of our country and her institutions, but have been in some way induced to regard it as a land of unparalleled freedom and happiness. Still the biggotted supporters of monarchy, seek to make the impression that it is an impracticable abstraction, which enjoys but a fleeting existance and which could no where else exist at all, and therefore wholly unsuited to Europe. Indeed, these men, either deluded themselves or seeking to delude the people, who are now looking out, and almost ready to hail for freedom, hold up free government as nothing better than anarchy—the fruitful parent of disorder, outrage, robbery—where life, liberty and property have no guarrantly better than the will of a licentious mob. But notwithstanding these tricks, systematically practiced upon the people from childhood to old age, the truth will now and then reach them, and nothing has contributed so much to the prevailing commotion in Europe, as the growing influence of our power, our freedom and prosperity.

I went some weeks ago on board of an American Bark then lying in the Tagus, and took with my by invitation of the Captain, Mrs. H and our consul here. Amongst the sailors were two Portuguese, who united in giving us a most hearty cheer, and united also in singing several good yankee songs as clanish and national as the best yankee could desire. It was the only occasion that I have felt happy since I entered this city. They sung with a good

gusto, and you would have laughed heartily to hear them sing a Jackson song, which run in this way

General Jackson, he give them beans

In the battle of New Orleans.

When the flag was taken down in the evening, such was the influence of the days scene upon the two Portuguese that they embraced the flag and kissed it.

The Mexican war is I presume now over. It has ended as poor Dromgoole once said General Jackson would die, "in a blaze of glory" and its prosecution has elevated us abroad far beyond the conceptions of the most sanguine minds. And now when our example of free government is shaking monarchy to its very foundation, and our Navy has nothing to do, give us an imposing demonstration in Europe, and send us that greatest battle ship perhaps in the world (the Pennsylvania) under the command of an experienced and accomplished officer. This will be fit, as a closing measure of your successful and distinguished administration. Believe me sir, that there is no feeling of flattery in this sentiment. For whilst I shall continue to entertain a very grateful appreciation of your kindness in sending me to Lisbon experience has satisfied me, that both of us were mistaken in supposing that it would be a favor to me. Neither is this remark, made in any spirit of complaint. In my conscience I believe you have justly entitled yourself to the gratitude of our country for a wise, upright and enlightened republican administration which will entitle you to a place in the impartial and faithful history of the Union, with the great author and founder of our faith. But send out immediately the great Pennsylvania, let her enter the Tagus, and look out upon monarchy, and let monarchy and subjects look upon her, and neither the commerce of our country, nor the rights of our citizens, nor the arms of our consulates, will be trifled with again, during her sojourn in these waters. And may that retirement which you now contemplate I doubt not with more real pleasure than you left it, be to you one of peace, happiness and prosperity, the sincere wish of . . .

G. W. HOPKINS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Morganton [N.C.]<sup>69</sup>

May 18th 1848

Dear uncle,

To day I intended starting for Washington, but mother would not permit me so I have to defer it until tuesday. Mother is far from being out of danger, she is in a very critical situation but father is doing his best to releive her, he has consulted the most eminent physicians in New York & other places and he has received their aprobation of his course as the only one liable to releive her. I would not leave her for perhaps I may never see her again & it would be hard not to be by the death bed of my only remaining parent. Give my love to aunt Sarah. Ma & father send their love to you & aunt.

Yours affectionately

MARSHALL T. POLK

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69 State identified from postmark.

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover. From James K. Polk's AE: received May 27, 1848.

FROM RICHARD RUSH

Paris

May 18. 1848

Dear Sir,

I was most happy and gratified in receiving your letter of the 15th of April, accompanying the Joint Resolution of congress, tendering congratulations to France on the Revolution. It got to hand on the 12th instant, and on the day following I went in person to the new minister of Foreign affairs as I had not then received official notice of his appointment, to ask when I might have the honor of presenting the Resolution to the Executive committee appointed by the National Assembly, handing the minister a copy of it. He received the communication with great satisfaction, saying that he felt sure the Executive committee would appoint an early day for the ceremony.

This was last Saturday. Up to that day, every thing remained quiet here. On Sunday commotions began to be apprehended, and on Monday another Revolution broke out; the national Assembly was forcibly invaded by a band of violent people, and its deliberations for a time stopped. I can now only refer in a word to this extraordinary state of things. There has been no bloodshed, but all Paris was uproar and confusion for two or three days. This has doubtless been the reason why I have as yet received no answer to my communication.

It is now Thursday. Order has been restored, and I have waited until the last moments thinking that some answer might still come, of the first receipt of which I might apprise you; but as this is not the case, I am only able by the present Steamer to say thus much, deferring until the next the better Report which, by that time, I shall hope to have it in my power to make to the Secretary of State.

I regard the Joint Resolution of congress, as having arrived very opportunely. Standing on the basis and spirit of your letter to me, I will anxiously endeavor, when presenting the Resolution to this government, to turn the occasion to the best account I can, at this precise moment when the violence of Clubs in Paris, and equal violence and rashness of the Poles, have been furiously aiming to drive France into foreign wars, and upset the very Republic.

RICHARD RUSH

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 4, 1848.

FROM HENRY SIMPSON

Philada

May 18/48

Sir,

You have many, and old friends here, who would like you be a candidate again, so that if elected, you might again be made the instrument of "Ten cent Jimmy" Buchanan, your

prime minister, your constant enemy ever since you have had him in your cabinet, and the [un]tiring<sup>70</sup> enemy of your disappoin[ted] . . .

HENRY SIMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Baltimore, May 21. From Polk's AE: received May 22, 1848.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Liverpool [England]

19th May 48

My dear Sir

I have not heard from you by letter since I left the U States. Before this reaches you the convention will have acted and our Candidate will be before the people. I have never had but one opinion about it, that was, that our party owed it to you and you owe the acceptance to them. You have had a trying time and, one term is not sufficient to place Your acts, fame &c in its true light.

I hope and trust that it will be as I wish. I was always opposed to the one term letter.<sup>71</sup> Your Election would be sure, that of Mr B. Mr cass or Mr Woodbury doubtfull (as far as I can Judge here). Our party must adhere to Principle and Genl. Taylor, who is fishing with "Two Hand Cast" would scarcely be accepted by the convention. Everything ought to be done to defeate Mr Clay. It can be done with ease if You are in the field.

Mr. Rowan passed on a few days since to London on route for Naples. He informed me that you would be nominated if you would accept. Bancroft Talks strangely on this subject and indeed is a strange compound. He does not like me and if he makes any representations about me, all I want or ask of you is a hearing. To you I will at all times, "Confess, and keep nothing back,["]<sup>72</sup> but he shall not Trifle with me.

I sent a letter to you and also one to the Post Master Genl. from Wilmere & Smith who publish here The European Times.<sup>73</sup> They wish to be released from the Foreign Postage for their paper. It is an american paper & if the Honble. Post Master Genl. can release them I would be glad. They do every thing here that they can to "release us,[" and procure the publication of such articles and notices &c. as we wish to see in the English papers.

I have written Mr. Johnson.

I wish to obtain a Midshipmans Warrant for my son William. He is a proper age and very anxious to enter the navy. Will you have the kindness to speak to Judge Mason on the subject. I dislike to make the application for I know how much Trouble you have in this way. Still it will save me very much.

I had a letter from Rachel the other day in which she says what she feels, for the great kindness of yourself and Mrs Polk to her.

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70 Letters here and below obliterated, hole.

71 Polk to Henry Hubbard et al., June 12, 1844.

72 Closing quotation mark here and below missing.

73 Letter to Polk not found.



I never can repay this, but you and your good wife have the Consolation “promised, to those who protect and watch over[”] the orphan, for she is alone.

Give my kind respects to Mrs. P. Mr. & Mrs. Walker Majr. & Mrs. Graham and friends.

R ARMSTRONG

[P.S.] I wanted to get over by the steamer a month ago, but could not make up a “case” that would pass as an excuse.

If things turn out as I hope and expect, I must try and get over and a word from you to Mr B. would give me the “chance.[”] I wish too to bring Rachel over to stay with me while I remain here. Kiss Rachel for me when you see her. R Armstrong

[P.S.] I enclose a Private letter to Mr Walker which he will show you, and also a line to Mr. Johnson on Willmere & Smiths application.<sup>74</sup>

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “Private” at the top of the letter and to the left of the first signature. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received June 4, 1848; “Private.”

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

Washington City

May 20th 1848

Dear Sir:

From speculations which have appeared in some of the public journals, and from frequent inquiries which have been made of me, by many political friends, some of them Delegates to the Democratic National convention which will assemble at Baltimore on the 22nd Instant, I am induced to suppose that it may be the desire of some of my friends to propose my re-nomination, as the candidate of the Democratic party, for the office of President of the United States. Should you ascertain that such is the intention of any of the Delegates, I desire through you to communicate to the convention that I am not a candidate for the nomination, and that any use of my name with that view, which may be contemplated, is without any agency or desire on my part.

The purpose declared in my letter of the 12th of June 1844, in accepting the nomination tendered to me by the Democratic National convention of that year, remains unchanged, and to relieve the convention from any possible embarrassment which the suggestion of my name might produce, in “making a free selection of a successor who may be best calculated to give effect to their will, and guard all the interests of our beloved country,” I deem it proper to re-iterate the sentiments contained in that letter.<sup>75</sup> Since my election I have often expressed the sincere desire which I still feel, to retire to private life at the close of my present term.

I entertain the confident hope and belief, that my Democratic friends of the convention will unite in the harmonious nomination of some citizen to succeed me, who if elected, will firmly maintain and carry out the great political principles, embodied in the Resolutions adopted by the Democratic National convention in 1844, principles, which it has been the earnest endeavour and the constant aim of my administration to preserve and pursue, and

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74 Letters to Cave Johnson and, probably, Joseph Knox Walker not found.

75 Polk refers to and slightly paraphrases Polk to Henry Hubbard et al., June 12, 1844.

upon the observance of which in my opinion mainly depend the prosperity and permanent welfare of our country. If on reviewing the history of my administration, and the remarkable events, foreign and domestic which have attended it, it shall be the judgement of my countrymen that I have adhered to these principles and faithfully performed my duty, the measure of my ambition is full, and I am amply compensated for all the labours, cares and anxieties, which are inseparable from the high station which I have been called to fill. I shall ever cherish sentiments of deep gratitude to my fellow-citizens, for the confidence they reposed in me, in elevating me to the most distinguished and responsible public trust, on earth.

It is scarcely necessary that I should add, that it will be no less my duty than it will be my sincere pleasure, as a citizen, to unite with my Democratic friends in the support of the nominees of the convention for the offices of President & Vice President of the United States.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MoSHi-P. Addressed "To Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey of Tennessee"; delivered by hand at the Executive Mansion on May 21, 1848; Polk read a draft to Ramsey and others there on May 20 (and versions to others on May 13, 17, 19, 21, and 22). See also ALS, press copy; four ALs, drafts; AL, draft, with emendations in John Y. Mason's hand and possibly William L. Marcy's hand; L, draft, in George S. Houston's hand; two Ls, drafts, in Mason's hand; L, draft, possibly in Isaac Toucey's hand; and L, draft, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Published in Washington Daily Union, May 26, 1848; New York Herald, May 26, 1848; other newspapers; The Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention, Held at Baltimore, May 22, 1848 (Washington, D.C. : Blair & Rives, [1848]), pp. 12-13; John S. Jenkins, *The Life of James Knox Polk, Late President of the United States* (Auburn, N.Y.: James M. Alden, 1850), pp. 307-8; TR, pp. 573-74; and S. G. Heiskell, *Andrew Jackson and Early Tennessee History*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Nashville: Ambrose, 1920), pp. 314-15. Published versions are dated May or between May 18 and 20, 1848.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]

Monday morning [May 22, 1848]<sup>76</sup>

My dear Sir/

I have received no communications from Mexico. If I had, they should have been sent to you without a moment's delay.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received May 22, 1848; "In answer to a note addressed to him by me" (not found).

TO JOHN CATRON

Washington City

May 22nd 1848

My Dear Sir:

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76 Place identified through content analysis; date identified from Polk's AE.

I received your letter of the 12th Instant on yesterday. The suggestion which I made to you in my letter of the 1st, about the employment of Mr Stickland, the architect, to superintend the building of my House, was made in consequence of a letter received from you,<sup>77</sup> and with the view to relieve Mr Stevenson from trouble. Do as you please on the subject. By the contract entered into by Mr Stevenson with Mr Hughes, \$3.000. were to be advanced on the 1st of May. Mr S. has paid him \$2.000. of this amount, leaving \$1.000 yet due. I have advised Mr S. that I had directed my agent E. P. McNeal of Bolivar Tenn. to remit to him \$460. which he had collected for me, and have authorized Mr S. to draw on me for the remaining \$540. [to]<sup>78</sup> make the payment to Mr Hughes.<sup>79</sup> Learning [that] Mr Stevenson is absent in Georgia I authorise you to draw on me at sight for the \$540. & pay over the proceeds to Mr Hughes, taking his receipt therefor. The remittance from McNeal will doubtless be at Nashville before you receive this letter. I learn from Gov. Brown that the work on the House had not been commenced when he left.<sup>80</sup> Say to Mr Hughes that he must not disappoint me, but must have it done by the 1st of January. If I ascertain that this work is not progressing as rapidly as it should do, I will postpone the period of making the next payment. I [will] make the next payment promptly at the time stipulated (1st of October)—provided the work is sufficiently advanced to insure its completion by the 1st of January. I have noth[ing] to add to what I have heretofore said about the title to the property. I wish you to see Messrs Humphreys, Nicholson & Houst[on] & explain to them the nature of the case, & engage them to attend to it, in the chancery Court. The title to the property sold by Mr Bass in his individual right had better be made, as it has no necessary connection with the part bought from the Grundey estate. Will you do me the favour to have a Deed with covenants of general warranty, prepared, and have it executed by Mr Bass and recorded. Messrs. Nicholson, Houston & Humphreys can save you the trouble, if they have the true description of the property and its boundaries, which you can furnish to them. Care must be taken in executing this Deed, that nothing shall occur to prejudice my title to the Grundy part of the purchase.

The City was crowded during the last week with Delegates to the Democratic National Convention, which meets in Baltimore today. They are all off, to Baltimore, and with them many, perhaps a majority of the members of Congress. So much has been said in reference to myself, but without the slightest authority [from] me, that I have deemed it proper to address a letter to the convention, through Dr. Ramsey of Knox who is a Delegate, re-iterating the grounds assumed in my letter of the 12th of June 1844, accepting the nomination of the Democratic National convention of that year.<sup>81</sup> I have thus, placed myself in the position that I have always occupied & have relieved the convention of any possible embarrassment, wh[ich]<sup>82</sup> the suggestion of my name for re-nomination might

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77 Catron to Polk, April 19, 1848.

78 Word uncertain or letters missing here and below, light and blurred ink transfer.

79 Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, May 10, 1848; Polk to Ezekiel P. McNeal, May 10, 1848.

80 Aaron V. Brown to Polk, May 7, 1848.

81 Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, May 20, 1848; Polk to Henry Hubbard et al., June 12, 1844.

82 Letters cut off side of page.

produce. Who will be the nominee is regarded as uncertain by all who have conversed with me on the subject. With Respectful regards to Mrs. C. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM WALTER LOWRIE

Baltimore

22 May 1848

My Dear Sir

The Revd Lewis Bridel, a protestant clergyman from Paris, and the Revd Alexr King from Dublin, are on a visit to this country, and will be highly gratified, if it be in your power to give them a short interview this evening. These gentlemen, are well informed, and intelligent, and quite familiar with the stirring events of their respective countries.

WALTER LOWRIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by Louis Bridel and Alexander King. From Polk's AE: received May 22, 1848.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Baltimore

May 22 1848. Monday night, 11 O'clock

Dear Sir.

The Convention as you will have seen have been in session all day & have accomplished a partial organization. There has been & is much confusion & uncertainty, more than I supposed. The two third rule will most probably be adopted, but it is not certain. The New York case has been referred to a Committee of one from each State, the Committee on credentials. This committee have been in session all evening until a few minutes ago & have after much discussion & a close vote of one majority come to the preliminary decision, not to hear either side unless they would agree to abide by the decision & the nomination. Until now there has been not much bitterness but it is now becoming very warm & bitter. It is regarded as tantamount to admitting the Old Hunkers as they have agreed to bind themselves so, and the BarnBurners it is said have refused to submit to any such interrogatories & deny the right of the Convention or Committee to interrogate them. It is regarded as a Cass movement and is essentially a Cass triumph, and if the Convention should confirm the action of the Committee, which it is probable they will, the nomination afterwards made, will be effected amidst much violence & mangling. It is probable that if confirmed the Hunkers will come in, the Barnburners will go home dissatisfied & denouncing the convention as a pro Slavery packed convention & that Cass will then be nominated. The last event is still very uncertain however even if the Hunkers are admitted, but will depend much upon the adoption of the two third rule. Turney, the Committeeman from Tennessee voted & spoke against the right of applying any such test. Tennessee will cast her vote on the first ballot 6 for Cass and 7 scattering, viz 2 for Buchanan & the remaining 5 between Worth & Woodbury. There is an interest growing up under the auspices of Blair & the Kentucky delegation for Butler. It is impossible to tell how the developements of to night will affect the stock in the morning.

Your true position before the Convention will be presented immediately before any balloting.<sup>83</sup> I think it most probable that all day to-morrow will be occupied with the New York case.

I will write you to morrow night again.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Private.”

FROM ABRAHAM W. VENABLE

Washigtn

Tuesday evening [May 23, 1848]<sup>84</sup>

Dr Sir

I have this moment returned from Baltimore. The 2/3 rule is adopted. The Barnburners are by the report of the committee to be excluded if that report be confirmed. Of this there is but little doubt. I saw Mr Ramsey & he promised to read your letter<sup>85</sup> before the balloting commenced and I also spoke to Mr Thomas on the subject. I fear trouble among our friends. Great prudence is necessary, & I have some apprehension that it may not be in presence at the time of need. Genl Cass’s prospects are the best at present but nobody can tell how long. Your letter will place you in a position the most enviable and desirable and one also most justly your own.

A W VENABLE

[P.S.] Mr Hawkins Mr Ramsey & Mr Walker are well of this please inform the ladies. The balloting will commence on tomorrow.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received May 24, 1848.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Baltimore,

Wednesday morning 12 oclock [May 24, 1848]<sup>86</sup>

Dear Sir.

As I anticipated the entire day on yesterday was devoted to the discussion of the New York case, & the adoption of the two thirds rule.

I need not write to you anything which you will see in the papers, but give something of an impression as to what may be the result. Much confusion & no little bitterness exists. Unless there is a change & that a decided one, no man ever spoken of prominently will stand much chance for a nomination & when made it may not be a cordial or unanimous one. I think it will be a very close vote between the confirmation of the report of the Committee & the admission of both sets. The chances I think are with the latter alternative, that is the admission of both sets with 36 votes. If the Barnburners come in, a demonstration will be made pretty early for Gen Butler, prominent in whose support will be Hamlin of Maine, Blair & the Maryland delegation, Kentucky & a good many of

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83 Walker refers to Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, May 20, 1848.

84 Date identified from Polk’s AE.

85 Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, May 20, 1848.

86 Date identified from postmark of May 24 and through content analysis.

the moderate men, but the probabilities are that he will be brought on too early to be successful. The Cass men are becoming very violent, & dispirited.

I have heard very few intimate a doubt of the good faith of your declaration four years ago & ever since of a sincere desire to see a harmonious nomination of a successor & that you may retire to private life.

An unfortunate remark of Morse of Louisiana brought down upon him a most eloquent & scathing castigation from Bowden of Ala. which thrilled through the convention in a tumult of applause which was followed up by Hamlin of Me & Rich Thompson of N.J in vindication of the Administration. Poor Morse tried to apologise that he did not mean to call you an "outsider," and then Yancy apologised for him. The two-third rule was much assisted by this scene, for the Louisiana delegation immediately retired & changed their purpose & voted for it. They may get to voting to night, but I hardly expect it. If they do you will hear of it before you see this. I will write you again to-night.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private."

FROM THOMAS H. BENTON

C Street, [Washington City]

May, 28. [1848]<sup>87</sup>

Mr. Benton has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the two letters recived in the President's package from Oregon, which, like many others recived by Mr. Meek, relate to the unhappy condition of Oregon, and the necessity for law and government.<sup>88</sup>

[THOMAS H. BENTON]

AN. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received May 28, 1848.

TO PETER D. VROOM

Washington City

May 30th 1848

Dear Sir:

The Office of Attorney General of the United States, having become vacant in consequence of the resignation of Mr Clifford, it is my duty to fill it, by the appointment of

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87 City and year identified through content analysis and from Polk's AE.

88 Polk apparently had sent Benton two of the documents from Oregon that Joseph L. Meek had delivered to the president on May 26. Polk's accompanying letter, if any, has not been found. Meek's package included George Abernethy to Polk, December 28 or 29, 1847; Abernethy to Polk, December 28, 1847; and a December 29 letter from Abernethy to Congress enclosing (1) a memorial from the legislature seeking the establishment of a territorial government and U.S. protection against a suspected Indian alliance; (2) an extract from Abernethy's December 7 message to the legislature expressing hope that Congress will create that government soon, arguing that the provisional government must address conflicts with Indians if the United States does not soon send an agent, and noting the growth and improved safety of shipping in Oregon; and (3) Abernethy's December 25 proclamation calling for five hundred six-month volunteers to fight the united Indians at Walla Walla. See these documents, except Abernethy's December 28 letter, in Senate Executive Document No. 47, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

some other citizen. You are fully inform[ed]<sup>89</sup> of my opinions and views upon all the leading public questions now before the country. Presuming that you agree with me in thos[e] opinions and views, and that you appro[ve] the general policy of my administration, a[nd] would cordially co-operate with me, in sustaining and carrying it out, it gives [me] pleasure to tender for your acceptance the Office of Attorney General of the United States. I have selected you for this important station in my Cabinet, because of my conv[ic]tion of your eminent qualifications to fill it, and because in the discharge of its duties you could render me essential aid in conducting my administration. In the event of your acceptance it is desirable that you should enter upon the duties of the office at your earliest convenience. I shall be pleased to receive from you [an] early answer.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Trenton, N.J., and marked “(Private.)”

FROM ANONYMOUS

Memphis

June 2 1848

Sir

Enclosed we hand you a slip from Fowle's Evening Herald. Notice the remarks relative to the Departure of Genls Scott & Pillow from Mexico,<sup>90</sup> and this from a paper (the Herald) professing Democracy the organ of F P Stanton L H Coe & others. This same paper promptly copies everything in its columns, that he thinks will cast odium upon Genl Pillow. They are not actuated by so much Hostility to Pillow as to yourself. There is a secret under current here in opposition to you (not so much to you Administration as to you personally) & it has been the case from the announcement of Genl Pillows appointment as Brig Genl. You can Easily Imagine from what Quarter it emanates. The Enclosed slip is a fair specimen. We only want you to see it & Judge your self.

We, think it unnecessary to say more & will not assign our names. Our whole object is to show you who is your Enemies at the same time professing to be your friends.

TWO DEMOCRATS

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Private” on the cover. From Polk's AE: received June 14, 1848.

TO FRANKLIN PIERCE

[Washington City]<sup>91</sup>

Saturday morning June 3rd 1848

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89 Text here and below missing, light ink transfer.

90 The enclosed article, “Departure of Gen. Scott from the city of Mexico,” from the Memphis Evening Herald, describes that April 21, 1848, event as “an affecting sight,” citing war correspondent James L. Freaner's letter to the New Orleans Daily Delta, written on that date under the pseudonym “Mustang” and published on May 14. The article then asserts, “The departure of [Gideon J.] Pillow about the same time, is said to have been about as ludicrous, as the departure of the commander-in-chief was affecting.” Paymaster Archibald W. Burns, it adds, “was very conspicuous in this latter demonstration.” DLC–JKP.

91 Place identified through content analysis.

The President's presents his respects to Genl. Pierce, and requests, that he will take a family dinner with him to day at 3 1/2 O.Clock P.M.

[JAMES K. POLK]

AN. DLC-FP. Probably addressed locally.

FROM JOHN K. KANE

Phila.

5 June, 1848

My dear sir,

I pray you to allow me the honour of introducing to you Mr. Henry Guy, of Mexico, the cashier of the Real del Monte Silver Mines, who will pass a few days at Washington before setting out for England.

Mr. Guy is a gentleman of high standing, and has availed himself of his ample opportunities to befriend some of our officers in Mexico when in circumstances to make his kindness to them important.

J. K. KANE

ALS. DLC-JKP. Delivered by Henry Guy. From Polk's AE: received June 8, 1848.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Washington City

June 5th 1848

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 4th ultimo. You inform me that the boy Joe, has behaved badly, but that he is at home again. I hope that he will remain at home and do his duty. I wish you to release him from his confinement, beat him well, and if he leaves you again, I wish you to request Mr Leigh to dispose of him, and procure another hand in his place. The draft which Mr Leigh drew on me in your favour for \$315.76. has been presented to me and has been paid. I have not yet sold my last year's crop of cotton, and will not do so, at the present low prices. As soon as I sell I will inform you of the amount which is due to the hands, and will authorize you to pay it over to them. Tell them that they will be sure to get their money as soon as the cotton is sold. After you finish cultivating the crop this summer, I wish you to employ any time you may have, before the gathering season, in clearing more land, as I expect to increase the force for next year. In your next letter I wish you to inform me whether the blacksmith Harry gets work enough from the neighbourhood to keep him employed, and whether he is profitably employed.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

FROM PETER D. VROOM

Trenton [N.J.],<sup>92</sup>

June 5th 1848

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 30th ult. in which you have kindly tendered to me office of Attorney General of the United States. I feel very sensibly the honour you have

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92 State identified from postmark and Polk's AE.



conferred on me by selecting me to fill so responsible a situation, and one so intimately connected with the Administration of the government. No one should be willing to take an appointment by which he is brought into such close connection with the Executive, who does not feel that he can cheerfully accord with and fully sustain the views and leading policy of the Administration. As to these I have no difficulty. I cordially approve them. They have been wise and patriotic, and greatly advanced the honor and interests of the whole country.

I feel, nevertheless, constrained to decline the office, and from motives entirely disconnected with public or political considerations. My professional engagements are so extended, that I could not abandon them, at this time, without great sacrifice. The duties also, which I owe my family are such as I may not neglect. These are grounds which are imperative in their nature, and upon which it is not needful I should enlarge. Under other circumstances it would have afforded me great pleasure to have accepted the appointment.

I beg that you will receive my acknowledgments for this unexpected mark of confidence, and believe me to be . . . .

P. D. VROOM

A. McCLELLAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE or AEs: received June 7, 1848; "note on June 8th 1848 I tenderd the office to the Hon. Isaac Toucey of Connecticut."

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>93</sup>

June 6the 1848

Dear sir

I nough take the oppitunity of writing you a few lins concurning youre plantation and the bisness. Sir youre people are all well at present.

We have a good stand of coten and of corn and in good order. I am in hops it will be a good year for to crop & we will make a good crop. I rought you in my last Leter that all of youre groceres had come safe to hand.

Mr. J. T Leigh told me that he had got the tax recete and that all of your Land was safe. All so the forty that he pade Twenty five dollars or Last yeare the tax had bin pade on it. The stock all Lucks well.

Sir I have to Let you nough that the boy Joe Lefeft me agane on the 28 of May Last.

The outhter hands behaves vary well.

I have nothing Mor worth youre attention only Remane . . . .

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 16, 1848.

TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Washington City

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93 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

June 8th 1848

Sir:

It gives me pleasure to comply with the request of Congress, by transmitting to you, an authenticated copy of a Joint Resolution of that body, approved on the 9th ultimo, entitled "Joint Resolution of thanks to Major General Taylor."<sup>94</sup> As soon as the gold medal directed by the Resolution to be struck can be prepared it will be presented to you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Baton Rouge, La. See also ALS, photocopy, DLC–ZT, and ALS, press copy, DLC–JKP.

TO ISAAC TOUCEY

Washington City

June 8th 1848

Dear Sir:

The Office of Attorney General of the United States, having become vacant, in consequence of the resignation of Mr Clifford, it is proper that I should fill it by the appointment of some other citizen. Presuming, from a general knowledge of your opinions and views, that they accord with my own, upon all the leading public questions now before the country, and believing that you approve the general policy of my administration, and would cordially co-operate with me, in sustaining and carrying it out, it gives me pleasure to tender for your acceptance, the office of Attorney General of the United States.

In inviting you to accept this important station in my Cabinet, I have been influenced by the conviction of your eminent qualifications to fill it, and that in the discharge of its duties you could render me essential aid in conducting my administration.

In the event of your acceptance, it is desirable that you should enter upon the duties of the office at your earliest convenience.

I have to request an early answer.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Ct. Addressed to Hartford, Conn. See also ALS, copy, and ALS, press copy of that copy. DLC–JKP.

FROM JOHN L. BROWN

[Nashville]<sup>95</sup>

June 10th 1848

Dear Sir

I should have written to you on my arrival at Nashville but concluded to defer it until it was ascertained whether the Treaty was ratified or rejected. The news of its ratification has arrived. Permit me to congratulate you on the successful and happy termination of the

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94 The enclosure has not been found, though the manuscript envelope for it has. DLC–ZT. The joint resolution thanked Taylor and the other officers and soldiers "for their valor, skill, and good conduct . . . in the battle of Buena Vista"; it directed Polk to inform Taylor of the resolution and to present him with a gold medal. SL, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Number 7.

95 Place identified through content analysis.

War. It is the crowning act of your Administration.<sup>96</sup> You can look forward to its close (viz) to your Administration with much pleasure, with a proud consciousness of having discharged your duty, honestly, faithfully, and efficiently, with the high satisfaction of knowing that the character of the American-people for high toned Chivalry for cool, determined, bravery, and for all that is ennobling to human nature has advanced as much or more during your Administration than any preceding one. It may now with truth and justice be said that "we are indeed a great and wonderful people." I should have remained in Mexico until the ratification of the Treaty, but it was thought very doubtful at what time it would be ratified and by many that it would be rejected. Immediately preceding my departure from Mexico I received letters advising me of the almost entire recovery of my Son and urging upon me that I should return immediately and travel with him: his Physicians and friends considering that travelling would be more beneficial to him than any thing else and would more speedily bring about his entire restoration. I applied to Genl Butler and obtained a furlough for 60 days. I suppose my services will not be needed Longer as commissary. If so should be glad to be employed in the West without going farther South than Memphis until fall. Inasmuch as the War is closed it is unnecessary for me to return to Mexico. I may conclude to meet the Regt between this and New Orleans. Will there be a use for me as Commissary any Longer. Should be glad to have some Office more profitable. So soon as my Sons health improves sufficiently will take him on North, and will call at Washington and close my accounts with the Government. We start to the mountains this week with a view to spend several weeks travelling. Hunting fishing &c

The selection of Cass & Butler as the candidates of the Democratic party has given universal satisfaction to the party in this Section of Country. I have not heard the first murmur. In fact I doubt whether any other ticket would have been recieved with half the inthusiam. Many of the Clay Whigs about Nashville are dissatisfied at the nomination of Genl Taylor and say they will not vote for him. Among them Doct. B. McNary, the most of them however will be whipt in by the Election. (Inter nos) Old Zac will give us employment enough particularly in Tennessee. I do hope the same Lethargy will not prevail here as did Last year. It was the fault of a few of the Leaders of the party that we were defeated. If our Electors will do their duty (they are capable) Tennessee I think will come out "right side up." I have written more lengthily than I intended. I would transcribe the letter but have not time, you will therefore please excuse mistakes. Be obigling enough to present my best respects to Mrs. Polk and accept for yourself my best wishes too for your prosperity and happiness. . . .

JOHN L BROWN

P.S. Should you have to make any new appointments in the Regular Army, allow me to present to your Notice the following Officers of 3d Tennessee Regt. (viz) Capt D. Trigg of Nashville Capt Hatton of Gallatin also Liut Bate, and Mr Gardner of Murfreesboro. J.L.B  
ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 1848.

FROM ISAAC TOUCEY

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96 Here Brown wrote a mark resembling "n" or "h" and possibly meant to represent "&."

Hartford Connecticut

June 12th 1848

Dear Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 8th inst, inviting me to a seat in your cabinet in the important station of attorney General of the United States.

I fully appreciate the high honour conferred on me by the selection.

Concurring, as I do most assuredly, in your views upon all the leading questions now before the country, & approving the general policy of your distinguished Administration, it will require not only no sacrifice of principle or feeling on my part, but be my highest pleasure & duty to co-operate with you in carrying it out.

Entertaining these views, I am aware of no obstacle in the way of my accepting the place tendered me in such flattering terms, & I propose therefore to repair to Washington the ensuing week for the purpose of entering upon its duties.

ISAAC TOUCEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM DANIEL WEBSTER ET AL.<sup>97</sup>

Washington

June 13. 1848

The undersigned beg leave, most respectfully, to introduce to the President of the United States, the Revd. Dr. Gannett, a distinguished clergyman of Massachusetts, closely connected by marriage with Lieut B. P. Tilden jr, of the second Infantry, whose most lamentable case has already been brought to the President's notice. Dr Gannett's object, is, to invoke the attention of the President to the proceedings of the Court, by which Lt Tilden was condemned; as it is fully believed that the proceedings of that Court, & the Evidence before it, cannot justify the sentence which was pronounced.

DANL WEBSTER

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; delivered by Ezra S. Gannett, probably on June 13, 1848. From Polk's AEI: "They ask the interposition of the Executive in Liet. Tilden's case, who is under sentence of death in Mexico./On yesterday, I ordered a letter to be addressed to Genl. Butler, directing him to suspend the execution of the sentence in this & the other cases similarly situated./June 14th 1848."

FROM PETER PARKER

Legation of the United States of America to China Canton.

14. June 1848

Dear Sir.

I beg herewith to transmit the enclosed documents and correspondence relative to an unfortunate error seriously affecting a citizen of the United States now resident in Canton, Robert P. De Silver Esq.<sup>98</sup>

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97 Letter written by Webster and signed by him, John Davis, and Robert C. Winthrop.

98 In February and March 1844, U.S. merchant Cornelius H. Tiers purchased tea, for resale, from the Chinese firm Lungke. In December 1846 Alexander H. Everett sent Polk, enclosed in a letter that has not been found, a statement made to Paul S. Forbes by Young Tingqua (or Tingkwa), of Lungke, about

It appears that a private letter addressed you by the late Mr. Everett, under date of Dec. 1[6]th<sup>99</sup> 1846, enclosing a translation of a Memorial from a Chinese Mercantile house, relative to a certain claim (as is represented) upon the firm of Tiers Bourne & Co. of Canton, and which mentioned Mr De Silver as a partner of Mr. Tiers, at the time of the transaction, has come to the knowledge of Mr De Silver through his friends in America. In one respect this is fortunate as it affords Mr. De Silver the opportunity of correcting the serious mistake into which the Memorialist had fallen, and consequently of counter acting the injury which in future the error uncorrected might inflict upon an innocent person. The request of Mr. De Silver that the correction should be filed in the Archives of the Legation and forwarded to the President, is so reasonable and just, that I have most cordially complied therewith. Whilst feeling deeply upon the subject, his refutation of the charge has been made in a gentlemanly and unimpassioned manner, leaving the facts of the case, and the accompanying voucher of Mr. Forbes, to shew the injustice he has sustained.

How the original error of associating Mr. De Silver with the transaction arose does not appear from the questions put to "Tingqua" by the Consul. But as Mr. De Silver was a member of the firm of Tiers Bourne & Co. at the time the memorial was presented, the idea probably never occurred to Mr. Everett that there was a fundamental error in its representing him as such, at the time of the transaction; and were he living none would

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the transaction. According to Tingqua, De Silver had partnered with Tiers in the purchase and the Americans, through deceit, had not paid in full. On May 23, 1848, Parker read that statement to De Silver. With this letter to Polk, Parker enclosed six related documents: (1) De Silver to Parker, May 24, 1848, in which De Silver denies having been a party to the transaction or having been Tiers's business partner at the time, and requests a copy of the accusatory document (ALS); (2) Parker to De Silver, May 24, 1848, a cover letter for the requested copy (L, copy); (3) Forbes to De Silver, May 26, 1848, in which Forbes reports that, on questioning, Tingqua that day said that in 1844 he had known that De Silver was not Tiers's partner and was not involved in the tea purchase (L, copy, in Parker's hand); (4) De Silver to Parker, June 13, 1848, in which De Silver enclosed Forbes's letter of May 26 and his own statement about Tingqua's accusation, asking Parker to file these documents in the legation's archives and then send them to Polk (L, copy, in Parker's hand); (5) De Silver's statement, dated June 10, in which he claims (a) that in January 1844 he traveled to China under a business arrangement with Tiers, but that not until after the tea purchase—Tiers's private purchase, not business of Tiers, Bourne & Co.—did he become Tiers's clerk and then a partner in the firm; (b) that, after returning to the United States for his health, Tiers "found that he had been cheated in the teas to a very large amount, and refused to pay for them"; and (c) that De Silver and Tiers, Bourne & Co. have "fulfilled" their own agreements with Tingqua (D, copy, in Parker's hand); and (6) Parker to De Silver, June 13, 1848, in which Parker agrees to De Silver's requests and quotes Everett's letter to Polk: "As the transaction out of which the Petition has grown, is wholly of a private character, it is beyond the reach of the Executive Department, and nothing can be done here but to advise the petitioners to bring their complaint before the courts of justice at home in the regular way" (ALS, copy). DNA-RG 59.

99 Possibly "13th": Parker wrote "3" then wrote "6" over it, or possibly the reverse. Alexander H. Everett's letter not found.

be more prompt to receive the correction, and as far as possible to repair the injury it has inflicted.

The enclosed Statements will remove all the unjust impressions the error has produced, and so far as it has deprived Mr. De Silver of any advantages in the gift of the President, I doubt not that any feasible reparation in the power of the government will be cheerfully rendered him.

PETER PARKER

ALS. DNA–RG 59. Probably addressed to Washington City. From William Hunter, Jr.’s AE at top of letter: received September 11, 1848; “Original.”

FROM THOMAS RITCHIE

[Washington City]

Wednesday Night [June 28, 1848]<sup>100</sup>

My Dear Sir/

I have been too much engaged to see you to-day.

I could not see Johnson of Georgia yesterday, because the Senate had adjourned before I reached the Capitol.

To-day they were in secret session—but I happened to meet with his wife, with whom I had formed a most agreeable acquaintance. She has a strong mind and is a republican in her sentiments, and proud of her husband. I tried my Eloquence upon her. She believes he will support the Compromise.

I suppose you have heard by Telegraph to-day, that Sevier would reach Vera Cruz by the 19th. They had attempted (Paredes & Co.) a Revolution in the Government, and assassinated five of the friends of Peace.

T. RITCHIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

June 17th 1848

My Dear Sir:

The accompanying papers and printed volume, have been transmitted to me, by Ex. Governor Swain of N. Carolina, now President of the University of that state, with a request that I would forward them to you.<sup>101</sup> Mr. Swain has been for some time engaged in making

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100 Place and date identified through content analysis.

101 Polk enclosed at least four documents that David L. Swain had sent him: a copy of the Mecklenburg Resolves, either clipped or copied from the Charles Town South-Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal, June 13, 1775; an article about Mecklenburg and Rowan County, N.C. , young women’s refusal to receive young men who had not helped defeat the Schovolite Insurgents, either clipped or copied from the Charles Town South Carolina & American General Gazette, February 1–9, 1776; Jared Sparks to Swain, April 16, 1847, which quotes Josiah Martin to William Legge, Lord Dartmouth, June 30, 1775, condemning the resolves and noting that a copy had been sent to the Second Continental Congress; and the “printed volume.” Neither the enclosures nor Swain’s letter to Polk has been found, but see Polk’s

researches, into the early history of the two Carolinas. The Declaration of Independence by the people of Mecklenburg on the 20th of May 1775—and their Resolves, passed on the 31st of the same month are interesting events. Mr Swain whom I saw a year ago, when on a visit to the University of N.C. thinks it more than probable that the Reports of the Colonial Governor (Martin) to his Government, may be found among the archives of the British Government. If he is right in this, and you could obtain copies, or the substance of these Reports, they would be very interesting, especially, to the people of the two Carolinas.

I have not written to you for many months, first because I had nothing of interest to communicate, and secondly because there has been no relaxation of my labours since you left. Every moment of my time is occupied, and I am compelled to neglect almost entirely, my correspondence with my friends.

It may I think be regarded as certain that there is peace with Mexico. A despatch received from Messrs Sevier & Clifford under date of the 25th ultimo at Queretero, announces the fact of the ratification of the Treaty by both branches of the Mexican Congress.<sup>102</sup> All that remained to be done, was the formal exchange of ratifications, which would probably take place in two or three days, from the date of their despatch.

The Presidential contest promises to be a violent one. Factions of each party, are not satisfied with their respective nominees. The New York Barnburners are producing great embarrassment in the Democratic party. They are highly excited & I fear irreconcilable. The great probability is that their course will ensure the vote of N. York to the Whig candidate. I am however confident that the Democracy can elect Genl. Cass without the vote of New York. I hope they may be able to do so.

I am rejoiced that I shall soon retire from the incessant labours, cares and anxieties of my office, which as you know have been very great during my whole term. With the respectful salutations of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Bancroft : . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. As Mecklenburg N.C. is my native County I take a lively, interest in all that concerns, the early history of that part of N.C. J.K.P.

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Published in BP, pp. 102–3.

TO RALPH I. INGERSOLL

Washington City

June 17th 1848

My Dear Sir:

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copies of the resolves, the article about women, and the Sparks letter. Ds, copies, and L, copy, all in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC–JKP.

102 Polk refers to Ambrose H. Sevier and Nathan Clifford to James Buchanan, May 25, 1848, which announces the Mexican Senate's approval of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that day, leaving only the exchange of ratifications to complete the process. Senate Executive Document No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 72.

You will be informed by the Secretary of State that I have acceded to your wishes to be recalled from your mission. Senator Bagby of Alabama has been nominated to the Senate & been confirmed by body as your Successor. Mr Bagby thinks he will be ready to sail from the United States, sometime between the middle and last of July. I have informed him of your desire to leave St. Petersburg early in August, and he will on that account hasten his departure. I have by and with the advice and consent of the Senate appointed your son Colin Ingersoll , to be Secretary of Legation. Mr Bagby is anxious that he should remain with him. I hope he will do so. Should he desire to return to the U. Stats, in the course of a few months, he would of course be permitted to resign the situation. His intimate acquaintance with the business of the Legation, will enable him to be very useful to Mr Bagby , especially for the first months after he enters upon the duties of the Mission. Mr Buchanan thinks it desireable that you should not leave, before the arrival of Mr Bagby . He will however write to you on the subject.

I think it may be regarded as certain that there is peace with Mexico. A despatch received from Messrs Sevier & Clifford , dated as Queretero on the 25th ultimo, announces that the Treaty as amended by our Senate, had been ratified by both branches of the Mexican Congress.<sup>103</sup> The formal exchange of ratifications would probably take place, in two or three days after that time.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S: Upon further conference with Mr Buchanan , he concludes, to say to you that you can leave on the 1st of August, leaving your son, whose commission as Sectary of Legation, will be immediately transmitted to him, in charge of the affairs of the Legation.

J.K.P.

ALS, fragment (body), MBU, and ALI, fragment (postscript), location of auctioned fragment unknown. ALS, fragment, addressed to St. Petersburg. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

Washington City

June 17th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 5th Instant,<sup>104</sup> and am under renewed obligations to you for your kind attention to my business. I am glad that the transmission of my tax receepts to you by Col. Campbell , has saved me from paying further contribution to Mr Rayburn . Mr Rayburn 's title under the tax sale is void as long as the tax receipts may be preserved. These are however liable to be lost, and his Deed is recorded, it is desireable in order to avoid future difficulty that he should execute a quit claim Deed to me. This he ought to be willing to do cheerfully and without compensation. Rather than fail to get the Deed however, it would be better to pay him a small sum. I suppose he paid but a nominal price at the Sheriff's sale. This I would be willing to refund to him, though he is not justly entitled

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103 On Ambrose H. Sevier and Nathan Clifford's letter to James Buchanan, see letter and notes in Polk to George Bancroft, June 17, 1848.

104 Letter not found.



to it. I desire to secure the services of Mr Marrs for the next year, and I am willing to pay him the same wages (\$500.) for his services, which he receives for this year. I will thank you to engage him at that rate, & to close the contract with him.

The boy Joe I am satisfied will do me no good. When he shall be again reclaimed, I concur with you in opinion that I ought not to retain him. He has been treated well, but he may be better satisfied to live with some one else. If you can do so, I will be obliged to you to dispose of him for me, and if an opportunity offers, to purchase another hand in his place.

Like yourself, I have not yet sold my cotton & will not do so at present prices. I hope the present troubled state of affairs in Europe may be of short duration. When they are over, we may expect better prices.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

FROM WALTER LENOX ET AL. TO JAMES K. POLK ET AL.<sup>105</sup>

Washington National Monument office<sup>106</sup>

June 17, 1848

The committee of Arrangements most Respectfully invite the President, and the Honorable members of his Cabinet, to attend the ceremony of laying the Corner Stone of the Washington National Monument on the fourth day of July next.

The order of forming the procession will be duly made known.

W LENOX

NS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Elisha Whittlesey to Polk et al., June 23, 1848. See also unsent N in Whittlesey's hand (discussed in aforesaid cover letter). DNA–RG 42.

FROM MARY ANNA RANDOLPH CUSTIS LEE

Arlington [Va.]

1848 June 18th

Pardon my dear Sir the liberty I take in addressing you on behalf of my son G W.

Custis Lee, whose desire to enter the military academy at west Point is so intense that I have promised to use every exertion in my power to aid him in effecting his purpose.

In presenting him to you for the service of his county, I offer one whose powers both intellectual & physical are equal to any exertion. He will be 18 in September next & if you could give me any assurance that he should obtain a commission for the 1st June 1849 I should be infinitely indebted to you, as I wish him to spend the intervening time in preparing for the course of study at West Point. I do not know that I have made this application according to established rule, or that you would make any promise so long beforehand, but if you will only intimate to me that my application shall be remembered at the proper time you will perhaps have conferred as great a benefit on the Country as did Genl Jackson when he appointed his father Capt R. E. Lee of the Engineers of whose valuable services you are well informed. You will excuse this letter elicited by the anxiety

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105 Letter signed by Lenox, Matthew F. Maury, and Joseph H. Bradley; addressed to Polk, James Buchanan, Robert J. Walker, William L. Marcy, John Y. Mason, Isaac Toucey, and Cave Johnson.

106 The Washington National Monument Society's office was in Washington City.

of a mother's heart, & if you will favor me with a reply address to Arlington, near Alexandria Va.

M C. LEE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM JOHN C. HAYS

San Antonio Texas

June 20th 48

Mr President

I have hesitated a long time as to the propriety of addressing you a letter but I trust you will excuse the liberty and the intrusion. Your friendly offers to me when I had the pleasure of seeing you have induced me to trouble you with one or two requests. Since my return from Mexico I find myself out of employment and almost out of means and urgent necessity compels me to ask for favours from Washington (where my unsettled business at this time prevents me from going as I would wish). I have been informed that there was a probability of some two or three mounted regiments being raised to act in this portion of the country and on the Rio Grande line. If such be the case, I solicit the command of one of them. If there is to be an expedition to Calafornia (as is reported) or a command raised to open a military road I would be much gratified to be appointed to it. I have an intimate knowledge of the whole Country from the coast to near Chihuahua and might be of service in exploring the route to that country. Any service the President may render me will be ever most gratefully remembered by this . . .

JOHN C HAYS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City “pr Mr Ruthvin”; likely delivered by Archibald S. Ruthven. From Polk's AE: received August 11, 1848.

FROM EDWARD C. DELAVAN TO JAMES K. POLK ET AL.<sup>107</sup>

Ballston Centre [N.Y.]

June 21st 1848

Respected Sirs,

Believing, that the enclosed,<sup>108</sup> signed in their private capacities, by the President of the United States the Speaker of the house, and by the Governors of the Thirty United States

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107 Letter addressed to Polk, George M. Dallas, and the “Speaker of the House of Representatives”; Robert C. Winthrop was Speaker, though Armistead Burt served as Speaker pro tempore on June 19–22 due to Winthrop's illness.

108 The enclosed circular, dated July 4, 1848, expresses Americans' “indebtedness to France for” its support in the Revolutionary War and their “profound admiration” for France's recent “mighty and almost bloodless revolution” and attendant “regard for the rights of property and person.” It then outlines for the “sister Republic” ten “great principles illustrated in our history”: (1) that Americans' commitment to the Bible enabled the writing, adoption, and preservation of the Constitution; (2) that U.S. officials “recognise[d] the government of God”; (3) that they honored the Sabbath; (4) that “they ordered . . . the importation of many thousand copies of the Bible”; (5) that, at Benjamin Franklin's suggestion, the authors of the Constitution sought God's “guidance”; (6) that the government has begun each day by seeking God's guidance; (7) that Americans established “freedom of opinion, freedom of speech,

and by other distinguished citizens and sent, at this time, to certain citizens in France might be of great service to that country, I am induced respectfully, but most earnestly to request that you will, if in your view consistent, put your names to the enclosed and send it to me by return mail.

EDWARD C. DELAVAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received June 1848;

“Wishes me to sign a printed address to the people, of France, &c.”

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

Colemans<sup>109</sup>

9 oclock. [June 23, 1848]<sup>110</sup>

My Dear Sir,

I was just in the act of starting to see you When the rain set in. It is now 9 oclock, & knowing your feeble health & the necessity of your having repose, I have thought it best not to come up to night.

My self & wife will be up tomorrow.

GID. J. PILLOW

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AE: received June 23, 1848.

FROM ELISHA WHITTLESEY TO JAMES K. POLK ET AL.<sup>111</sup>

Washington National Monument Office

June 23, 1848

Dear Sir

The committee of Arrangements, having decided on the 15th to invite, the President of the United States, and the Honorable members of his Cabinet; the Vice President: Senate; and officers, the Speaker: House of Representatives; and officers, chief Justice Taney, and the other members of the Supreme court of present, and chief Judge, Cranch, to attend the Ceremony of laying the Corner Stone on the fourth of July next letters were prepared at this office to give effect to the decision, and sent to Gen Henderson the Chairman, for his signature. Under the conviction that he had replaced the

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freedom of the press, and freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience”; (8) that “All religious denominations have effectual and equal protection, but none are in any way connected with the government, nor are their ministers paid out of the public treasury”; (9) that Americans’ “peace, and harmony, and happiness” owe much to their making the Bible “the Family Book of the masses”; and (10) that “the temperance reformation” has conserved money, “reclaimed” “many inebriates,” fostered “productive industry,” reduced “crime and pauperism,” and “increased prosperity.” The circular concludes with “the hope that God may so guide and direct the National Assembly in their councils, and the Nation in its acts, as to secure for the future to your Republic, peace, and freedom, and universal prosperity.”

Despite Delavan’s request, it does not bear Polk’s or any other’s signature. PC. DLC–JKP.

109 Reference is to Coleman’s Hotel, Washington City.

110 Date identified from Polk’s AE and through content analysis.

111 Letter addressed to Polk, James Buchanan, Robert J. Walker, William L. Marcy, John Y. Mason, Isaac Toucey, and Cave Johnson.

communications as he found them, the envelopes were not opened on being returned, but were sealed and immediately sent to the Post office.

I learn with deep regret that in the hurry of the transaction, those communications were placed by him, in envelopes to which they did not belong. Be pleased to receive this as an apology for the error to repair which I send you duplicate of the invitation, intended to have been sent to you before.<sup>112</sup>

Gen Henderson is at Norfolk, and the invitation will be signed by other members of the Committee.

ELISHA WHITTLESEY

LS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 26, 1848.

FROM JOHN ANDERSON

Portland [Maine]<sup>113</sup>

June 26 1848

My Dear Sir,

I regret that my apparent obstinacy in holding on to my late office should have given you the anxiety I am assured it has. I would have resigned long ago could I have done so honorably.

At the head of the few, personally insignificant, persons, who, by unwearied importunity & misrepresentation, obtained the host of names for Dunlap, are the Post master of this City & Clapp, who holds his place, by means of money & like servile importunity, for a scrap, to Congress, and were much elated by Dunlaps success. But the report, let out by Mr Moore, that an appointment on the Commission to pass on the Mexican claims would be offered me, has depressed & greatly disturbed them. They dread, as is said, my presence at Washington & it is supposed may make an effort to prevent your offering me this place. It is possible they may have the presumption to do so, & even get our Delegation in Congress to get up some other name, "to head you off" in this as they say they have done in the other case. Hamblin is hostile, for my name was used against him as Senator two years ago, Bradbury is selfish & with the others I have very slight acquaintance, they are not men of whom I ever have or can ask a favour.

I do not like to appear importunate, but, under existing circumstances, I should be doubly gratified to receive from yourself the appointment in proposed Mexican Commission, & trust that no efforts of these men, should they have the assurance again to assail you, will divert you from the favourable intentions you have expressed toward me.

JOHN ANDERSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "private" on the cover and at the top of the letter.

FROM THOMAS G. CLINTON

Washington

June 26th 1848

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112 Walter Lenox et al. to Polk et al., June 17, 1848.

113 State identified through content analysis.

Sir

Permit me to approach you on the subject of the enclosed letter which I this day received.<sup>114</sup> It is a suspension from the performance of the duties of my desk an an Asst Examiner in the Patent Office and I presume is a step taken by The Commr of Patents in consequence of the charges presented by me against him to The Hon Secy of State. Sir I trust that you will not countenance in Mr Burke the exercise of a power similar to that you refused to tolerate in Gen Scott when Gen Worth preferred charges against him. Upon your action then I ground my hope that you will order me to be restored to my desk and no action taken against me until the charges I have made have been thoroughly investigated. A copy of these charges I have the honor to enclose.<sup>115</sup> Having referred Mr Burke's letter to the Hon Secy of State it has been returned to me as containing matter not germane to his control. I now present it for consideration to your Excellency and ask your earliest action thereon. The Hon Secy of State having sent a copy of my charges against the Commr of Patents to him for explanation I do not deem it respectful to the Secy of State for me to do more than furnish your Excellency with a copy of the charges as explanatory of the cause of the Commr's letter to me.

THOS G CLINTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received July 1848.

FROM JOHN S. BARBOUR

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114 Edmund Burke to Clinton, June 24, 1848. LS in Henry H. Sylvester's hand. DLC–JKP.

115 In this petition to James Buchanan, dated June 15, 1848, Clinton prefers twenty-one charges against Burke, in sum accusing the commissioner "of fraud bribery corruption embezzlement felony and malfeasance in office." The charges include (1) "approving and paying a bill or bills, not allowing it or them to be examined in the usual way; this bill or these bills being knowingly wilfully and fraudulently designed and constructed so as to pass the accounting Officers of the Treasury"; (2) sending patentees' inventions "to Europe by A[lexander]. Vattimore; by which act these patentees are deprived of any emoluments they might derive from the possession of patents for the same when taken out in Europe"; (6) "Granting illegally and wilfully patents which ought not to be granted and refusing others which ought to be granted"; (13) nominating for examiner men who had not served as assistant examiner, thus "Violating the spirit and tradition of the Law of 1839," which created the training position of assistant examiner; (17) "General neglect of the business of the Office and appropriation of the business hours to political & personal writing . . . and employing his subordinates during Office hours on his own personal or private affairs"; (18) "General absence from the Office during Office hours, [and] coming late and going early"; (20) "Exercising generally a tyrannical deportment and insolent bearing towards his subordinates in Office; subjecting them to his oaths, illtemper and caprice; and threatening to turn them out on false and insulting charges"; and (21) "Prostituting the office to purposes of personal aggrandizement by employing Editors and letter-writers, giving them all license in hours (so that one can report Congressional news for his paper) and in performance of clerical duties; permitting them to take papers out of the Office; to publish news-paper puffs personal to himself and then and in the above way rewarding them." Clinton calls for "a thorough examination into the affairs of the Patent Office" and asks Buchanan to ensure "that the personelle of the Patent Office be not tampered with and that the records and papers of the same be not destroyed altered or withdrawn." ANS, copy. DLC–JKP.

Catalpa<sup>116</sup>

June 29th '48

Dear Sir.

The accompanying letter from Govr. Edwards of Missouri<sup>117</sup> was put into my hands for you in Feby last. Why it was not left with you I cannot even conjecture at this moment.

We are this evening closing our harvest, & it is by far the best I have ever had.

We have it in rumour that you will visit the Warrenton Springs this season as soon as

Congress leave[s]<sup>118</sup> you alone. Should this be so, it will afford Mrs B & myself great pleasure to see you at our house with Mrs Polk & all your household. Our other home to which we shall go next week is but eight miles from the Springs the roads very good, & near that place, is a very good mineral water, called some times Voss's & at others [Thane's]<sup>119</sup> that may tempt you by its variety less than its preference to the waters of Warrenton Springs.

For the country & our principles, I doubly regret that we are so soon to loose you in the high trust you have signalized, so usefully & so eminently; but you are yet young in contrast with your predecessors & the hope may be indulged, that before many years elapse, your return to the same trust, may present the first instance to the country of your voluntary retirement from power & your recall to it for a nations benefit.

J. S. BARBOUR

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 2, 1848.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]<sup>120</sup>

29 June 1848

Dear Sir/

The enclosed draft covers the pay of Mr. Trist up till the 16th November the day he received notice of his recall & one quarter's salary for his infit.<sup>121</sup> Mr. Randolph informs me that Mr. Trist says he ought to receive his pay until the 6th December which was the first day he could have left: & my impression is he ought to be paid until that day.

If you think proper to allow him an infit, then the enclosed may be paid.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 29, 1848. Polk's AE: "The Direction was that he should receive his salary as commissioner to Mexico, up to the day, he recived official information of his recall—and his infit, to which he is by law entitled."

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116 Catalpa was Barbour's plantation in Culpeper County, Va.

117 John C. Edwards to Polk, February 22, 1848.

118 Letter either absent or cut off side of page.

119 Word uncertain, possibly "Thone's" or "Thom's."

120 Place identified through content analysis.

121 Enclosure not found.

FROM JOHN P. HELFENSTEIN

Milwaukee [Wisc.]

29th June 1848

Dear Sir,

My son J Albert was in Madison during the canvass for United States Senators, he went on as the friend of Judge Dunn who he says should have been Elected. Judge Dunn was and is the friend of the Administration, supports it in all its measures, and was too independent to pledge himself for the Wilmot proviso as those did who were elected. Govr. Dodge's Election was obtain'd by his visiting in person nearly all the Members of the Legislature immediately after the Election, and pledg'd himself for the Wilmot proviso, this secured his Election, altho if left without this pledge would have been in the Manority about 15 votes. Walker is also pledg'd for the Wilmot proviso.

Having now before you how these men will moove on the Wilmot proviso question, you can judge what will be their action on other questions that will closely interest your other measures—this may appear strange after the result of the last state Election, when the Democracy carried the State by 5000 a Majority—this is in some measure accounted for, when I say, New York influence has had much to do in it. Notwithstanding this U States Senator Election, the real Democracy has the Voice of the people with them, and will in all after Elections prove it so. This New York influence has given us much trouble, and rises up at every time it finds the friends of the admn. asleep—Cunning, shrew & designing, a watchful care must be observ'd.

Since the Nomination of Van Buren & Dodge by the Utica convention, all is quiet here, and these men who labour for N York influence are quiet waiting to see popular opinion—before we moove, we desire to see action on the part the Barn Burner influence here, this ever fully developig itself will be suitably met. Our United States Senators as also our representatives have a precarious part to act, their after continuence in office will depend on their action in Congress.

Having now plainly and [naritively]<sup>122</sup> given you the course of action of our Representatives, you are the better able to regulate yourself with them. I gave you my views about our Representatives in a former note,<sup>123</sup> forgot to say Mr Lynde is also pledg'd as the others. Mr. Lynde is young, he can be prevailed upon to take a different course he pledg'd himself for.

The several candidates now brought before the people for the presidency causes much agitation—several are waiting the course things are likely to take, and have no doubt a little time will settle the question. As regards the Vote for the Nominee of the Baltimore convention I have no doubt of Wisconsin—Nor have I of all the North West. It may not be amiss here to state, that Dodge is connected by ties of Marriage to Senator Benton, who will have influence over him.

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122 Word uncertain.

123 Helfenstein may refer to his letter of June 7, 1848, which discusses Rep. William P. Lynde but only mentions Rep. Mason C. Darling, or to that of June 14, which discusses Senators Henry Dodge and, especially, Isaac P. Walker.

Van Buren has sunk himself greatly in the estimation of the Democracy, which he will learn after the Election.

JOHN P HELFENSTEIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “private” on the cover and at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received July 13, 1848; “Private.”

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Washington City

July 3rd 1848

Dear Marshall:

It is my painful duty to transmit to you the enclosed letters from Mr. R. C. Pearson, announcing the distressing and Melancholy intelligence that your Dear Mother is no more.<sup>124</sup> It appears that she died on the 23rd of June. She was the best of mothers and I know the receipt of the information of her death, will be to you a severe shock, but I trust you will be able to bear it, with christian fortitude. Both your parents are now gone, and I shall feel a greater solicitude, if possible, for your welfare, than I have heretofore done. Dr. Tate will no doubt write to you soon. My advice to you is to submit to the severe affliction, with a firm reliance on an All-wise creator for aid and support in the grief which it is so natural you should feel. You must reconcile yourself to your condition, and continue steadily to pursue your duties at West Point.

Your aunt requests to be remembered kindly to you. She sympathises with you, in your irreparable loss, and requests that you will write to her soon.

Your affectionate Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y. Published in DYF , p. 65.

TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Washington

July 3. 1848

Sir,

Pursuant to a Joint Resolution of Congress approved the 3d of March 1847, I have caused to be prepared, and now have the honor to present to you the gold medal voted to you by that resolution as a testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of your judicious and distinguished conduct in the brilliant military operations at Monterey, Mexico, in September 1846.

JAMES K. POLK

LS. KyU. From Es probably in William W. S. Bliss’s hand: received September 13, 1848; answered September 28, 1848. Published in New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 6, 1848; Washington Daily Union, October 17, 1848; and other newspapers.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

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124 Polk, according to his diary entry of July 3, 1848, “received a letter to-day from Mr. R[obert]. C. Pearson of Morganton, N.C., enclosing one to my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, announcing the death of his mother”; Polk enclosed at least the latter to Marshall. Neither letter has been found.



[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>125</sup>

July 6th 1848

Dear Sir

Received your letter of the 5 ultimo. Sir we are all in Reasonable health.

We at this time have fine seasons. The crop of corn & cotton Lucks well. I think if the season continues favorable we will make a fine crop. The crop is in Good order. We will shortly be gone on the clothing & clearing. The stock all Lucks well.

The blacksmith Harry is working fine ly. He has had the Rheumatism in the ankles but is gotten well of them. Sir Harry has not as much work to do for the neighborhood as he could do but he is all ples with his work. I kept the boy for him until Harry could manage it himself. I have your farm a good set of Twos. In short time for him will commence with him a game. We have some Nework on hand we will try and sell. Daphny has a fine child she calls it Palina Born 16th of June.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 17, 1848. Polk's AE: "Relates to my private business."

FROM ROBERT B. CAMPBELL

Consulate of the United States

Havana

July 7<sup>th</sup> 1848

My dear Sir,

Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance my son Lucius Campbell who visits Washington for the purpose of delivering to the State Department John Lytle who under instructions issuing from your energetic administration that has so signally enforced Justice to our Countrymen has been redeemed from a bondage of eleven years upon a Sugar Estate in the interior of this Island. And you will allow to avail myself of this opportunity to express the hope that my management of the affair meets yr. approval.

ROBERT B CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Delivered by Lucius Campbell. From Polk's AE: received July 27, 1848.

FROM THOMAS G. CLINTON

Washington

July 8th 1848

Sir

I desire to countervail any statements to the effect that the Grand Jury have "triumphantly acquitted" Mr Burke of any charges. I have reason to believe the case is not dismissed. Not having it in my power improperly to command information I can only say that as far as I can judge from queries put to me that it is not the facts but the laws that do not seem to reach the case. That the Subtreasury or other laws may not do so, is Mr Burke's luck and not my fault. To end this matter, Sir, please let the accused and the accuser meet face to face before some competent and public board of Examiners authorized by you to investigate these charges through all their bearings. The Hon Secy of State (as I learned

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125 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

from Mr J. Knox Walker) although authorized by you to investigate these charges, has to this day left me without letter or line from him upon the subject. My movements elsewhere were the consequence and were so shaped (much to my detriment) as not to interfere with Executive Action. I now formally ask your Excellency to take cognizance of these charges and bring them before some tribunal for investigation.

THOS G CLINTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 12, 1848.

FROM DANIEL S. DICKINSON

Washington

July 8 1848

Dear Sir

In behalf of numerous friends in the state of New York I recommend & urge the removal at once of such prominent federal office holders in that state as are engaged in attempting to defeat the nominees of the late Democratic National Convention. If this is not done, whatever the alleged reason may be, it is a practical concession that they are so far right & the Democratic party in its chosen agents so far wrong that their hostility must be endured by the party who furnish the position & the means for their own assault. So far as I know or believe there is not a single democrat in the state who is not anxious for their removal. By "democrat" I mean those who support the measures & candidates of the party & not those who support either Hale or Van Buren.

If this defection is different from all others it may perhaps require a treatment I do not understand but if it is like those which have gone before it its mischief will be best prevented by treating it as other defections have been treated. The disorganisers will vote against the party in any event—they cannot do more if repudiated by the administration. Besides should it be seen that the administration marked them by its disapprobation they could not hereafter lead astray those who have honest intentions but are as weak as they (the leaders) are wicked & shameless. No campaign can be fought in New York under present circumstances for our most efficient men refuse to move. I am aware that some may found who recommend a different course but they either know nothing about it—sympathise with the defection, or lack moral courage to do right lest they may be accused of doing wrong.

I intended to have seen you but cannot this morning & begging for early action I send you this very hasty & seemingly familiar note which I hope you will excuse.

D. S. DICKINSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Dickinson wrote "one day after date I promise" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received July 9, 1848; "Urges the removal from office, of the Barnburners in N. York, who oppose the administration."

FROM THOMAS E. S. RUSSWURM

Post Office Department

July 10th 1848

Sir,

The bearer, Alphonso M. Sumner, was emancipated many years since by a relative of mine, Thos. E. Sumner, of Williamson County, Tennessee. He has for many years taught

school in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is anxious to visit Liberia, for the purpose of obtaining information of the country which may be useful to his colored bretheren in the United States who may wish to emigrate to that country. His means are limited, and he wishes to know whether he will be permitted to go, in any capacity, in any one of the Government vessels which may be ordered to the coast of Africa. Alphonso had testimonials of his uniform good deportment from many highly respectable gentlemen, to which I desire to add my own. I have no doubt but that the favor, should he be permitted to go as he desires, will be properly appreciated by him, and that it will redound to the welfare of the free colored population of our country.

THO. E. S. RUSSWURM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by Alphonso M. Sumner. From Polk's AE: received July 21, 1848.

FROM JESSE D. BRIGHT

Senate chamber Washington

July 11 1848

Dear Sir

The Comt on Territories, have this morning directed me, to report Bills, for the Organization of Territorial Govts. in Upper California & New Mexico.

If your engagements permit I should be glad to confer with you at such hour as you may name after 4 Oclk this Evening. The bearer of this note will return me your answer.

J D BRIGHT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by courier. From Polk's AE: received July 11, 1848. See also L, typed copy. InU–Li.

FROM THOMAS G. CLINTON

Washington

July 11th 1848

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that in the matter of the charges preferred by me against Mr Burke to the Grand Jury I was before them a considerable time yesterday and without being discharged, was ordered to be at hand to day. I have reason to believe, Sir, (and I might use a stronger term) that the Grand Jury are perfectly satisfied, the spirit and intent of the Subtreasury law has been violated, but that as the law is either too specific or too little so they prefer not to present Mr Burke. Were the law plainer or did it not say so distinctly that the Officer must "convert to his own use" or use "by way of investment, loan &c &c" nothing would stand between Mr Burke and an indictment. The Grand Jury may yet present him, but I think they will not—and there are minor reasons besides, for not doing so. The Executive and Congress can more fully investigate the whole of the charges, the Grand Jury is of a different political complexion from Mr Burke, and the language of the law is too specific for them to feel certain that Mr Burke could not slip through its loop-holes; when it would be said they presented him because they disliked his politics.

I fully agree with the Grand Jury in the impressions I conclude they have taken.

The House committee on Patents meet to day for the first time since the presentation of my petition.

Sir Permit me to say that all my movements are the suggestions of self-preservation and not and<sup>126</sup> distrust of you.

THOS G CLINTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “Present”; probably delivered by hand. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received July 13, 1848.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Near Nashville

July 12, 1848<sup>127</sup>

Dear Sir

Hughs is making good progress with your house & I think will finish it in time and in good style. The directions to finish off another front are consider’d very judicious. I examined & found that three or four lotts can be laid off & sold on the west, without detriment to the balance of the premises for some Six or Eight thousand dollars according to the payments. Nicholson I suppose has written you in relation to the probability of a compromise about the title.<sup>128</sup> I have not attended much to that subject because I have been confined almost constantly with the most afflicted family I have ever had. For two weeks I have not pretended to go to bed & even now am in some degree doubtful as to my youngest child. In relation to politics—the nominations—probable result of the coming election in the State, I have but little to say beyond the expression of opinion that the State is in a very salvable condition. My own position is a very disagreeable one. Many of my personal friends believe that I have devoted enough of my time, health & means to former elections & I find it difficult to persuade them that I have not been strangely pretermitted if not neglected in the distribution of honors &c. Beside this if I pour my accustomed energies into this election there are certain democrats who look forward to advancement from Cass when elected who would be likely to become jealous of me if I became too prominent in the canvass. Added to these considerations, the Whig leaders here (you know them) are beginning to whisper already, that the only reason why I would consent to perform so much labor must be, that having been disappointed in not getting any thing under your administration I am disposed to make a desperate struggle to succeed better under the approaching one. Now these insinuations are annoying to my friends and are well calculated to lessen my efficiency in this canvass. When I consented to accept it, I did not know but it might have to be fought on the old issues of 1844 both as to persons & measures & not being willing to see it fall on the hands of those I knew to be disaffected & disinclined to let the State sustain its own Citizen, I consented to take it to prevent such a result. But those I have so long delighted to cooperate with & to serve, are now no longer interested & I lack motive for encountering so hard & so severe a contest, except what simply arises from the desire to advance my principles. You remember that I adverted to this peculiarity of my position in a former letter & suggested that the mere offer of some high position with your administration which I should certainly decline, would have a good

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126 Clinton may have meant to write “any.”

127 Concluding section of letter, dated “July,” was written c. July 25 (from postmark).

128 Alfred O. P. Nicholson to Polk, June 1, 1848.

effect to remove the stifled dissatisfaction of some of my friends & disarm my enemies of their insidious mode & subject of attack,<sup>129</sup> & I am free to state, that on the occurrence of several important missions & vacancies lately, putting it in your power, I have felt like my suggestion attracted too little of your attention & my embarrassments too little of your sympathy. But it is too late now to apply any such remedy & I regret that I ever made the suggestion. I have to make a bloody fight for 3 or 4 months with Govr. Jones, Jno Bell & Gentry, all stimulated, to their utmost pitch by the hopes of reward—whilst I bear the taunts of former supposed neglect & the rival jealousy of some of my own party. In short I have succeeded to all your former troubles & trials in the State, with an infernal set of party leaders against me & with a decided falling off of the strong men which you then had to support you. Jackson dead, you abstracted necessarily from the field of labor—Armstrong gone—&c &c. Not to say any thing of the disappointed & disaffected, who if they do nothing against us, do but little for us. Tennessee will be a great battle ground & such men as Baylie Peiyton, Yerger & others will be imported upon me. These are the circumstances by which I am to be surrounded, to say nothing of the total destitution of funds essential to the canvass & much of which it is doubtless expected I will furnish & add to the 4 or \$5.000 I have already paid in the last two canvasses of the State, some of which was to make up deficiencies in the payment of some individuals in your elections & which individuals are now basking in the sunshine of the best offices at your disposal abroad.

I never wanted to get into the vortex of our State elections & I never wanted office under your administration. But I did seek a connection with the New paper to be establishd as your organ at Washington<sup>130</sup>, but Mr. A. J. D. seemed to be preferd. & the idea was abandond, & I thrown into the Tennessee arena. But no matter I am in it & will go through with it against Baylie Peiyton if he come Jno. Bell Govr. Jones & the De. . . .Is<sup>131</sup>: But when I do, I whilst I am doing it, I mean to hold the state in my own hands ready and able to throw it at any moment against our nominees if I discover one particle of the Van Buren spirit, to truckle with the powers of the north & to sacrafice our principles, our in[te]rest<sup>132</sup> or our honor in order to propitiate the God of numbers. I will give them up at the very last moment of the contest. With the close of your administration I shall care less than ever about men & will support only those who maintain the principles & doctrines which I deem essential to the Country.

AARON V. BROWN

[c.] July [25]

I returned from a trip to Murfreesboro & Shel[b]yville<sup>133</sup> & found that I had failed to send off this letter—which I now do however with the assurance that in Rutherford Bedford

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129 Letter not found.

130 Brown to Polk, January 5, 1845 (first such letter); Brown to Polk, January 6, 1845 (second such letter).

131 Ellipsis in manuscript.

132 Letters obliterated, ink blot.

133 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

Williamson & Davidson which I have now canvassd. the Democracy is in a sound & improving condition. AVB

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Confidential." From Polk's AEs: received August 1, 1848; "Draft of answer within but not sent./To be answered hereafter—Augt. 24th 1848/At Bedford Springs" (see Polk to Brown, August 24, 1848).

FROM WILLIAM PATTERSON

Sandusky [Ohio]<sup>134</sup>

15th July 1848

My dear Sir

The people in the west are excited to some extent on the subject of the Presidential election, but less than they have been at any former election for twenty years. The whigs are striving to excite the people for Genl Taylor, but it wont work. They are flored in a moment when we call on his principles, when we ask how many negroes he Ownes, what are his opinions on the improvement of Harbour &c (The slope) at once. But misary loves company (you know) and when we tell them that the whig farmers are opposed to Taylor they say they are aware that both nominations are objectionable. In this city of anti slavery men, and many rank abolitionists, we have some Trouble, & Martin Vanburen with his Barn Burning faction, will be remembered & marked while his head is hot. If ever a man Truckled to catch Southern votes it was Martin V & his ingratitude to the South and his democratic friends in the north and west deserves the execration of all honest democrats. I have gone all lengths to support sustain and defend him But I am done with him forever. There is One thing worthy of profound consideration. Martin Vanburan & his party can have no prospect of electing their man (whether he or some other) and their prime object is nothing less or more than to defeat Genl Cass and elect Genl Taylor. At the bottom of this plot is the foundation of a sectional party that is to overwhelm the South. The leaders boast that the prime object of electing Taylor is to make the South and slavery as Odious as practicable. In this view of the matter what should the South do? It is due to the west to have the President. The South should at once see that to defeat all the plots and schemes laid by Vanburan and whigery united, would be blown skie high in the election of Genl Cass who would make a national and not a sectional President. I know your official station should have forbidden me to address to you a politial epistle, But my dear Sir knowing me you well know how to excuse it. Remembr howevr that Ohio will go for Cass and that the efforts of a litle ineficent paper here whose editor is evidently strongly Tinctured with abolition can amout to but little. It is small potatoes and the only democratic paper in the state that has bolted.

The western reserve has determind against Taylor and he will loose that strong federal vote that always gave us trouble in Ohio.

WM. PATTERSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM THOMAS G. CLINTON

Washington

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134 State identified from postmark.

July 17th 1848

Sir

It is due to myself and not disrespectful to you for me once more to approach you and call your attention to the appeal I made to you on the 26th June last, against the act of the Commr of Patents suspending me from my duties simply because I dared to prefer charges against him. I am at a loss to conceive what crime I have committed by so doing, and still more so to understand upon what principles, having justice and duty for their basis, that act of the Commr's can be sustained or allowed to remain in force.

Page 5, Nos 3 and 4 of the enclosed pamphlet contains a printed copy of the appeal.<sup>135</sup>

I understand this afternoon that Mr Burke has actually placed a Mr Cooper at my desk whether temporarily or not I did not hear. Will this too, Sir, be allowed?

It may be said, though not very deductively, that I subsequently asked and you granted a board to examine the charges which called forth this letter of suspension.<sup>136</sup> Sir, I did ask for a competent and public board of Examiners and you granted such a commission as it lay within your power to institute (for which I thank you). But, unfortunately it was found and admitted by the Commissioners themselves that you could not under any law, with which they were acquainted, grant them competent powers. They could not summons witnesses, compel the attendance of persons, nor the production of papers. They could not even administer an oath. And besides there sat before them the Commr of Patents in the control of all the Officers and in the possession of all the papers of the Patent Office. Under these circumstances should it not be that I ought to go where the necessary powers do exist? Even the Commr has stated in writing his intention (forced from him by my petition) to demand an investigation by Congress. And yet neither of these points touch the question of my appeal to you against the Commrs suspension of me. If any one should be suspended, is it not the accused who should be so treated?

Sir, please excuse the plain language of an American Citizen who says he intends to come out of this matter of charges against the Commr of Patents in a manner satisfactory to the consciences of every honest man and who, to that end, in this point of suspension throws himself under the power and sense of justice of The President of The United States by renewing his appeal.

THOS G CLINTON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received July 17, 1848.

TO ROBERT J. WALKER

[Washington City]<sup>137</sup>

July 17 1848<sup>138</sup>

Dear Sir:

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135 Enclosure not found.

136 Clinton to Polk, July 8, 1848. The charges and suspension letter were enclosed in Clinton to Polk, June 26, 1848.

137 Place identified through content analysis.

138 Date repeated, as "July 17h/848," below signature.

I am anxious to send my Message to the Ho of Reps, in answer to their Resolutions of the 10th Instant and will invite you to send to me the information which I requested, in relation to the public lands in New Mexico & Upper California, as soon as the same can be prepared.<sup>139</sup>

JAMES K POLK

L, copy, in Robert J. Walker's hand. DLC–MVB.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Treasury Department

July 19, 1848

Sir:

I have the honor to communicate, herewith, a letter from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, with accompanying statements A and B, containing so much of the information called for in the resolution referred by you to this department, as it has been in my power to procure at present.<sup>140</sup>

The statement B is believed to contain a correct abstract of the official report from the land office of Texas, in 1845, to the convention which framed the constitution of that State. It will be perceived by that report, that the superficies of Texas, assuming the boundary fixed by the laws of that State, is about 397,000 square miles, or 254,248,166 acres; whereas the area of Texas, with the same boundary, according to Disturnell's map, and the calculation of the Commissioner of our General Land Office, is 325,529 square miles, or 208,332,800 acres.

The territory of California and New Mexico, west of the Rio Grande, acquired by the treaty with Mexico, is estimated, according to Disturnell's map, and by the Commissioner of our General Land Office, at 526,078 square miles, or 336,689,920 acres.

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139 Polk's letter to Walker, if any, not found. After formally proclaiming the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on July 4, 1848, Polk sent the treaty to Congress on July 6 with a request that it take related actions, including the establishment of territorial governments. The House responded on July 10 with a series of resolutions seeking information on the Mexican Cession from the president. Polk replied on July 24, including with his message, among other documents, John Disturnell's *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico*, rev. ed. (New York: J. Disturnell, 1847), mentioned in and appended to the treaty, and cabinet members' reports and enclosures (Marcy to Polk, July 19, 1848; Walker to Polk, July 19, 1848; John Y. Mason to Polk, July 20, 1848; and James Buchanan's report of July 17, published in WJB–8, pp. 123–25). See Polk's message and all enclosures except the map in House Executive Document No. 70, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

140 Polk enclosed this letter, with its enclosures, in his July 24 message responding to the U.S. House's resolution of July 10; see letter and notes in Polk to Walker, July 17, 1848. Richard M. Young to Walker, July 18, 1848, enclosed with this letter, is a cover letter for the two statements. Statement A, dated July 17 at the General Land Office, gives the "extent of Texas, taking the Rio Grande to its source, and thence to the parallel of 42° north latitude, as the western boundary," using John Disturnell's *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico*. Statement B, titled "Extracts from the Texas papers of 1845," uses "the limits defined by statute of the first Texan congress." PL and PDs. Published in House Executive Document No. 70, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 9–10.



By statement B it would appear that the whole amount of Mexican grants, within these assumed limits of Texas, is estimated at their land office at 22,080,000 acres, "a portion of which is supposed to be invalid."

If the proportion of Mexican grants should be the same in the territory above referred to, west of the Rio Grande, it would leave the amount of public domain in that territory nearly equal to 468,750 square miles, or three hundred millions of acres.

This department has not been able to obtain any authentic information as to the extent of Mexican grants within this territory, west of the Rio Grande. It is believed, however, to be very small, except within the most western slope, fronting on the Pacific.

R. J. WALKER

PL. Published in House Executive Document No. 70, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 9.

FROM WILLIAM T. AND MARTHA AMBROSE SMITH<sup>141</sup>

Deerfield N.H.

July 22. 1848

Dear Sir,

Suffer me, although trembling beneath the infirmities of almost fourscore years, to address a few words to you. We who have so long sat dumb with grief would open our lips. We would express the gratitude of our burdened hearts. Our Son that was lost is found. He has exchanged the noxious air of a dungeon for the pure breath of Heaven among these granite hills. He is with us to cheer us, to comfort us in the decline of life, and to make us forget the days of our mourning. You alone had power to bestow upon us the blessing of his presence, and how shall we acknowledge our obligation to you? Words fail us. We can only say that though you know not how great is the favor you have granted for we did not expect to have seen his face again on the shores of time. We pray you may be abundantly rewarded for this act of mercy: And when you like us stand upon the thresh-hold of time may the remembrance of this and similar acts of mercy gild your departing hours. May God bless you and keep you through time, and at last receive you to blest mansions above. So pray . . .

WILLIAM T. SMITH

MARTHA SMITH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 28, 1848; "A very excellent letter from these old people thanking the President for the pardon of their Son from the Penitentiary of D.C."

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>142</sup>

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1848

Dear Sir

I nough right you a few lins concerning your people and plantation. We have had a young woman to dy by the name of caroline Henly wone that Col Campbell Bought for you.

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141 Letter written by William and signed by both.

142 Place identified from postmark of Oakchickama, Miss.

She dyed on the 20 of this month. The people are all well Except won of the children complayning. The corn crop is vary good.

The coten crop is vary good but we have had rather two much Rane lately. We are nough clearing land & making cloth for the winter clothing. The stock all Locks as well as coul be exspected. I think we will rase aplenty of Polk for the plantation.

I have nothing more of intrust.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM ARCHIBALD W. BURNS

Burlington New Jersey

July 24. 1848

Sir

You will pardon me for not having done my self the honor of waiting upon you, when in Washington, on my return from Mexico, the morning I had set aside for this purpose, I was informed you were engaged with the Honl the Secty of the Navy, and being under orders to report to New York, my time was necessarily short.<sup>143</sup> Our mutual friend Genl Pillow would have accompanied me could I have remained longer. Permit me to congratulate you, and the democracy of our country upon his full, triumphant, & honorable acquital, of the unfounded, base and infamous charges, the Commander in chief, th[r]o[ugh]<sup>144</sup> jealous & consumate Vanity, saw fit to press against him. As soon as the reception shall have been given to the Penna Volunteers, which ceremony takes place to day, & the mustering officer shall have examined their Rolls, I shall take upon the duty of paying these troops. With my regards to your lady, and my best wishes for your health & happiness.

A W BURNS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Nashville, c.

[July 24, 1848]<sup>145</sup>

My dr Sir/

Hand the enclosed to Mrs. Polk.<sup>146</sup> I am very sorry to hear that you are again unwell, but that flat of mud south of you will always produce that result.

I am again in excellent health, as is Mrs. Catron.

If it be possible, have the Territory bill, for Oregon, California, & New Mexico, passd.

before Congress adjourns—& 36° 30" fixed as the Slave line—and I hope a man of high

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143 Sentence division unclear up to this point.

144 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

145 Place and approximate date identified from enclosure.

146 Catron to Sarah Childress Polk, July 24, 1848, describes the Polks' new house in Nashville and the progress on its construction. Catron judges it a fine "Summer House" but remarks, "if the presdt. has the fever and ague, it may turn out that he will be one of your Shivering N. Carolina, law land men, needing a blanket in August." ALS. DLC–JKP.

energy will be selected to establish the new treaty line; who will, if possible do it by the 4th of March next.

J. CATRON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

TO JOHN CATRON

Washington City

July 24th 1848

My Dear Sir:

As Mr Stevenson is often absent from home, attending to his Rail Road & other business, I enclose to you the accompanying open letter addressed to him, and request that you will read it, and in the event of his absence that you will attend to it for me.<sup>147</sup> The front on Vine Street, Mrs Polk insists is quite as important as that on church Street, but upon this point you will see what I have said in my letter to Mr. Stevenson. If your leisure will permit it, I will be obliged to you to examine the Deed to be executed by Mr Bass, and see that the description of the property is correct.

I am busy in my office as usual. Congress has fixed upon no day of adjournment, and will not do so, until the compromise bill upon the slavery question, as applicable to the organization of Territorial Governments in Oregon, Upper California & New Mexico, now before the Senate shall either have been passed or rejected. In its present form the ultimate decision of the question is referred to the Judiciary. It is thought it will pass the Senate by a decided majority. No calculation approximating accuracy can be made as to the vote of the House.

I write in haste.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JAMES LEE

New York

24 July 1848

Sir,

This will be handed to you by Mr G. A. Ward, who is desirous of obtaining the appointment of Secretary to the Territory of California.

I have known Mr Ward favorably for many years as a Merchant of this City, and recommend him as every way calculated to fill the appointment with honor to himself & credit to the Country.

JAMES LEE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by George A. Ward. From Polk's AE: received July 1848.

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Washington City

July 24th 1848

Dear Marshall:

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147 Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, July 24, 1848.

It has been nearly a month since I heard from you. You know that I take an interest in your welfare. I hope you will conform to all the regulations of the Academy, and perform with alacrity every duty which may be required of you. If you will do this and give regular and close attention to your studies, you have talents to enable you to maintain, not only a respectable, but a high standing in your class. If you shall fail to maintain such a standing, it will be your own fault, and I shall be greatly mortified, at it. You should so conduct yourself as to avoid demerit marks, and to be always prepared for your recitations. I am frequently called upon to receive the proceedings of Courts Marshall in the case of Cadets, and in almost every case, the delinquency is to be traced to culpable inattention to duty. It is a painful duty, to confirm the sentences against them but the discipline of the Institution and the good of the service requires it. You must not make the mistaken calculation that because you are my nephew, you can be protected or receive any favour. All the Cadets stand on the same footing, and if unfortunately you should offend, you must calculate to suffer the punishment which may be awarded in your case. I hope that no such case will occur; and I know that you can avoid it, if you resolve to perform your whole duty faithfully. It is my wish that you should write to me every two weeks. If you have nothing else to communicate, you can inform me how your health is, and how you are progressing in your studies. I shall expect to receive a letter from you once in every two weeks.

Your Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y. Published in DYF, pp. 65–66.

FROM JOEL B. SUTHERLAND

Philada

July 27th '48 8 oclock am.

My dear Sir,

There is a good deal of excitement here, about the 3 months extra pay. I therefore take leave to add, to what I said yesterday, that "in the finding of Court Martials," where "the pay" is suspended, it includes rations & every thing else. But when the sentance operates upon pay only, the court adds pay, proper. I send this as Amicus Curia wishing prosperity to the President & his Administration.

J B SUTHERLAND

[N.B.] I wrote the annex'd lines.<sup>148</sup>

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received July 29, 1848.

FROM SARAH MYTTON HUGHES MAURY

Liverpool [England]—

July 28th 1848

My dear Sir/

I think it will give you pleasure to hear the opinion expressed by the Earl of Shrewsbury of Mr Martin, whom you have recently been pleased to appoint Chargé d'Affairs at Rome.

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148 Sutherland affixed a printed clipping of his poem "The Soldiers' Return" above the letter. He wrote this note to the right of the clipping.

The Earl by the marriage of his two daughters with the Princes Doria & Borghese is connected with the most distinguished and influential families in Italy, and he is besides as you of course well know, the leading Catholic Peer of England.

"I wish to tell you," he says, "that we found Mr Martin a particularly clever, entertaining, gentlemanly, and high principled person. He was just the man to select for Rome; his Catholic prepossessions are very strong."

From one whose position affords such excellent opportunities of forming a correct judgment, this opinion is interesting, and I have therefore taken the liberty of transmitting it to you—trusting that you know how dear to me is the praise of all that is American.

I learn from Miss VanNess that Mrs. Polk is looking quite well, and that you have quite recovered your health. Will you favour me by offering to Mrs. Polk my most kind remembrance. My conversations with Genl Armstrong about America are among my great sources of happiness.

I blush to speak to you of this suffering country—we are in fact in a state of revolution, and from the reports of today, we seem little short of the state of the continent; it is in vain that the government papers turn the Confederations of Ireland into ridicule—it is in vain that armies are sent out against them. When the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended, in what are Englishmen and Irishmen better off than the serfs of Russia? And an imbecile Administration, a renegade Whig faction, sleep on the brink of the volcano, and think that thus they shall govern & triumph! In fatal security, in cruel recklessness they have voted coercion—but every honest and clear sighted man condemns their course of folly. Meanwhile we have again the potato disease in all its severity, but as you are blessed with an unusually early and abundant harvest, this is of less importance. And the calamity in its ultimate influence may prove a blessing for it will utterly destroy the remnant of Protection.

I remain, my dear Sir,

your faithful friend

and loyal subject

SARAH MYTTON MAURY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM WILLIAM O. BUTLER

Washington

July 29th 1848

Genl Butler has the pleasure to inform the President in reply to his note of this date<sup>149</sup> that he will call on him this evening at eight oclock. He would call earlier but that he has accepted Col Bentons invitation to dinner.

[WILLIAM O. BUTLER]

AN. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received July 29, 1848.

FROM LESLIE COMBS

Lexington Ky

July 31/48

Sir

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149 Letter not found.

I suppose some warlike expedition is contemplated & not a Buffaloe hunt.<sup>150</sup>

Ought not the Govt. to look to it?

LESLIE COMBS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Joseph R. Underwood at Washington City; PC on which it is written addressed to Lexington, Ky. Enclosed in Underwood to Polk, August 10, 1848.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

London

5. August. 1848

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 17th of June & its enclosures reached me so seasonably, that I was able to reply to Governor Swain on the Fourth day of July. I did not fail to make particular search in the archives of this Government for all that related to the early movements for liberty in North-Carolina. Governor Sir James Wright of Georgia was the first to send from America a copy of the Mecklenburg Resolves; & that copy is still in its place. I had already had a copy made of them, & was exalting in the thought of my great discovery, when I found that simultaneously with myself Governor Swain had succeeded in finding a copy of them in Charleston. So much the better: history gains, though I lose the pleasure of being the first to recover for North Carolina a document of such surpassing interest in her history. Connected with the Mecklenburg Resolves are two or three little passages in letters & journals, of which I will send you copies at some future day, if you desire them. The Archives abound also with papers on the Regulators, which show those ill-used men to have been pioneers in the valley of the Mississippi & patriots always. After the defeat of the Americans under Gates, the Regulators were among the principal resources of the patriot-party in rallying anew & recovering the Carolinas under the lead of Greene. And they knew what they were about; claiming to be in the regular line of succession from the opponents to the Stamp Act. Indeed I do not think that the instincts of any state turned more directly towards freedom than those of the people of the midland counties of North Carolina, or that any started earlier in the career of independence, or pursued that end with more perseverance.

The ratified treaty with Mexico soon followed your letter. I know not what is said of this treaty at home; but an American abroad cannot but see that it is one of the greatest events of our time. So it is viewed by British Statesmen; so it is regarded by those of our countrymen who stay in Europe long enough to form their judgments or indulge their

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150 Combs wrote this letter on an unsigned invitation he had received, titled "BUFFALO HUNT ON THE RIO GRANDE" and dated July 13, 1848. It asks those interested in participating "next Fall" to write to "the Grand Scribe of the O.O.O.," in New Orleans, by September 1 and notes that "each Hunter" must provide his own "Rifles, Muskets or 'Revolvers.'" "As occasional attacks may be expected from the hostile Indians roaming in that section of country," the invitation notes, "it is recommended that each party should be organized and drilled before meeting at the rendezvous. It is expected that many friendly Mexicans, skilful in the sport, and acquainted with the habits and haunts of the animal, will join in the chase." PC. DLC–JKP.

patriotic feelings independent of party influences. Every one sees that the Pacific Ocean falls under the peaceful influence of our flag: & that it is our civilization which is to make its impression on the islands in that immense waste of water and on the opposite continent. Japan & China are brought near to the United States: & the Sandwich Islands become to us far more valuable than Southern Africa ever was or ever will be to England. This country will scarce make a struggle to dispute our supremacy in the mighty West; & will find its attention more and more engaged by its domestic difficulties. The struggles in Europe are but beginning: & will not rest, til every vestige of feudal nobility is effaced; and the power of the people shall have superseded that of hereditary princes. That the era of the commencement of the great struggle, which will go on for generations, is contemporary with your administration, is an additional testimony to its merit. I have been, in the short period of my residence here, the witness to the great advancement, which the American name has in the last three years made in the respect of all Europe & in the affections of all lovers of free Government. Switzerland will at once succeed in imitating our constitution; France will succeed but not quite so soon; Germany openly avows that she takes America for her model in her desire of effecting the union of States which desire like our own to preserve also their local & separate existence & opportunity of development; and these most expressive tributes to our institutions as well as the wish of European industry to emigrate & seek a home with us would not be at this time so rapidly on the increase, if there were not the conviction that our country is, well administered as well as well constituted. If from considering the relation of your administration to the world, you look at home, I can only say, what the near approach to its end enables me to say without fear of misconstruction, that for fidelity to the democratic principle & the best interests of our country, it has never been equaled. The establishment of the constitutional Treasury, the overthrow of protection, the adjustment of our boundary, the rigidly strict construction of the Constitution, the annexation of Texas, the purchase of New Mexico & California form a series of measures, the like of which can hardly ever again be crowded into one administration of four years, & which in the eyes of posterity will single yours out among the administrations of the century. The state of the country now shows your complete success. You have settled every great question; and when parties seek to select your successor, no one of the old issues is found so far undecided as to kindle zeal or inflame the public mind. How tame is the present contest, compared with that of 1844. The public is tranquil from apathy in the comparison. And the reason is because you have quieted the questions that then agitated the public mind. This is my great source of grief at the course of a portion (which in the end as I believe, will be found to be a very small portion) of the democracy of the North, in its secession. They put at hazard the great measures which your administration has perfected, & in which the public with unusual unanimity is beginning to acquiesce. The business men of New York at this time dread a change, and enter reluctantly upon the struggle. I think as ill of slavery as Mr Van Buren can do, & should deplore any measures that would stimulate the increase of the African race within our limits; but I cannot see how a party organization, comprising whigs of every hue, men who were loudest in denouncing Mr Van Buren eight years ago, can by any possibility tend to accomplish that end. The protest of old against slavery, the declaration of human equality in our great title-deed of independence, the suppression of the Slave trade, the

gradually increasing tenderness towards the black, the Ordinance of 1787, the acts of Congress containing slavery, all came from the judgment of the country, including south and north; and I see no good reason for not continuing to abide by that which shall be the enlightened judgment of the collective country.

But I have written more than you will have time to read, though I have by no means said all that was on my mind in reference to your position before the democratic party & the country. Looking on from a distance, I say with you, the democracy can succeed even without New York; thanks to the vigor infused into it by an administration which with all its personal enemies, has satisfied the judgment & the pride & the patriotism of the country. I hope it will succeed.

Mrs. Bancroft joins me in desiring our affectionate regards to Mrs Polk & in sending you our best wishes for your happiness.

GEORGE BANCROFT

[P.S.] Pray keep down the administrative expenses. They love us in Europe because we spend so little on the army & navy in time of peace. Let us not lose that good name. The papers say the House has voted \$11.000.000 for the navy alone. The world expects of republicanism economy in army & navy expenditures, as a cardinal principle.

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department

August 10, 1848

Sir:

In obedience to your directions, and in answer to the Resolution of the Senate of the 18th July ultimo, I have the honor to transmit copies of correspondence and papers on file, which contain all the information in possession of this Department, relating to the seizure or capture of the American ship Admittance on the Coast of California, by a vessel of war of the United States. The papers and documents transmitted show "what proceedings have occurred in regard to the said vessel or her cargo," so far as they are known at this Department.<sup>151</sup>

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, probably in Samuel L. Harris's hand. DNA-RG 45. Published in Senate Executive Document No. 72, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1.

FROM JOSEPH R. UNDERWOOD

Senate Chamber

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151 The merchant ship Admittance left New Orleans on October 2, 1846, carrying cotton, iron, paper, and silk. Owned by Bostonians Charles B. Fessenden and Richard S. Fay, it was captained by Peter Peterson and chartered by Wyllie & Egana, of New Orleans, agents for Rubio, Brother & Co., a firm of Spaniards in Mexico. Ownership of at least the cotton transferred, en route, to Barron, Forbes & Co., a British firm in Tepic, Mexico. On April 7, 1847, Cmdr. John A. Montgomery, of the USS Portsmouth, seized the ship and cargo at San José de Cabo, Baja California, Mexico. He charged the owners, charterers, and captain with the intention illegally to deliver the cargo to San Blas, Mexico. After the U.S. Court of Admiralty. . . .



10 Augt, 48

Sir

The inclosed letter sent me by Genl Combs<sup>152</sup> I transmit to you at his request, so that you may judge whether there is concealed under this movement hostile designs upon Mexico.

J. R. UNDERWOOD

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Joseph Knox Walker's AE: "Received from Senator Underwood of Ky on 10 Aug. 1848, delivered to the President Aug 11. 1848, who requested me to inform Judge Underwood that this was the first intimation he had recd of any such design or purpose from any quarter whatever, that this was without signature but he would transmit it to the Senate with his letter if he desired it, & that he would at all events use all his Constitutional means to discharge his duty to prevent a violation of the treaty with Mexico."

FROM JACOB GOULD

Rochester N.Y.

Aug. 12th 1848

Sir,

When I saw you, early in July, you supposed, as I then did, that the unhappy divisions of the Democracy in this State, would have the effect to give the Electoral vote to Genl. Taylor—since Genl. Taylor's letter of acceptance and the strange union, at Buffalo, of Whigs, Abolitionists and a large portion of the Democracy of this state—(unless ere the election, some other mighty change comes over the People of the Empire state.) Genl. Taylor cannot get the Vote, and consequently cannot be elected by the People. The election may, perhaps, go to the House of Representatives and if so, Gov. Cass will, doubtless, be elected.

I have just seen a very intelligent Gentleman of Connecticut (commissioner of school Fund.) who has been spending a few weeks in Northern Ohio, he says Genl. Taylor has not the least chance in that section of Ohio. In our flourishing Town, he remarked to some Gent., you are mostly whigs here. Yes was the reply and he added all go for Taylor, I suppose. The reply was Taylor cannot get 3 votes in Town out of several hundred. . . .

J. GOULD

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

P.O. Dep.

Augt. 17h 1848

My dear Sir,

I recd the enclosed reply<sup>153</sup> about one Oclock to day (Friday). It has turned out as I apprehended. Any directions you may give will be punctually attended to without troubling you to return.

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152 Genl Combs

153 Johnson enclosed a telegram of August 17, 1848, from James W. Wymer, in reply to Johnson's of August 15, communicating James Shields's declining the Oregon Territory governorship due to his Mexican War wounds "and other reasons." "His recovery," Wymer explains, "is not such as to enable

C JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bedford Springs, Penn. From Polk's AE, with erroneous summary: "Transmits to me at the Bedford Springs Penn: a Telegraphic Despatch, announcing that Genl. Shields to accept the office of Governor of Oregon;/Recd. Augt. 21st 1848."

FROM WILLIAM J. BROWN

P.O. Dept

Aug 19. 1848

Dear Sir

I learn from Mr Johnson that Gen Shields declines the appointment of Governor of Oregon. I hasten to say that I hope you may find it consistant with your public duties to confer the appointment on Gen Joseph Lane of Indiana. I know he would gladly accept and would be ready to leave for Oregon on 12 hours notice. The only difficulty would be the want of means which to some extent would be furniished to him by the goverment.

W. J. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: "Recd. at the Bedford Springs Penn. Augt. 21st 1848."

FROM SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

[Washington City]<sup>154</sup>

Saturday [August 19, 1848]<sup>155</sup> 2 O'C.

Dear Husband

I do hope when you receive this note you will not say to yourself, that your wife is as annoying as the office seekers, persecuting you where ever you go, by compelling you to open and read a little budget of nonsense of my own sad complaints that I am seperated from you.

Yesterday not being very well, I kept my room and felt disconsolate; Every thing bore the appearance of unusual quietness. The door bell only rung a few times.

This morning our friends got off at last for Mt. Vernon.

I beg that you will stay long enough at Bedford to renovate your health. Greived as I may be at your absense, (don't think I am jesting) I do not wish you to leave there before Monday week, a shorter time can not benefit you. How often do you intend to write me?

Your affectionate Wife

SARAH POLK

ALS, facsimile, published in MSCP , between pp. 116 and 117. Addressed to Bedford, Penn. James K. Polk's AE, facsimile: "Mrs. Sarah Polk/Recd. at Bedford Springs Augt.<sup>156</sup> 1848." Transcriptions published in MSCP, p. 116; 88YSP, p. 105; and SCP, p. 95.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Washington

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him to undertake an arduous journey at this season of the year, or the arduous duties in such an office."

Partly printed L, telegram. DLC–JKP.

154 Place identified through content analysis.

155 Date identified from postmarks and through content analysis.

156 Place identified through content analysis.

Aug 19. 1848

My dear Sir.

There is nothing of interest, transpiring since you left. I clip the following from the N.Y. Ev Post.<sup>157</sup> I know not what it means.

I enclose a letter for Sam.<sup>158</sup>

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: "Recd. at the Bedford Springs Penn.—Augt. 22nd 1848;/ Encloses a slip from the N.Y. Ev. Post of which I know nothing."

TO JOSEPH LANE

Bedford Springs Pennsylvania

August 21st 1848

Dear Sir:

On the 14th Instant I nominated Genl. James Shields of Illinois to the Senate of the United States, for the Office of Governor of the Territory of Oregon, and the nomination was on that day confirmed. Genl. Shields was notified of his appointment through the Telegraph, and has answered declining to accept. Before I left Washington to spend a few days at this place, I made known my intention, in the event Genl. Shields should decline, to appoint you in his place. Your commission has been accordingly made out, and is now forwarded to you by Mr Joseph L. Meek whom I have appointed Marshall of Oregon, and who will deliver it to you in person with this letter.<sup>159</sup> It is deemed very important that the Governor and other officers appointed for Oregon, should set out in time to cross the Mountains before the snows of winter shall obstruct the passage. In order to do this no time is to be lost. Orders have been given to Genl. Kearney to have an escort of Mounted Riflemen in readiness at Fort Leavenworth, to accompany the officers of the Territorial Government, on their journey upon their arrival at that place. I hope you may accept the

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157 Walker affixed a brief article, from the August 18, 1848, New York Evening Post, titled "'Slave Abduction Case'" and attributed by the paper to "A friend." According to the article, "'the President of the United States, speaking of the abduction, by wholesale, of numbers of negro slaves, some time since, makes use of the following language: "Had this been to give them freedom, he" (that is, the abductor) "would have done right. But it was to consign them," &c. &c. Are not the doctrines of freedom gaining ground, indeed, when the most prominent of southerners, himself the owner of slaves, openly acknowledges—and commits to paper—the opinion, that whoever takes away those slaves to give them their freedom, does "right"?"' The author promises "'proof'" of the president's statement "'should the fact be denied by any responsible party.'" DLC–JKP. The article, however, was misleading: it quoted not Polk but an earlier president. Thomas Jefferson, discussing the 1781 occupation by British general Charles Cornwallis, Lord Cornwallis, of Jefferson's Elkhill plantation in Goochland County, Va. , wrote, "He carried off also about 30. slaves: had this been to give them freedom he would have done right, but it was to consign them to inevitable death from the small pox and putrid fever then raging in his camp." Jefferson to William Gordon, July 16, 1788, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 13, March to 7 October 1788 , ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 363–64.

158 Letter to Samuel P. Walker not found.

159 The commission was dated August 18, 1848. Partly printed DS. InU–Li.

important office now tendered to you, and that you may be able to accompany Mr Meek and the other officers to Oregon this fall. You should be at Fort Leavenworth, early in September, when I have no doubt you will find the escort in readiness to move without a day's delay. On reaching Oregon the escort will remain in the country, as a part of the military force which will be employed there. It is intended to send 1000. men to Oregon. All of them except the escort will probably be sent round by sea.

Hoping that you may accept the appointment . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed “To Genl. Joseph Lane of Indiana” and delivered by Joseph L. Meek in Vanderburgh County, Ind., probably on August 27, 1848.

FROM SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Washington City

[August 21, 1848]<sup>160</sup>

I am this morning distressed on your account at the change in the weather, fearing that you will be discouraged and return home without benefit to yourself. I hope that you will not get sick, and know that you will keep a large fire, and wish that you may be able to stay as long as you intended when you left. There is nothing to call your attention back here so soon. I saw Mr. Buchanan last evening; he was full of the foreign news, but I learned nothing very specific. I did not go to church on yesterday. I coughed so much I was afraid of disturbing the congregation. I would be very happy to be with you to-day at Bedford. The visit of our family circle to Mt. Vernon has passed off very well. The trip to New York and Tennessee is still on the tapis, and when they will be accomplished is more than I can tell. I heard from you verbally on yesterday morning. I fear that you will be so taken up with the Democracy of Pennsylvania that you will not find time to write me. If it rains to-morrow as it does to-day I will look for you back on Wednesday. Not that I think you ought to come, but knowing you as well as I do, I fear that you will. I beg you to be patient and wait for sunshine.

[SARAH POLK]

PL. Published in MSCP , p. 117. Also published in 88YSP , p. 106, and SCP , p. 96.

Manuscript envelope—with endorsements—but not letter has been found. From James K. Polk's AE: “Recd. at Bedford-Springs Augt. 1848.” Sarah Childress Polk's AE: “for Mrs Nelson.” DLC–JKP.

FROM ALBERT GALLUP

Albany [N.Y.]<sup>161</sup>

August 22d 1848

Dear Sir,

An effort is being, or soon will be made for the removal of Gen. Gould now Marshall of the Northern District of this State. I doubt the propriety of the movement, or to say at least, its policy. Quere, Would it not be better to leave him where he is, than to turn him out before

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160 Place and date identified through content analysis and from postmark of Washington City, August 22, on envelope.

161 State identified through content analysis.

election? By the 15th of Novr. we will all know who will be President (if he live). We will also know who during the coming contest have been faithful to the Democratic faith. If Gen Gould should not be, as I believe he will not be!, faithful!!, "May his days be few & another take his office." I would like to have it. We are laboring here as best we can for the success of the Baltimore nominees. Strange it is, that Mr. V. B should have so soon lost his Southern principles. I was at the white house by especial invitation in 1838.

The President, Mr. Wright & several others besides myself were there. The main question discussed was Atherton's resolutions. I did not believe in the propriety or necessity of passing them. The President & Mr. Wright, both, asked me what I would do with abolition petitions. I answered, I would refer them to the appropriate Committee or Committes.

If Petitioners ask for the abolishment of Slavery & the Slave trade in the district of Columbia I would refer to the Committee on that District.

If petitioners asked for the same in territories of the US, I would refer it to the committee on Territories. Wright said, what the<sup>162</sup> would you say were you on either of those Committees? I answered, I would make a very short report. It should be something

like this—<sup>163</sup>"The committee to which has been refered sundry petitions asking for the abolishment of Slavery & the Slave trade in the District of Columbia & Territories of the United [States]"<sup>164</sup> Respectfully report, that in the judgment of said Committee, it is a matter with which Congress has no right to meddle or interfere." Mr. Van Buren remarked, The South will not be satisfied with any thing short of the resolutions of Atherton. I replied by saying, The South did not seem to be dissatisfied with the report of Mr. Pinckney of S.C. I believe in the right, of petition. We are the servants, not the masters of the people! The people place us where we are. They may at times ask us to do what we cannot do constitutionally. If they do so, would it not be better to give them our reasons for rejecting their prayer, than to lay petitions on the table without reading, reference, or consideration? It was the opinion of a majority of the conclave, that no man could be recognised as a democrat, or, a friend to the then administration; who would not go the whole length of the Atherton Resolutions. They were passed, no man more anxious for their passage than Mr. Van Buren. (apparently) Where is he now? It pains me whenever the thought comes over me—I have been one of his supporters! The old world has had its Iscariot The new its Arnold & Van Buren. I will not mention Burr in this category; because, I think him better than the rest. It is impossible to give any reliable opinion in regard to the election in this State.

Many whigs will vote for V. B. Many will stay at home & not vote at all. I believe that the Buffalo nomination will rather profit than injure us. I dont' know but the wish may be father to the belief. We shall see whether or not the belief be well founded. Mr. Van Buren has been for many years the pet of this state. You cannot have forgotten who were his wire

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162 Short dashes here and below may represent commas or periods; others in this letter have been so rendered.

163 Short dashes here and below may represent commas or periods; others in this letter have been so rendered.

164 Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

pullers in 47–8. Would Hoffman, Purdy, Butler, Gillett & lots of others have given you even a “quasi” support but for loaves & fishes?

ALBERT GALLUP

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM ROBERT WILLIAMS ET AL.<sup>165</sup>

Hollidaysburgh [Penn.]

August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1848

Dear Sir—

The undersigned a few of your Democratic friends of Blair County having heard of your visit to Bedford Springs, feel anxious, in common with their Democratic Brethren of this place, to take by the hand and hold converse with the man who has so fully realized the expectations of the friends of Equal rights throughout the Union—and whose administration of the Government thus far has clearly illustrated, and largely contributed towards the perpetuation of, those sound democratic doctrines as held forth by Jefferson, Jackson, Madison & Monroe.

We therefore tender you a Cordial invitation to visit this place on your return to the Seat of Government. We will be happy to greet you at our mountain homes.

ROBT WILLIAMS

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bedford, Penn., and forwarded to Washington City.

Postmarked Hollidaysburg, August 26, and Bedford, August 27. From Polk's AE: received August 30, 1848.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Bedford Springs<sup>166</sup>

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1848

My Dear Sir:

Mr McKeon of N. York C arrived here on yesterday and left this morning. He informed me that after consulting his two friends in N.Y. he had concluded to accept the place himself. I told him that I had said to you, that I would leave the selection to you, as you were better able to judge than I could be, who should be appointed. Since Mr McK. left, I have seen in the Pennsylvanian of the 22<sup>nd</sup> (yesterday) the statement which I enclose.<sup>167</sup> Though all my sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the oppressed and suffering people of Ireland, yet

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165 Letter written by Williams and signed by him and five others.

166 Reference is to the mineral springs in Bedford, Penn.

167 The enclosed clipping from the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian contains a statement signed by John McKeon, O'Connor, Horace Greeley, and five other members of the Directory of the Friends of Ireland. They assert that news brought to New York City by the Cambria, from British “Tory papers, is intended to deceive the public, and to depress the cause of Ireland. Collisions have occurred, the precise result of which cannot be stated, as the patriotic journals are all suppressed. But known events . . . are all encouraging. The whole Government force has been employed for a week in attempts to arrest the leaders without effecting a single capture. Those leaders have adopted the most effectual means, and will be successful.” The authors call for “prompt and continued action” by “our friends in every part of the Union.” NjP.

as President of the U. States, I would be bound to enforce our neutrality laws, and should do nothing which would have the appearance of encouraging their violation. If I had seen the statement before Mr McK. left I would have told him so frankly. I do not know that it should have any influence upon my action, but think it proper to enclose it to you, and to inform you of what has occurred, that you may be, the better able to advise me on my return.

Mr Meek reached here on the evening of the 21st bringing despatches &c. I signed Genl. Lane's commission; wrote a letter to him, and sent a Telegraphic despatch to Louisville for him, on the same evening, and Mr Meek proceeded on his journey that night. Will you inform Mr Buchanan of this, as I have engaged to take a ride this morning and have not time to write to him. I will be in Washington, either on Saturday evening or Monday evening.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NjP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "(Private)" on the cover and at the top of the letter. One of Marcy's AEs: "3 Vol US Statutes at Large 447." See also ALS, copy. DLC-JKP.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Washington

Aug 23. 1848

Dear Sir.

I received your letter of the 20th<sup>168</sup> this morning. You will have learned from Col Johnson's letter,<sup>169</sup> which he informed me he sent to you on Saturday & from the arrival of Maj Meek with General Lane's commission, that your action & direction was anticipated. Wm J. Brown is very certain that Gen'l Lane will be glad to accept. I showed yr letter to Mr. Buchanan who thought it unnecessary to do more than had already been done—says he requested you if you signed the commission to have Gen Lane telegraphed throug Mr Read the P-M at Louisville.

There is nothing of interest here. Aunt Sally has got entirely well of her cold.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC-JKP. From Polk's AE: "Recd. at the Bedford Springs Penn. Augt. 24th 1848."

TO AARON V. BROWN

[Bedford, Penn.]

August 24, 1848<sup>170</sup>

My Dear Sir:

I received early in this month your letter of the 12th of July, but which as you inform me in a postscript, you failed to put into the mail until the latter days of that month. Before the adjournment of Congress my time was so constantly occupied, that I found it to be impossible to answer it. Since that time I have been spending a few days at this place for relaxation and the benefit of my health.

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168 Letter not found.

169 Cave Johnson to Polk, August 17, 1848.

170 Place and date identified from Polk's AE to Brown to Polk, July 12 and c. July 25, 1848.

It has given me pain to learn from you, the embarrassments under which you labour in the pending political contest in the State, and it would give me still more, if I have unconsciously contributed to produce them. Surely I had no such intention and such a thought had never occurred to me, until I received your letter. You state in your letter "I never wanted office under your administration." This I had always understood to be your true position; and this being so, I am at a loss to conceive, how any of our mutual political friends in the State, could come to the conclusion, as you state they have, that you had been "strangely pretermitted, if not neglected in the distribution of honors." In regard to what illiberal political opponents may say, both you and I have been long enough in public life to know how little it should be regarded. They are seldom able to inflict any injury, by such means. When I held a conversation with you, at the time I was forming my cabinet, I understood your position, and have ever since understood it to be as you now state it. You returned to Tennessee not looking to the Federal Government or desiring any position however honourable under it, and entered upon the canvass as a candidate for Governor in which you were successful. At the end of two years, you were a candidate for re-election and none of your friends more sincerely regretted your defeat than I did. Up to that time, the whole country saw and knew that you would not have accepted any position under the Federal Government if tendered to you. Since that time, the tender of a high position, which you state, and I knew, you would have declined to accept, could have been of no service, in giving you greater character or political standing that you already possessed. With this strong impression on my mind, and in its correctness I think I cannot be mistaken, such a tender as you speak of, was not made. You and I have been long intimate personal and political friends, and I should be sorely distressed if I had done any-thing which could injuriously affect, you in any possible way. Upon a calm review of this painful subject, I think you must on reflection be satisfied, that you attribute too much consequence to what those who are uninformed on the subject may say.

In regard to a connection with a newspaper at Washington, I scarcely thought you serious, and it made so little impression on my mind that I had forgotten it, until it was called to mind by your letter. It would have been a position, far below your merits and wholly incompatible, with your character and the high public stations you had filled.

[JAMES K. POLK]

AL, draft. DLC-JKP. See Brown to Polk, July 12 and c. July 25, 1848, with which Polk filed this.

FROM J. CARMICHAEL<sup>171</sup>

Philadelphia, Pa

August 24th '48

Sir Your Excellency

The extreme abuse that I have seen of the officers of the "Pension office" in granting the warrants of volunteers in the late Mexican war has induced me to address you. Twice have I been in Washington where my men presented claims and they were allowed.

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171 The author's first name may have been James or John.



In more than fifty instances through agent I have known them to wait for weeks and weeks under expence; and then to be compelled to sell the[m]<sup>172</sup> unless some friend would lend them money enough to keep them, untill they got their warrant.

As in my letter to Your Excellency these things should not be, and I am so fully convinced of Your Excellency's heart on that point that a mere attention to it is all that is necessary. It would have been a pleasure to me to have met you at "The springs," but that pleasure which I anticipated I have to forgo.

Perhaps I am going too far, but may I particularly ask you, in your sojourn at Andersons not to forget my kind War friends, Gen'l Bowman & Messrs Chew, Tate &c &c.

J. CARMICHAEL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Bedford, Penn., and forwarded to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 30, 1848.

TO LEWIS CASS

Bedford Springs Penn.

Augt. 24th 1848

My Dear Sir:

After my long confinement, and arduous duties, at Washington, I felt at the close of the late session of Congress, that I required some relaxation from business, and resolved to spend a few days at this place. It has so happened that ever since the commencement of my administration, some important public question has been pending, requiring my constant attention, and I have not been absent a month, from the seat of Government, during that whole period. The closing days of Congress were of an important and highly exciting character. I rejoice that a Territorial Government, has at length been provided for Oregon, but deeply regret that the delicate and agitating question concerning slavery, could not have been settled by Congress, upon principles of conciliation and compromise, and Territorial Governments have been established also, over New Mexico and California. In view of the excitement which existed, threatening to array the country into geographical parties, which could not fail to destroy the harmony, and might prove dangerous to the existence of the Union, I felt it to be my duty, to accompany the Announcement of my approval and signature of the Oregon Bill, with the message which you have seen. That message, at the same time, that it expresses my well-considered convictions, it was hoped would tend to allay the excitement in the different sections of the Union. Time will decide whether it will have this effect. I was strongly urged to with-hold my sanction from the Oregon Bill. A Southern convention I was informed was openly spoken of by members of Congress. I gave my approval to the Bill, and protested against such a convention, as calculated to do no possible good, but on the contrary to widen the breach between the North and the South, upon a question which I believed and still believe, ought to have been, & can yet be, settled by a satisfactory compromise. I trust the message may do no harm, and hope it may do good. Since its appearance I have heard nothing further of the projet of a Southern convention. It cannot I think be doubted, that some of the leading men of the Whig party, North and South, preferred to have no settlement of the

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172 Letter uncertain, ink blot.

slavery question, at the late session, but desired to keep it an open question, with a view to political agitation, calculating upon its effect in the Presidential Election. The establishment of a Territorial Government over Oregon, has deprived them to that extent, of the wicked use, which they may have designed to make of so delicate & dangerous a question. I think I may safely congratulate you, upon the almost certain prospect of your election. Should the excitement in the South, upon the slavery question be allayed, by the prospect, that in organizing Territorial Governments, in New Mexico and California, it will ultimately be settled by compromise, I think that result is certain. Indeed the present prospect is, that you may receive the support of every Southern State, except Kentucky. I need not assure you, that I shall be most happy, if, at the close of my term I can surrender the Government into your hands. In that event the great principles embodied in the Baltimore Resolutions of 1844, and 1848, which I have endeavoured faithfully to maintain, will be carried out. Since I have been here I have seen several of our leading and best informed political friends, who assure me that the defection of the Barnburners in New York, and the nominations made at Buffalo, will produce not the slightest effect upon the Democracy of this state, and that your majority will probably exceed that given to Governor Shunk at the last state election. My information from Tennessee is highly encouraging. Governor Brown and others have taken the stump, are actively canvassing the State, and are confident of success. I shall return to Washington on tomorrow, where I shall be pleased to hear from you.

With my kind regards, to Mrs. Cass— . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU—C. Addressed to Detroit and marked “(Private).” See also L, copy, in Joseph Knox Walker’s hand. DLC—JKP.

FROM O’FERRALL & CO.

Bath, Va. c.

[August 24, 1848]<sup>173</sup>

Sir

We will be happy to entertain you for a few days at our place.<sup>174</sup>

OFERRALL & CO

L. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Couton’s Hotel, Cumberland, Md. From Polk’s AE: “Recd. at Cumberland Md. Augt. 25th 1848;/Rooms had been engaged for me at another house, & I made a mistake in not stopping at O’Farrell’s.”

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

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173 Place identified from advertisement; approximate date identified from Polk’s AE and through content analysis.

174 O’Ferrall wrote this letter beneath an advertisement, dated June 1, 1848, for the Pavilion Hotel, which, with the Bath Boarding House, could accommodate 150 guests. The advertisement stresses the two hotels’ convenience to “the Ladies’ as well as the Gentlemen’s Baths” and “the main drinking Springs and Baths” at Berkeley Springs, Bath, Va. It notes the nearest stop on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, St. John’s Run; the company’s contracted coaches; the availability of spring water for guests; and the presence of a musical band. PD. DLC—JKP.

Cumberland Md.

Augt. 25th 1848. 6 O.C. P.M.

My Dear Wife:

I arrived here this afternoon, and met an invitation from the proprietor of the Springs at Bath, to stop at his place.<sup>175</sup> Dr. Foltz & S. P. Walker both advise me to do so. Though I am becoming impatient to get back to Washington, I have concluded to stop at Bath on tomorrow, and will be at Washington on Monday evening. My health is good. I recived a letter from Knox this evening & am glad to learn that you have recovered from your cold.<sup>176</sup>

Your affectionate [Husband]

[JAMES K. POLK]<sup>177</sup>

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Washington

Sunday 27h Augt. '48

My dear Sir,

I have concluded to be absent ten or twelve days & will leave in the morning. I have learned since you left, that Gov. Bagby wrote a letter in the fall of '45 & which was published in the Mobile Register (which may be found in the department of state) in which he says, as a reason for his course on the admission of Texas, that he had been informed from three different quarters (Haywood Dix & Blair) that you had pledged yourself to adopt the alternative proposed in the amendment of Benton & there can be no doubt of the existence of a conspiracy between these three to assail and slander you & make capital if possible in the Presidential election. It occurs to me as the best possible course to meet such villany, is to stand still & keep Mr. R. quiet until the Presidential election is over. They will make themselves voluntary witnesses in behalf of Blair before that is over, probably as soon as B. F. B. is removed. I could not leave without making this communication. I wished also to make an additional suggestion upon the removal of B. F. B. to tender of it to Chancellor Walworth. McK. &, the Oconners are too much identified with the movements in behalf of Ireland, to fill that office.

Should desire to make any communication to me, address me at N. York, from which they will be immediately forwarded by the Post Master.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Berkley Springs Va

Sunday Morning Augt. 27th 1848

My Dear Wife:

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175 Polk refers to O'Ferrall & Co. to Polk, c. August 24, 1848, though he did not stay at either of that company's lodging facilities.

176 Joseph Knox Walker to Polk, August 23, 1848.

177 Signature and end of closing cut out of letter.

We arrived here at 11. O.Clock on yesterday, and found a large number of highly respectable and fashionable people assembled. Among others are Judge Daniel of the Supreme Court & his daughters; Senator Johnson of Louisiana and Mrs. Johnson, old Dr. Laurie and all the Keys old and young of Washington; the Howards and Loyds of Maryland, Judge Pendleton of Va; &c. &c. I was received with proper consideration. I have been in the bath, and attended the Ball at night. There are about 150. or 200 visitors here. I will take the cars tomorrow mornig & will be in Washington on tomorrow evening. You can direct the carriage to meet me at the Rail Road Depot, about 7. O.Clock P.M.

[JAMES K. POLK]<sup>178</sup>

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM GEORGE C. WHEELER

Pikeville Bledsoe Co Ten

August 28, 1848

Most Respected Sir,

On the 11th Aug 1846, I filed in the patent office 3 Specifications, For Seperate Inventions. 1st a New method of constructing Boats, to Float on the Surface, and which cannot be Sunk in the water an Inch tho the Bottom may be riddled as a Seive. This invention depends Upon an Immense Volume of Condensed air forced Into Cylenders &c. (this also serves for Life Boats Bridges wharfs &c &c.) 2nd a New Method of Generating Steam by which 2/3 of the weight is saved & no danger of Fire &c. 3rd A New method of applying Steam so as to Use its entire percussion powr and Also the power of the Forge usually impacted in Boilers & which is the cause of their Explosions, A further Befferice<sup>179</sup> of which is Most Respectfully Made to said Specifications as filed. Authority to draw the same from the pattent office for the time being is hereby Transmitted. The Commissioner of Pattents will Deliver to the Order of his Excellency James K Polk the above cited Specifications as Filed in Scroll Schedule &c Aug 11th 1848.<sup>180</sup>

GEORGE C. WHEELER

The foregoing I have been Unabe to pattent or to have models made &c owing to my Situation in a pecuniary point of View I delayed 2 years in hopes to obtain ample Funds by the Settlement of Some Land Business but as yet have been disappointed and wishing much to add another bright and Unfading Luminary to this great Era of Improvement, before the Close of your Executive term of office I have Made Free to transmit you the knowledge of the Facts in order by any means to obtain Such Aid as is Nessary I am willing to give any gentleman a full Share for the aid required, or as the Congress of the United States, has appropriated 100000 Dollars as a premium to him or them who shall attain certain maximus in the Steam Improvements, as I am fully aware I have attained the whole I am willing to give the whole of this premium Up for \$2500. which will be an outfit Sufficient to enable me to attend to the whole matter Untill ready for Use & Sale &c.<sup>181</sup>

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178 Closing and signature cut out of letter.

179 Wheeler may have meant to write "Buffer" or "Buffing apparatus."

180 Wheeler probably meant to write "1846."

181 Sentence divisions unclear in this paragraph up to this point.

Remember poor Fulton, & that, as Fulton made so great and powerfull an Improvement Yet, as much more, is now made if not 3. times as much tho. Fulton, must always, have the honour of the, application &c. I am Constrained to believe that on my Inventions going into operation the great Maximum of Steam powr will be attained as Nearly as the Maximum of, Electro Galvanic Power is Attained in its application to Telegraphic Dispatch, all of which is most respectfully Submitted, to the Consideration & Investigation of your excellency and the Investigation of any person or persons you may see proper.

GEORGE C. WHEELER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 7, 1848.

TO JOHN Y. MASON

Washington City

Sep. 2d 1848

Sir

I hereby appoint you to act as Secretary of War, during the temporary absence of the Secretary of War, from the seat of Government.

JAMES K. POLK

L, copy. DNA–RG 92. Marked "Original sent to Comm'y General [George Gibson]. Sept. 5"" on the cover. From E possibly in Archibald Campbell's hand: received September 5, 1848.

FROM GEORGE T. WOOD

Executive Office, Austin

September 2, 1848

Sir,

I have before me a communication from Col. P. H. Bell, commanding the force now in service for the protection of the frontier of Texas against our neighboring Indians, which informs me that the discharge of those troops had been ordered by Genl. Brooke, under instructions from the War Department.

The order of Genl. Brooke, a copy of which has been forwarded to me by Col. Bell, directs the discharge of "Lt. Col. Bell's battallion." This intelligence has created much excitement and alarm among our frontier citizens as the immediate execution of this order would leave them wholly unprotected, until such time as their place might be supplied by such force as the General Government intend to employ for that purpose. Such a measure I feel satisfied was never contemplated by the War Department, advised as it is of the unsatisfactory state of our Indian relations at this particular juncture. If this order be carried out our frontier settlements will recede at once, and the consequence will be not only great individual loss and suffering, but an outbreak on the part of the Indians who are now only restrained by the strong demonstrations made by our troops upon this frontier.

The order of Genl. Brooke, referred to above, directs, that the troops in question be marched to San Antonio, for muster and pay, which furnishes me a reason to believe that he refers to the regiment of Col. Hays, raised in 1847, and which was ordered to Mexico with the exception of one or two companies left under the command of Lieut. Col. Bell on this frontier, and not to such companies as have been raised for frontier defence under a discretionary authority given to the Executive of Texas by the War Department, dated

July 16th 1847, on file in this Office. I am further induced to believe such to have been the intention of Genl. Brooke, as he by the terms of the order many of these troops would have to march a distance of from 200 to 400 miles to reach San Antonio for the purpose of being mustered out which could be as well done at their respective stations, and with far less inconvenience. And whatever may have been the intention of Genl. Brooke, or as expressed by his order, I can see nothing in the General order from the War Department to justify the implication that these troops raised and in service for a special purpose altogether distinct from the War with Mexico were to be discharged. These General orders grew out of a change of our relations with Mexico, but there being no change in our Indian relations their application to these troops seems entirely gratuitous, more especially when this application involves the probability of such serious disasters, for in the interval between the disbandment of the troops now upon our frontier and the supply of their places by others our whole frontier might be desolated. Your early attention is invoked to this matter.

GEO T WOOD

LS, copy, in R. C. Matthewson's hand. Tx. Published in TIP-3, pp. 105-6.

TO AARON V. BROWN

Washington City

Sept. 6th 1848

Dear Sir:

Two publications, the one written by Benjamin Tappan of Ohio, and the other by Francis P. Blair made their appearance in the New York Evening Post of the 28th of July, and were republished in the National Intelligencer of Washington, on the 1st of August last. Printed copies of these publications cut from the National Intelligencer are herewith enclosed to you.<sup>182</sup> In Mr Blair's publication, you will perceive that your name

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182 Enclosures not found. Tappan's letter of July 21, 1848, to Evening Post editor William Cullen Bryant and Blair's letter of July 7, 1848, to Tappan were published in the National Intelligencer under the title "A Chapter of Secret History." Tappan defends his February 1845 vote in the U.S. Senate for the joint resolution offering U.S. annexation to the Republic of Texas, despite earlier having rejected a treaty for the same purpose. He asserts (1) that he expected the Polk, not the John Tyler, administration to act on the resolution; (2) that Polk first had suggested the Senate's amending the House-initiated resolution to give the president the option—in lieu of offering Texas annexation outright—to appoint a commission to reopen treaty negotiations, a process that Sen. Thomas H. Benton had proposed and that Tappan believes would have averted the Mexican War; and (3) that Sen. William H. Haywood, Jr., "told me that he was authorized by Mr. Polk to say . . . that . . . he . . . would submit the Senate amendment as the sole proposition to Texas." The Tyler administration did, however, offer annexation outright and Polk reaffirmed that decision. Blair asserts that President-Elect Polk gave him, then editor of the Washington Globe, "full assurance that he would appoint a commission . . . if passed in conjunction with the House resolution as an alternative" and gave the same "assurance" to Haywood and Sen. John A. Dix. After Polk's inauguration, according to Blair, the president told Dix that "he intended the instant recall of the messenger understood to have been dispatched by Mr. Tyler, and to revoke his orders given in the

is introduced, and a conversation purporting to have been held by him, with you on the subject of the Annexation of Texas, to the United States, is given. I desire to obtain from you, a statement of all you may remember of the conversation alluded to, if any such took place. I request that you will furnish me also with a statement of any conversation, you may have had with me, on the subject of the annexation of Texas, after my arrival in Washington in February 1845, and of all you may know in relation to the matters stated by Mr Tappan and Mr Blair .

It is proper to inform you, that I may deem it necessary to publish your answer.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville; enclosed in Polk to John Catron, September 7, 1848.

TO AARON V. BROWN

Washington City

Sept. 6th 1848

My Dear Sir:

Accompanying this, I have addressed a letter to you,<sup>183</sup> to which I request an answer, as early as your other engagements will enable you to give it. I have not the slightest recollection of ever having held a conversation with either Mr Blair or Mr Tappan , upon the subject of the annexation of Texas. If I did it is certain that I have been wholly misconceived or misunderstood. When I arrived in Washington on the 13th of February 1845, the subject of the annexation of Texas was pending before Congress. The annexation of Texas was one of the main issues upon which I had been elected President of the United States. I was anxious that Congress should, at this then Session, pass some measure for annexation, if Texas would consent. I believed that unless some measure of the kind was passed at that session, there was danger that the “golden moment,” for securing Texas as a part of our Union might pass, and that fine territory be lost forever. My opinions and my anxiety upon the subject were freely and publicly expressed in the Hotel where I was, to all who chose to converse with me on the subject. I was as you know, much surrounded with company from the day of my arrival in Washington, until the day of my Inauguration. I had no opportunity to examine and did not examine, the particular form of the different propositions which were before Congress. I remember to have learned generally in conversation with several persons, and I think it likely among others with yourself, that there was some difficulty in reconciling the two Houses, or in procuring their concurrence upon any one proposition, though there was believed to be a majority of each House in favour of the measure in some form. I remember that I entertained the opinion, and repeatedly expressed the hope, that if the measure could not pass in [our]<sup>184</sup> form, it was better to pass it, in any form than not to pass it all. I may have said in conversation and probably did, that if the form of annexation by negotiation, through the agency of

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last moments of his power, to thwart the design of Congress in affording him (Mr. Polk) the means of instituting a negotiation with a view of bringing Texas peaceably into the Union.”

183 Polk refers to his other letter to Brown of September 6, 1848.

184 Word may, alternately, be “one.”

commissioners should be the one adopted by Congress, or if the measure should pass in the alternative, and that form should be selected by the President, that then, the ablest men in the country should be appointed the commissioners. But that I ever decided in advance, and before I had examined and compared the different propositions which were spoken of, in favour of that form in preference to that of the House, or authorized such a purpose to be communicated to Senators, is wholly inconceivable under the circumstances which existed. If I was so understood I was misunderstood. This is however stated in the publications of Messrs Tappan and Blair . For what purpose and with what motive or object, the statement is made at this late day, (three and one half years after the alledged conversations) I will leave others to determine. I know how difficult it is to prove a negative. Circumstances however exist in this case, which go far to establish the error, (to use no stronger term) of their statement. One of these circumstances is this. The Resolutions for the annexation of Texas, were approved by Mr Tyler on the 1st of March 1845. On that or the next day Mr Calhoun called on me to consult me, in relation to the selection to be made as between the alternative propositions, contained in the Resolutions, informing me that Mr Tyler was deliberating on the subject. I have since learned that Mr Calhoun reported to Mr Tyler , in Cabinet council, the result of his interview with me. It was in substance that I had informed him ( Mr Calhoun ) that I had been so much occupied with company and other engagements, that I had not had time or opportunity even to read the resolutions which had passed Congress, and could therefore give no opinion upon the subject; and that until I was inaugurated and had my own Cabinet around me, I could not undertake to decide or give an opinion on the subject, and that I left it to Mr Tyler to determine for himself, what action, if any, he deemed it proper to take on the subject. Mr Tyler made the election of the alternative embraced in the House propositions, as they were called, and had despatched a special messenger with his decision and instructions to our charge d' affairs to Texas, before he retired from office. On the 6th of March Genl. Almonte the Mexican minister made his communication demanding his passports. It was not until the 10th of March, that the subject was considered by me in my Cabinet. When it was considered I had before me the Resolutions passed by Congress, the election of alternatives made by Mr Tyler and his instructions given to our minister. I had also before me Genl. Almonte 's letter. The whole subject was fully discussed & carefully examined in all its bearings. We were unanimously of opinion that Mr Tyler 's election of alternatives should not be reversed, but should be confirmed. It was so confirmed and with my full assent, and accordingly Mr Buchanan addressed a despatch to that effect to the charge d' affairs. During the whole consideration of the subject not an intimation was given by me, of a preference for the alternative form by negotiation, or that any such pledge as that now attributed to me by Messrs Tappan and Blair had been given. Another circumstance is this. The Senate continued in Executive Session, until the 19th or 20th of March, when they adjourned. If I had determined to select the alternative of appointing commissioners to negotiate, it would have been necessary to nominate these commissioners for confirmation to the Senate, before their adjournment. No such nomination was made, and therefore any Senator must have known, that the alternative of negotiation by the appointment of commissioners had not been adopted, and yet there was no complaint from any Senator or from any other quarter that I had acted in bad faith or violated any pledge. Another



circumstance is this. Texas accepted the overture which was made to her, and in my annual message of December 1845, all that had been done by President Tyler and myself, was communicated to Congress, with all the correspondence on the subject, which was published. Messrs Tappan and Blair were then silent. Texas was shortly afterwards admitted into the Union as a State. The Senators referred to by Messrs Tappan & Blair in their publications, made no opposition to her admission, no charge or allegation that they had been deceived by pledges as to the form of affecting her annexation, and they continued long after that time to support my administration, including the Declaration and prosecution of the war with Mexico. I might add other facts and cogent circumstances, but it is not necessary, and I will not worry you by a recital of them. You had my full confidences, I was in habits of confidential conference with you at the time referred to, by Messrs Tappan & Blair, and I would have been as likely to converse with you, without the least reserve, as with any man living. Neither Messrs Tappan or Blair possessed my confidence. It may become necessary for me to vindicate myself before the public. At all events I desire to be prepared to do so. With this aim I have addressed the accompanying letter to you. I wish in your answer that you should be full, stating all the conversations you held with me on the subject of the annexation of Texas, as far as you may remember them, and all you may know or remember of any conversation you may have held with Mr. Blair. To vindicate truth and protect myself from misconception or misrepresentation, from whatever motive made is all I desire. I will call on Cave Johnson who possessed my full confidence with yourself, to make a statement, such as I request from you, of what he may know. The other members of my Cabinet, who had my confidence also, and with whom I conferred freely and without reserve, from the time I made known to them my intention to invite them to assist me in the administration, I shall if I shall deem it necessary, request to make statements of all my conversations with them on the subject of the annexation of Texas, both before and after my inauguration. But I will not tax your patience longer than to remark, that for obvious reasons, I desire that the fact that I have called on you for a statement of any facts in your possession or knowledge, may not at present be made public. I will hereafter determine whether it will be necessary to make a publication, in vindication of myself or not.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville; enclosed in Polk to John Catron, September 7, 1848; marked "Private."

TO JOHN CATRON

Washington City

Sept. 7th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I request that you will cause the accompanying letter addressed to Gov. A. V. Brown<sup>185</sup> to be delivered to him in person. I send it under care to your address, to guard against the possibility of its falling into other hands, or being opened by any one but the Governor himself. I observe that Gov. B. is actively engaged in the pending political canvass, and

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185 Polk enclosed both of his letters to Aaron V. Brown of September 6, 1848.

letters addressed to him, arriving in his absence from home, may be opened by his family, or by some friend whom he may have authorized to do so. This I desire to prevent. The letter is one of some importance, and I request you to hand it to him, when you shall see him. If he is in a distant part of the State, you can retain it until his return to Nashville, unless you meet with a perfectly safe opportunity to convey it to him.

I am under many obligations to Mr Stevenson and yourself for your kind attention to the progress of house and improvements. I have little doubt the work will be better done, than it would be if I were personally present superintending it.

With kind regards to Mrs Catron . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(Private & confidential).”  
FROM BENJAMIN B. FRENCH

Washington

Sep. 7. 1848

Dear Sir,

Among the letters received by me this morning, is one from the Collector & Naval officer at Newport R.I. containing \$30 “to aid in the election of Cass & Butler.”

I make from it the following extract “This State will undoubtedly give her electoral votes for Taylor & Fillmore. The influence of Banks & Factories give immense power to the Algerine party. And the money of the U.S. now being expended in repairing Fort Adams, goes principally to Algerine whigs employed there in preference to worthy Democrats, in injury to one party which is done by the Engineer in charge.”

I send you this extract in the hope that it may be in your power to remedy a part of the evil complained of.

As Treasurer of the National Democratic Committee, I am in the daily receipt of letters from all parts of the Union, all of which contain money, and the most cheering accounts of the prospects of the Democratic party. The best evidence that the people expect to elect Cass & Butler is the fact that I have recd. about 600 dollars, within the past 6 weeks, from persons out of this city, & in sums from one dollar up to 30. In addition to this I have received upwards of \$200 from subscriptions here, exclusive of the large Congressional fund.

The prospects of a glorious democratic triumph were never more cheering than they now are.

B. B. FRENCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AE: received September 8, 1848.  
FROM ANONYMOUS

Washington

9th Sep. 1848

I observe a sale of 100,000 Muskets advertised at New York first Wednesday in October. Believing the sale of Arms contraband according to the Law of Nations: I beg leave most respectfully, to suggest, that the arms be rendered into old “Old Iron” by beating, and bending, them out of shape.

After the Seven Years War: France sold all her arms and they were purchased and on their way to the Rhine in wagon trains. The celebrated Genl. Vauban repared immediately

to Louis XV and represented the impolicy of arming their neighbors by disarming themselves, and the trains were stopped the contracts cancelled and the arms sent to the diff't arsenals to be turned into materiel for other purposes. The sale of 100,000 stand of arms whilst a Revolutionary spirit pervades the world should cause the humane statesman to pause and reflect on the consequences. Sell those arms at the North and we arm the Free negroes at once to make War on the South. There are thousands of turbulent men principally foreigners & late of the army who would fight for plunder no matter who. They would War against the U.S. as readily as against Mexico.

If this humble effort will stop the sale of the arms it will singularly gratify a Phylanthropist. In the War of 1812 an officer of the Militia could seize public Arms wherever found and the writer has often done that duty with a party of men, but since Arms have been sold by the Govt. thousands of arms have been stolen & sold all over the world.

Great Britain never sells any of her public arms. Nor does France. Besides selling 100000 stand of Arms at New York would give England just cause to believe the object is to arm Ireland.

The writer does not consider his name material or he would sign it in full.

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 12, 1848.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

Sept. 9th 1848

Dear Sir:

I invite your attention to two publications which made their appearance in the New York Evening Post of the 28th of July, and were re-published in the National Intelligencer of Washington on the 1st of August last, the one bearing the signature of Benjamin Tappan, and the other that of Francis P. Blair. A printed copy of these publications, cut from the National Intelligencer is herewith enclosed.<sup>186</sup>

A few days after my arrival in Washington in February 1845, I invited you to accept a place in my Cabinet. After you had intimated a willingness to accept the position tendered to you, I was upon terms of confidential and unreserved intercourse with you. That you might be fully informed in advance, of my views and the principles on which my administration would be conducted, I read to you the Inaugural Address which I had prepared in Tennessee, and which I afterwards delivered to my fellow-citizens on the 4th of March 1845, and conferred freely with you in relation to public affairs. No opinions which I entertained upon any public subject, about which we may have conversed, were with-held from you. As it may become proper that I should at some future day, notice the publications of Messrs Tappan & Blair, I desire that you will furnish me with a statement, of any opinions, views or acts of mine, relating to the subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States, both before and after my Inauguration as President, which may have come to your knowledge.

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186 PLs. DLC—JKP. See letter and notes in Polk to Aaron V. Brown, September 6, 1848 (first such letter).

The enclosed letters have been published in BP, pp. 115–18.

I have not the slightest recollection of ever having held a conversation with either Mr Tappan or Mr Blair on the subject of the annexation of Texas. If I did, it is certain that I was wholly misunderstood. When I arrived in Washington on the 13th of February 1845, the subject of the Annexation of Texas was pending before Congress. That was one of the main issues, upon which I had been elected President of the United States. I was anxious that Congress should at its then Session, pass some measure for annexation, if Texas would consent. I believed that unless some measure with that object, was passed at that Session, there was danger that the "golden moment," for securing Texas as a part of our Union, might pass, and that fine territory be lost forever. My opinions on the subject were freely and pub[li]ckly<sup>187</sup> expressed in the Hotel where I was, to all who chose to converse with me on the subject. I was as you know, almost constantly surrounded with company from the day of my arrival in Washington until the day of my Inauguration: I had no opportunity to examine, and did not examine the particular form of the different propositions which were before Congress. I learned generally in conversations with several persons, and I think it likely among others with yourself, that there was some difficulty in reconciling the two Houses of Congress, or in procuring their concurrence upon any one proposition, though there was believed to be a majority of each House in favour of the measure in some form. I remember that I entertained and expressed the opinion and the hope, that if the measure could not pass in [our]<sup>188</sup> form, it was better to pass it in any form, than not to pass it at all. I may have said in conversation and probably did, for such was my opinion, that if the form of annexation by negotiation, through the agency of commissioners, which as I was informed had been suggested, should be the one adopted by Congress, or if the measure should pass in the alternative, and that form should be selected by the President, that then thee ablest men in the country should be appointed the commissioners. But that I ever decided in advance, and before I had examined and compared the different propositions which were spoken of, in favour of the form by negotiation, in preference to that of the House, or authorized such a purpose to be communicated to Senators, is wholly inconceivable under the circumstances which existed. If I was so understood by any one with whom I may have conversed, I was misunderstood. This however is stated in the publications of Messrs Tappan & Blair. For what purpose and with what object it is stated at this late day (after the lapse of nearly three and an half years[]),<sup>189</sup> I leave to others to determine. I know how difficult it is to prove a negative. Fortunately circumstances exist in this case, which go far to establish the error of their statements. One of these circumstances is this. The Resolutions for the Annexation of Texas, were approved by Mr Tyler on the 1st of March 1845. On that or the next day Mr. Calhoun then Secretary of State, called and conversed with me, in relation to the election proper to be made, as between the alternative propositions embraced in the Resolutions, informing me that Mr Tyler was deliberating on the subject. I have since learned that Mr Calhoun reported to Mr Tyler

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187 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

188 Word may, alternately, be "one."

189 Closing parenthesis missing.

sitting in Cabinet council, the result of his interview with me. It was in substance that I had informed him ( Mr Calhoun ) that I had been so much occupied with company and other engagements, that I had not even read the Resolutions which had passed Congress, and could therefore give no opinion upon the subject, and that until I had entered upon my duties as President, and had my own Cabinet advisers around me, I could not undertake to decide on the subject, and that I left it to Mr Tyler to decide for himself, what action, if any, he deemed it proper to take on the subject. Mr Tyler made the election of the alternative embraced in the House propositions, as they were called, and despatched a special messenger, bearing his decision and instructions to our charge d' Affaires to Texas, before he retired from Office. On the 6th of March Genl. Almonte the Mexican Minister made his communication, demanding his passports. It was not until the 10th of March that the subject was considered and finally decided on by me in my Cabinet. When the subject was considered, I had before me the Resolutions of Congress, the election of alternatives which had been made by Mr Tyler , and his instructions given to our minister. The whole subject was fully examined and carefully considered in all its bearings. The confirmation of your nomination as Secretary of the Navy, was delayed for some days by the Senate, but in anticipation of it I had invited you to attend the Cabinet meetings, and my impression is, that you were present on the occasion referred to. Your memory will doubtless enable you to determine how this was. The Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that Mr Tyler's election of alternatives should not be reversed, but should be confirmed. It was so confirmed and with my full assent and approval, and accordingly Mr Buchanan addressed a despatch to that effect to our charge d' affaires to Texas. During the whole consideration of the subject, not an intimation was given by me of a preference for the alternative form of annexation by negotiation, or that I was embarrassed by any such pledge as that now attributed to me by Messrs Tappan and Blair . It is impossible that all this could have occurred, if I had understood myself as having given any such pledge.

Another circumstance which goes far to negative the allegation is this. The Senate continued in Executive Session until the 19th or 20th of March, when they adjourned. If I had decided to elect the alternative of appointing commissioners to negotiate, it would have been necessary to nominate these commissioners to the Senate, for the confirmation of that body, before its adjournment. No such nomination was made and therefore every Senator and the public, must have known that the alternative of negotiation by the appointment of commissioners had not been adopted, and yet there was no complaint from any Senator or from any other quarter, that I had acted in bad faith or violated any pledge.

Another circumstance is this. Texas accepted the overture which was made to her, and in my annual Message of December 1845, I communicated to Congress, all that had been done by Mr Tyler and myself, and accompanied my Message with all the correspondence on the subject, which was published. Messrs Tappan and Blair were then silent. Texas was shortly afterwards admitted into the Union as a State. The Senators referred to by Messrs Tappan & Blair made no charge or allegation that they had been deceived by pledges, as to the form of affecting her annexation which would be adopted. They made no

opposition to her admission as a State, and they continued long after that time to support my administration, including the declaration and prosecution of the war with Mexico. I might add other facts and cogent circumstances, but it is unnecessary, and I will not worry you, by a recital of them. You had my full confidence at the time referred to, and I would have been as likely to converse with you without the least reserve, as with any other person. Neither Messrs Tappan or Blair possessed my confidence. It may become necessary for me to vindicate myself, before the public. At all events I desire to be prepared to do so. Were this the only object I do not know that I should trouble you. But a higher motive impels me to vindicate my official course in regard to the annexation of Texas. That was an event of the highest National importance, conceived and consummated, with pure & patriotic motives, and it is due to the truth of history, that the action, and the motives of action of the public functionaries entrusted with its management should be fully known. With this view I address you this letter. I wish in your answer that you should be full, stating all you may remember of my views, or of any conversations you may have held with me on the subject of the annexation of Texas. To protect myself from misconception or misrepresentation & to vindicate the truth of history is all that I desire. I will request like statements from the other members of the Cabinet, of what they may know or remember. I will not use them before the excitement of the pending Presidential election has passed, and not then unless, it shall appear to be proper and necessary.

I will add that I was much surprised on seeing the publications of Messrs Tappan & Blair. I had not the slightest intimation of an intention to make them, until they appeared in the New York Evening Post. I was the more surprised from the fact, that Mr Blair had previously expressed his approbation of all the leading measures of my administration, which of course embraced the first, and among the most important of these measures, the Annexation of Texas, which had been consummated by the policy which I had pursued. He once expressed this approbation to me, in strong terms, in your presence. As Mr Blair had been superseded by Mr Ritchie, in conducting the leading Democratic paper at Washington, and as I had reason to believe he had been dissatisfied at this circumstance, I regarded the voluntary opinion which he expressed, as magnanimous, and I was gratified to hear it. It made so deep an impression on my mind, that on the same evening, I made a note of it. It may not have made so deep an impression on you, and you may not remember it. I will recollect to your recollection the occasion on which it was made. On the afternoon of the 15th of August 1846, I took a ride with you in your carriage. We drove to Mr Blair's house, some five or six miles in the country. We found him alone, his family being absent from home. He received us very cordially and was very friendly. During our stay of an hour he took occasion to remark to me, that I had been eminently successful in my administration, and that he approved all my leading measures. In speaking of the tariff he entirely approved the act which had recently passed, and said he had been more anxious for its passage than some of the members of Congress who had voted for it. He said he had argued with Senator Haywood and had endeavoured to convince him that he ought to vote for it, and that he had dissuaded him from resigning his seat in the Senate. He made other remarks which are not material. You will of course remember our ride to his house. If you remember his expression of approbation of the measures of my

administration, and you see no objection to it, I desire that you will state your recollection of it, in your answer to this letter.

I have written so long a letter that I will not trouble you with much that I might say in relation to public affairs, but will postpone this to some future period.

I have received your letter in answer to mine enclosing to you a communication from Gov. Swain President of the University of N. Carolina,<sup>190</sup> and I am glad that you have been able to find in the British archives, some evidence, confirmatory of the fact of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in May 1775. I will write you on this subject soon.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I might have said much more than I have done, upon the subject of Texas annexation, and the reasons which influenced my action upon it. I will only make one additional remark. I think the wisdom of the choice of alternatives which was made, must long since have been manifest to the whole world. If the other alternative had been chosen I think there is abundant evidence to prove that Texas would probably have been lost to the Union. If negotiations had been opened by commissioners, much delay would necessarily have taken place, giving ample opportunity to British and French intrigue to have seriously embarrassed, if not defeated annexation. It was not until after I had entered upon my duties as President, that I had an opportunity deliberately to consider of the two propositions and to decide between them. When I decided I had Mr Tyler's instructions and Mr Almonte's letter before me, and the dangers of delay by protracted negotiations, had that mode been selected, were apparent. I acted upon my own best judgment, and in conformity with the unanimous advice of my Cabinet, and the result has proved that I was right. J.K.P.

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked "(Private & unofficial)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Published in BP, pp. 110-14.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>191</sup>

Sept 9<sup>th</sup> 1848

Dear Sir

The Last Leter I receved Frome you was dated 5<sup>th</sup> of June.

Sir We have had some sickness but We are all oup at this Time. The corn crop is good

But the coten crop will Not turn out as well as I exspected whene I rought to you last<sup>192</sup>

Oughing to the bold worm<sup>193</sup> which has ingerred it some. The coten is nough opening fast we are picking out coten. We have bin clearing making the wi[n]ter<sup>194</sup> clothing.

Put oup some cabins for the negros.

I still think I shal make More coten than i dyed Last yeare. If nothing hapens wewill rase plenty of meet to dough the plantation. Youre Black smith Hary has worked vary Well.

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190 Bancroft to Polk, August 5, 1848; Polk to Bancroft, June 17, 1848, and enclosures.

191 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

192 Mairs to Polk, August 13, 1848.

193 Mairs probably meant to write "boll worm."

194 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

He has a right smart of New work don which I will take To cofivill or some other plas where it will sell.

He has worked for all the nabers except those that have a Smith. I have bin giting some Iron from Grenado.

I will send you a bill so that you can Lay in aplenty this fall in new orleans.

I have nothing more of intrest only remane . . . .

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received September 20, 1848; answered September 22, 1848; “Relates to my private business.”

FROM ELEXIUS SIMMS ET AL.<sup>195</sup>

Washington D.C.

9th September 1848

Sir

The undersigned respectfully represent to your excellency their belief, that the present incumbent of the Office of Commissioner of Public Buildings and grounds does not possess the qualifications necessary to the proper discharge of that Office.

The interests of the Corporation of Washington and its Citizens are so deeply affected by the acts of this Officer, that the undersigned respectfully ask that a more competent and better qualified person may be placed in that Situation.

E SIMMS

[Washington City]<sup>196</sup> Novr. 10th 1848

This & inclosed papers, are referred to the commissioner of Public Buildings who will Report to me on the subject of their contents & will return the papers to me.<sup>197</sup>

J. K. P.

ANS and AEI. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AE: received November 10, 1848. Probably later enclosed in Charles Douglas to Polk, November 24, 1848.

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Washington City

Sept. 14th 1848

Dear Sir:

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195 Letter signed by Simms, James Crutchett, and 149 others; written in an unknown hand, presumably that of one of those 149.

196 Place identified through content analysis.

197 Besides Simms et al.’s letter, Polk enclosed, to Charles Douglas, Charles B. Cluskey to [John F. Callan et al.], November 8, 1848; James Maguire et al. to Polk, September 9, 1848; Jacob Bigelow to Polk, c. November 10, 1848; and James Crutchett to Polk, c. November 10, 1848. City surveyor Cluskey writes to President Callan and the directors of the Washington Gas Light Company. Having examined the lampposts and gas pipes being installed on Pennsylvania Avenue under Commissioner of Public Buildings James Crutchett’s direction, he asserts that the poles “are totally unfit for the purpose and out of character” and that the pipes are being laid so deep as to damage water and sewage culverts. Cluskey concludes that Crutchett “does not possess ordinary business qualifications” and laments the “frittering away of public money.” ALS. DLC–JKP.



As I learn from you, that it is your intention to settle at Memphis, and [to]<sup>198</sup> engage in the practice of your profession at that place,<sup>199</sup> I tender to you the use of my library of law-books, which you will find at Columbia Tennessee, until I shall call for them. You are welcome to the use of them, and can take them with you to Memphis, or wherever else you may settle.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM BENJAMIN SILLIMAN

Yale College New Haven Connt.

September 14, 1848

Understanding that Mr Philip T Tyson of Baltimore is about proceeding to California with a particular reference to mineral explorations I have been requested to express my views as to his qualifications.

I have long known his general reputation as a gentleman well versed in mineralogy geology and Chemistry and I have every reason to beleive that his reputation is well founded. I have also had some opportunity to observe his practical skill in an important coal field that of George's Creek in Allegany County Maryland. This is a portion of one of the richest and most important coal fields in the United States, and being called a few years ago to explore it in relation especially to its coal & iron and all its capabilities I there found Mr. Tyson and Mr J. H. Alexander assiduously occupied in opening the coal & iron of George's Creek. Mr Tyson appeared to be well acquainted with the Geology of coal & it is my beleif that should government set on foot any researches for coal in California Mr Tyson is well entitled to their confidence and should an appointment be made in relation to that subject I may be allowed to add that I hope it will be conferred on him.

B SILLIMAN

[P.S.] I doubt not Mr Tysons ability to engage with advantage in any other mineral researches. Quicksilver for example is now found in that country in very great quantity & is becoming an important article of exportation. BS .

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

Sept. 15th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I wrote a long letter to you, a few days ago,<sup>200</sup> and hope to receive your answer as early as you may find it convenient to give it. I was gratified to learn that you had succeeded in finding in the Brittish archives, evidence fully confirming, the fact of the Declaration of Independence, made by the people of Mecklenburg, and the movements for liberty in that part of North Carolina, as early as May 1775.<sup>201</sup> The authenticity of these bold and patriotic

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198 Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

199 Letter, if any, not found.

200 Polk to Bancroft, September 9, 1848.

201 Bancroft to Polk, August 5, 1848.

proceedings, though long since established by satisfactory proofs, had still been doubted by some. The fact which you state that "Governor Sir James Wright of Georgia, was the first to send from America a copy of the Mecklenburg Resolves," and that this "copy is still in its place," is a very important one. I must request the favour of you, to procure for me a copy of the Resolves, and especially a copy of the official communication of the Governor, made to his Government in transmitting them. You state that "connected with the Mecklenburg Resolves, are two or three little passages, in letters and journals," of which you will send me copies, if I desire them. If it shall not put you to too much inconvenience, to procure them, I shall be gratified to receive them, and also to receive a synopsis, of the proceedings of the "Regulators," to which you refer. Being myself a native of Mecklenburg, and many of my ancestors having taken an active part in these Revolutionary proceedings, I take a peculiar interest in all that relates to them.

I am much gratified at the assurance you give me, in your letter of the 5th ultimo, of the "great advancement which the American name, has in the last three years made in the respect of all Europe, and in the affections of all lovers of free Government." It has so happened that during my administration a succession of great and important public questions foreign & domestic have arisen, involving high responsibilities, great labour and constant anxiety and vigilance. If I have been so fortunate, as to be reasonably successful in their management, I can only attribute that success, to an honest purpose, a strict adherence to principle which has ever been my guide, and to the patriotic support, which I have received from the people. If I can close my administration, leaving the country prosperous, the measure of my ambition will be full. You are right in your observation, that all the old issues which divided the political parties of the country in 1840, and 1844, have been virtually settled. The party opposed to the Democratic policy upon these issues, manifest, an unwillingness, further to agitate them, or to resist the settlement of them which has been made. The only remaining subject giving rise to any considerable excitement and division of opinion is that to which you allude in your letter and,<sup>202</sup> relates to the organization of Governments, in the territories recently acquired from Mexico, and this would be readily settled (and I hope will be during my time) were it not for the agitation, of the delicate and distracting question of slavery. Much excitement existed in Congress, upon this subject, during the last weeks of the late Session. An act was at length passed, providing a Territorial Government for Oregon, and I deeply regret that Governments, based on principles of concession and compromise on the slavery question, had not also been established over New Mexico and California. Had this been done the agitation of the slavery question, so far as practical measures are concerned would have ceased. In view of the excitement which existed, threatening to array the country into geographical parties, which could not fail to destroy the harmony, and might endanger the existence of the Union itself, I felt it to be proper to accompany the announcement of my approval and signature of the Oregon Bill, with the Message which you have doubtless seen. In that message the reasons for yielding my official sanction were succinctly given. The question of difficulty which was involved was not an original one, arising for the first time.

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202 Polk probably meant to place "is . . . and," which he inserted with a caret, after the comma.

Had it been, my opinion and my action might have been different. But it was a question which had been twice adjusted by my predecessors, upon principles of concession and compromise, between the North and the South, once in the case of Missouri and again in the case of Texas, and all sections and all parties, had acquiesced in the compromise for more than a quarter of a century. It would have been a momentous responsibility and one which might have involved the integrity of the Union itself, to have disturbed this compromise by an Executive veto. My message, at the same time, that it expresses, my well considered convictions of duty, under the circumstances, which existed; it was hoped would tend to allay the excitement in the different sections of the Union. I am flattered with the belief, that it has to some extent, at least, produced that effect. Before my official action on the Oregon Bill, was known, I was strongly urged to with-hold from it my sanction. A Southern convention, I was informed, was openly spoken of by Members of Congress. I gave my approval to the Bill, and protested against such a convention, as calculated to do no possible good, but on the contrary to widen the breach between the North and the South, upon a question which I believed and still believe, ought to have been, and can still be, settled by a satisfactory compromise. Since the appearance of the message I have heard nothing further of the projet of a Southern convention. I have now, reasonable ground to hope, that the question may be settled at the next Session of Congress, by extending the Missouri and Texas compromise line West to the Pacific. If this compromise shall not be adopted, the subject may be referred to the Judiciary, as was proposed by a Bill passed by the Senate, or some other compromise may be agreed upon, which if not entirely satisfactory to all sections, will be acquiesced in by country. When the Presidential election shall be over, I have great confidence that the question can be adjusted, and from all I learn I think it will be, at the next session. It cannot I think be doubted that some of the leading men of the Whig party, North and South, preferred to have no settlement of the slavery question at the late Session of Congress, but desired to keep it an open issue, with a view to political agitation, calculating upon its effect upon the Presidential Election. The establishment of a Territorial Government over Oregon has deprived them to that extent of the wicked use, which they may have designed to make of so delicate and dangerous a question.

There is less, excitement, upon the Presidential Election than is usual. There is every prospect at present of Genl. Cass's election. Indeed I consider this result as almost certain. The whole contest is between Genl. Cass and Genl. Taylor, the regular nominees of their respective parties. Mr Van-Buren, it is true, is the candidate of the Barnburners and Abolitionists, and received their nomination at their convention at Buffalo, but he stands I think, no possible chance of carrying a single Electoral vote, out of New York, and every day diminishes his chances of success, even in that State. Three distinct tickets for electors, and possibly a fourth (for Clay) will be run in New York, and a plurality will decide the vote of the State. I deplore the great error, which Mr Van-Buren has committed, in suffering himself to occupy his present false position.

With the kind salutations of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Bancroft . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked "(Private & unofficial)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Published in BP, pp. 103-6.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

Philadelphia

15th Sep. 1848

My dear Sir/

I arrived here yesterday & shall leave for Lancaster tomorrow morning where I shall remain until Wednesday morning & then proceed to Chambersburg. I hope to be in Washington on Saturday week or Monday week at furthest; I drop you this note so that you may be able to recall me sooner in case of necessity.

With my kindest regards for Mrs. Polk I remane . . . .

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 16, 1848.

FROM ANONYMOUS

[Baltimore]<sup>203</sup>

Sept 18/48

Sir

Do you not think you ought to be horse whipped, and drummed out of the Country, for your Villanous conduct in removing Mr Butler from Office in N.Y. a Man that has done more to make you President of the U.S. than any Man in the Country—an Office which you have disgracd more than any Man who ever filled it—a simple 4th rate Tennessee Lawyer as you are and nothing more. Cannot a Man think for himself in this Free Country without being persecuted by you—you good for Nothing Old Scoundrel—show your head in NY. if you dare for the next Six Months and you will be sorry for it—you may depend upon it. A Man cannot think for himself but he must be punished by you—You Old Villiain You—be careful or you will not leave the chair you disgrace with a Whole skin—keep in Nights, I advise you.

Yours a

NEW YORK LOCO FOCO

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 21, 1848; "Vulgar abuse and threats, because of the removal of Benjamin F. Butler ."

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Sept. 18th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your two letters of the 26th ultimo, and 9th Instant.<sup>204</sup> I am glad you approve of my course in removing Mr Butler of New York, from the Office which I had conferred upon him early in my administration. In addition to the reasons which you state, it was proper upon other grounds. I removed a Whig when I appointed him, and in this I acted upon the General principle, that the principal chief subordinate officer of the Federal Government should accord in opinion with the chief Magistrate, and be ready to cooperate

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203 Likely place, though inconsistent with pseudonym, identified from postmark.

204 Letters not found.

with him, in carrying out the general policy, of his administration. When Mr Butler was appointed I had every reason to believe, that he would cheerfully do so. In this I have been disappointed. He has not only abandoned the political party to which he professed to belong, and denounced and opposed the regular nominations of that party, made according to former usage, but he has abandoned a practical political principle also, and united himself to a faction whose principle of action seems to be to "rule or ruin." In his case, also, the administration was taunted and almost challenged and defied to remove him. Had he been contented to entertain abstract opinions, however erroneous I might have thought them, I should have been reluctant to disturb him. In a word his who[le]<sup>205</sup> course, and that of his friends and new political allies, left me no alternative consistently with a due self-respect, as well as the public good. I could have wished that his course had been otherwise. I will take your advice in regard to Mr [ . . . ] and will not remove him. There is a great pressure upon me at this moment to make other removals in New York and Massachusetts. I doubt the propriety of doing so, and my present impression is, that I will not disturb any man in office, unless it be in such excepted cases, when the conduct of the officer shall be so obnoxious as to make it proper.

My opinion of the prospects of your success in the election, expressed to you in my letter written at Bedford<sup>206</sup> remains unchanged. In the South all is looking well, and if you are right in regard to the North-Western States the result is certain. South Carolina I regard now, as certain for you, as any state in the Union. Mr Rhett called to see me two or three days ago & expressed this opinion. He has become warm in the cause and has gone to Charleston to address a mass-meeting at that place. Georgia I consider perfectly safe. In N. Carolina and Tennessee there will be an active and close contest. In the latter state, the ablest men of both parties are in the field, addressing the people in mass meetings. Gov. A. V. Brown is performing, Herculean labour. At my last accounts he was addressing the people from day to day, in East Tennessee. The contest in t[he] [ . . . ] State will be bitter and close. From all the information I have I think, the Democracy will ca[rry] the State, though this result cannot be regarded as certain.

I shall at all times be pleased to hear fro[m] you.

With respectful salutations of Mrs. Polk an[d] myself to Mrs. Cass . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Detroit and marked "(Private)."

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

Washington City

Sept. 18th 1848

My Dear Sir:

In the memorandum of my private business, which I handed to you before you left Washington, I requested you to superintend on my behalf, the valuation of my brick store-house and lot in Columbia, which by my contract with Mr Hughes of Nashville, he is

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205 Text here and below cut off side of page.

206 Polk to Cass, August 24, 1848.

to take in part payment fo[r]<sup>207</sup> building and improving on my lot in Nashville.<sup>208</sup> I have written to my agent M[r] V. K. Stevenson of Nashville, and requested him to inform you, of the person whom Mr Hughes may select to make the valuation o[n] his part, and have informed him that you would select another on my part.<sup>209</sup> I wish t[. . .] business attended to before you leave home on your return to Washington. The house is to [. . .] delivered to Mr Hughes at the valuation which may be placed on it, on the 1st of January next. If you have not heard from Mr Stevenson, may I ask the favour of you to write to him, and remind him of the business.

All appears to be quiet in Washington, there being but few strangers in the City, but, notwithstanding this, I do not see that my labours are much diminished.

The prospects are decidedly favourable [. . .] Cass's election. Indeed judging from present appearances I should consider that result cert[ain]. The result of no election however is certain until it has taken place, and therefore the Democratic party, should not relent in its exertions. I see that the leading men of both parties are actively in the canvass in Tennessee. It would be exceedingly gratifying, if my own state, should give its vote to Cass & Butler. It would be an endorsement of the measures of my administration, measures which Genl. Cass has supported with so much ability and fidelity. I hope the State will no longer separate itself from the Republican party, but will unite with them, in the election, of an enlightened Statesman, (such as regard Genl. C. to be) who will faithfully, carry out, the measures of policy which my administration has maintained. Judging from the past history of the parties in the state, the contest will be animated, if not violent as the day of election approaches, and the majority small either way. Much may be effected by active exertion between this time and the election. I hope the Democracy may succeed. What is your opinion of the probable result? You will be able to speak with some certainty of your own District after you have canvassed it, which I hope you have done before this time.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Columbia, Tenn.

Sept. 19/48

My Dear Sir;

I have neglected writing you, tho. I have not neglected your business & it is proper that I inform you of the state of things. I had a decree made to day in our Chancery court in the matter of the Leech land in the western district precisely in accordance with your directions.<sup>210</sup> I wrote to Stevenson some time since that I would aid him in valuing the house and lot to Hughes as you requested,<sup>211</sup> but Hughes has not come out yet.

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207 Text here and below either missing due to a light ink transfer or cut off side of page.

208 Letter not found.

209 Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, September 2, 1848.

210 Letter, if any, not found.

211 Polk's letter not found but discussed in Polk to Thomas, September 18, 1848.

Little matters of taxes &c I have attended to, & furnished Your mother with what money she has wanted \$50. I will send the receipts at some convenient time.

My wifes health has been very bad, it has improved a little. The Doctor says she must travel some, & I purpose taking her to Bolivar in a few days, & as I go & return make some speaches for Cass & Butler. I have made three or four Speaches, but I cannot get "happy," like I did in 1844, tho. I hope I will do good service. So soon as I get to Bolivar I leave my family and make a three weeks tour speaking.

So far as I can learn the prospects are favorable for a gain thro. this country. The whigs have no organization & no enthusiasm.

Your friends here are all well. Evan Young comes to town every day, but is so paralyzed he cannot walk, has to be lifted out & into his carriage. I found my son nearly well when I got home.

As a last hope the whigs are trying to make something out of your signing the Oregon Bill, but with an antiveto candidate it is "no go."

When I can serve you, you will not fail to call upon me.

Remember me very kindly to Mrs. P. & to Knox & family.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered September 29, 1848; "Relates to my Private business."

FROM JOHN D. CARROLL

Carrollton Missi

Sepr 20th—1848

sir

By the request of Your boy Harry the Blacksmith of this place for several years I have written you. Harry has taken my old woman for a wife and he wished me to write to you about the matter. Harry is too old I do not want him that is I would not give much for him. Here is the description of his wife. She is 43 years old and no moore I have owned hir 20 years she has always been my cook. She has never been abused as good a cook as any and washer & ironer none better. She has two small children 1 of them 4 and the 6 years old. Harry and hir appears to be anctious to live together and I am against parting any man and wife provided, I donot have to loose too much. You can have the woman and hir 2 youngest children for twelve hundred dollars—I have been offered 800 for the woman in the last year—Or you can send me the price of harry. Mr. Jno E Hammonds know the woman you can find from him what she is.

JNO D. CARROLL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received October 4, 1848.

TO ROBERT J. WALKER

Washington City

Sept. 20th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I noticced in some of the New York papers, a day or two since, articles in relation to the removal of a person named John Scott an employee in the New York Custom House. I took it for granted that Mr Lawrence must have had some sufficient reason for his

removal, and still think from his known prudence and circumspection that this must be the case. I have however seen no explanation in any of the New York papers. On the contrary I find in the "New York Daily Sun" of yesterday, the article which I enclose to you herewith.<sup>212</sup> I cannot believe that the statements made in this article constitute the only reasons for the removal. I will not prejudge the case, but I must say, that this small affair gives me, some concern. I hope you will without delay confer with Mr Lawrence who I am sure has acted from pure and proper motives, and ascertain how the facts are. You will readily perceive that the case standing as it does, upon the newspaper accounts of it, is subject to be misunderstood and calculated to do great mischief. According to these accounts, if the appo[int]ments<sup>213</sup> of the administration are retained in office, and its friends turned out because they complain, or petition for their removal, you will readily see the false impression which will be made on the public mind. I request that you will give your attention to the subject, and write to me after you have seen Mr Lawrence .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Nothing has been more common during my term, than to receive complaints, often couched in very strong language, because I did not make removals from office, and some of these have been made by persons, themselves holding office. I have generally, given to such complaints the weight which I considered due to them, and where I did not think it proper to yield to the request, have passed them by unnoticed. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to New York City and marked "(Private)."

TO WILLIAM H. WINDER

Washington City

Sept. 20th 1848

Dear Sir:

I thank you for the information you have given me, of the genealogy of the Polk or Pollock family. As requested in your last note,<sup>214</sup> I have traced the issue of John Polk the eldest son of Robert and Magdalen Polk , and return to you herewith the [recording]<sup>215</sup> of that branch of the family, which you enclosed to me, with the information which you desire.<sup>216</sup> You will perceive that I have not given the names of the Grand children of Ezekiel , and their intermarriages, except those of my own immediate branch of his family,

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212 Enclosure not found. The New York Sun article, titled "Turning the Tables," reports that Scott led a committee of Democrats from New York's Old Hunker faction of the party in asking Collector Cornelius W. Lawrence to fire customs house employees who supported Free Soil party presidential nominee Martin Van Buren. The article quotes, in full, Lawrence's subsequent letter of September 16, 1848, in which he fires Scott but cites no reason.

213 Letters cut off side of page.

214 Letters not found. Polk's diary indicates that he received a letter from Winder the day he wrote this reply.

215 Unless noted otherwise, brackets indicate text uncertain, illegible, or missing due to a light or blurred ink transfer.

216 Enclosure or enclosures not found.



nor of his Great Grand children and their intermarriag[es]<sup>217</sup> and issue. These are very numerous. I possess I believe as accurate knowledge [. . .] them as any one man living, and if you desire it, will furnish you with their [. . .]s intermarriages and issue. I shall be under [ad]ditional obligations to you, if you will [fur]nish me with the "tree and short history [. . .] biography," which you inform me you [. . .] preparing.

In one of your communications you inform me that a correspondence took place in the spring of 1824, between Col. William Polk of Raleigh N. Carolina and your father the late Genl. William H. Winder of Baltimore. If this correspondence has been preserved I would be much gratified to have a copy of it. The synopsis which you give of Col. William Polk's account of his family, and of their participation in the Revolution I know from tradition and the history of the times to be correct. The fact which you state in one of your communications that, "Ezekiel was a member of the Mecklenburg convention, which in May 1775, first proclaimed Independence, and he commanded [. . .] company of Whig Rangers," I know also, from the same source, to be correct. His original commission as a Captain has been preserved, and I have it now in my possessi[on]. I would be pleased to receive from you any additional information, which may be in your possession and upon which your [substance] is based.

It appears from the genealogy of the family, [which] you have furnished, that I descended from John & you from William who were brothers and the sons of Robert and Magdalen, and that we are both of the fifth generation from Robert and Magdalen. I observe a remarkable circumstance in your account. It is that John my ancestor married Jane Knox and from that marriage my family sprung, and that William your ancestor married Nancy Knox and from that marriage your family sprung. Both John & William married wives named Knox. Did they marry sisters? If so, you and I are more nearly related than the degrees of descent from a common paternal ancestor would indicate. I remark further that Samuel (my father) married Jane Knox. Have you any trace of the Knox family? In looking at the coincidence of the names, it has occurred to me that my mother may be of the same family of her name who were intermarried four generations before, with John and William (sons of Robert and Magdalen) and that the two families (the Polks and Knoxes) may have removed from Carlisle to N. Carolina, at the same time. My mother, now quite an aged lady, is still living, and I will hereafter ascertain from her, whether she can give any information on this point. I think it probable too that she may be able to give more minute and accurate information concerning some of the elder members of the family descended from William Polk of Carlisle and their descendants, than I have done. I will take pleasure in furnishing you with any additional information which I may be able to obtain.

I fear My Dear Sir: that I may impose such labour upon you by the request I m[ake]<sup>218</sup> but I know of no source from wh[om] I can derive so much and such reliable information concerning our family as from yourself. I desire to embody and preserve all the information concerning the family which I can procure. It may be interesting to those of our family who

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217 Letters cut off side of page.

218 Letter or letters here and below cut off side of page.

may come after us. After you shall have completed the "Tree and History" which you are preparing I would be pleased to se[e] and converse with you on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Delivered by hand at the Executive Mansion on September 20, 1848.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

N. York

Sep 21, 1848

Dear Sir

Your letter of yesterday is this moment received and in reply I inclose you the proceedings under which Mr Lawrence removed Mr. Scott.<sup>219</sup> You will see that Mr Scott not only presided at a meeting charging Mr Lawrence with "imbecility and insincerity" but sent him the resolutions in a letter. For this Mr Lawrence removed him during my absence at Boston & the best men of the Cass party approve the act. Mr Lawrence was very friendly to Mr Scott having appointed him to office some twelve months since. Mr Scott it seems instead of being grateful to Mr Lawrence has been in the habit of abusing him for some past & finally signed and communicated the proceedings now inclosed.

There are some hundreds of applicants now for office in the Custom House who are exerting themselves for succeeding removals. Mr Lawrence has expressed not only his willingness but also his determination to remove any violent partizan opposed to Cass & especially any one who spoke disrespectfully of you for he is your warm personal as well as political friend & always ardently sustains you & your measures. He is an open & decided supporter of Cass & Butler giving his reasons on all proper occasions. He has great weight in the community & he uses all his influence in a moderate judicious manner in aid of our cause.

In this state I fear Taylor must succeed but I have some hopes of Connecticut & I think Maine & N. Hampshire are certain.

In N. Jersey I think the chances are greatly in our favor. My news also from Pennsylvania is good, altho the alliance between the Whigs and Natives is complete. That which injures Genl Cass most in the Northern cities is the report meet industriously circulated by the Whigs that Genl Cass is a war man & that if elected we shall have a war with England.

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219 The enclosure has not been found, but Polk had received a copy of the resolutions of the September 12, 1848, meeting of New York City's First Ward Cass and Butler Association—likely the same document that Walker enclosed herein—on September 16, enclosed in John Scott et al. to Cornelius W. Lawrence, September 15, 1848. Besides endorsing nominees for governor and lieutenant governor, those resolutions call on Polk and Collector Lawrence to remove all customs house employees who oppose Democratic presidential nominee Lewis Cass's election, particularly Free Soilers. The association, led by president and lead signer Scott, would view Lawrence's placing this "responsibility in any other quarter, as such an evidence of insincerity and imbecility as would disqualify him for the further occupancy of the place he himself now holds." The resolutions accuse some customs house employees of "using the wages of Government in their diabolical attempts to destroy the Union" and warn of "a civil war between the North and the South." PD and ALS. DLC—JKP.

No trouble or money have been spared to circulate this report. I have met & contadicted it every where & I hope to some extent with success. I am as a general rule for peace whenever it can be maintained with honor & Especially with our best customer Great Britain & have put this sentiment in my reply to a dinner invitation here.

Since it was published, I have conversed with many on this topic & assured them that I entertained no doubt Genl Cass concurred with me in opinion. My letter on this point will I trust do some good.

On Monday I expect to leave for Washington.

Yesterday I felt called on to direct the removal of Mr. Grout a clerk in the Naval office who signed certain proceedings denouncing & vilifying you. It seemed to me so clear a case, that I acted without troubling you. In all similar cases I shall do the same thing.

I wish you would think over the propriety of recommending in your next message a Branch mint at San Francisco in California—not so much for the gold there, but for the bullion of [Nations]<sup>220</sup> Mexico Peru and all the West coast of America. The charge for coinage in these countries is exorbitant—whereas we charge nothing & would get the bullion—also much foreign coin for recoinage. With such a Branch mint we can deprive England of her monopoly of this specie especially with the aid of first rate steam ships & a route across the Isthmus. N. York capital is now ready to make a rail road across the Isthmus.

Your next message being a valedictory will have great weight with congress & the country.

R. J. WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered September 22, 1848.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Washington City

Sept. 22nd 1848

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 9th Instant, and am satisfied with the account you give me of my business. I have not written to you for three or four months past, because I had no specific directions to give, concerning my business. I desire that you will continue to write to me, once every month. I wish you to forward my cotton to Pickett Perkins & Co of New Orleans as you did last year. As you make the bales, send me their weights and numbers. I have not yet sold my last year's crop, [. . .]<sup>221</sup> I suppose the hands are becoming impatient to receive the price of the four bags which belong to them, and which were shipped with my cotton. If they will be better satisfied, you can at the end of the present picking season, sell the part wh[ich]<sup>222</sup> you may intrust for them at Granada, and pay to them the proceeds. If you conclude to [do] this, you can sell also four bags for their benef[it] for last year, out of those which were shipped to New Orleans. If instead of this, they prefer to wait until the cotton is sol[d] I will send you the money for them, [as] soon as

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220 Word may, alternately, be "Northern."

221 Word illegible, light and blurred ink transfer.

222 Text here and below either absent or cut off side of page.

it is sold. I wrote to Mr Leigh some time ago, and suppose he has engaged your services for next yea[r].

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

TO ROBERT J. WALKER

Washington City

Sept. 22nd 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of yesterday, in answer to mine of the 20th Inst. I am satisfied with the explanation given of the transaction about which I wrote to you. I approve of the removal of the clerk in the Naval office. The course stated by you, was amply sufficient to justify it. In all cases of like—partisan evidence in opposition to the administration—removals should be made. I have great confidence in Mr Lawrence, and have no doubt he will discreetly and properly exercise his authority, in such cases as may require it. I suggest to you, that you have a conversation with him on the subject, before you leave New York.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Private collection of Matthew Wynn. Addressed to New York City and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

FROM JOHN NORVELL

Detroit

September 25, 1848

Dear Sir,

I have been, for eighteen months, collecting materials for a history of your administration, and, after you retire, shall be very glad to receive from you any documents which will shed light upon it, unknown to the public. I consider that it will constitute a bright epoch in our national annals, not surpassed, if equalled, by any of its predecessors. My motive is one of grateful recollections, and partly selfish, wishing to identify my own name with the history of this brilliant period of our country's progress and glory, so far as an humble historian can thus be identified with the events he records.

Every day confirms me in the regret, that you were committed to decline a second election. You would have been re-elected with certainty, and the good old democratic party preserved intact.

While I do not permit myself to indulge in any attacks on General Cass, I support General Taylor, and think him more to be relied on as the guardian of the equal rights of the North, and of all the states, than either of his competitors. His stability and firmness of character will always render him invulnerable to any sectional or anti-republican tendencies. I am grateful to General Cass for supporting the war measures of the administration, but am rather more grateful to General Taylor for fighting the battles which necessarily add to the lustre of the administration. Besides, I know the temporarising instability of the one, especially on the questions connected with slavery, and equally well know the unchangeable principles of the other in regard to these questions. I support General Taylor on republican grounds, and have no apprehensions of his departure from the policy of Mr. Jefferson. Some of the democratic leaders have, I think, committed a great mistake in

letting General Taylor, even partially, become identified with the other party. In this I may prove myself to be mistaken. If I do, I shall retrace my steps, and be as ready to atone for the error as any friend could desire.

A good deal is said here about my removal from office. It has given me no uneasiness. In the first place, as you are not specially and personally interested in the election, and would have nothing to gain by any removals not demanded by the public interest, and must desire to terminate your presidency in peace and tranquillity, I have not supposed that you would act in the premises merely to gratify a gentleman to whom, certainly, I am, in no sense, indebted for my appointment. In the next place, I have thought that if a removal were to be made, you would let General Cass himself, if elected, take the responsibility. And, in the third place, I have known, that on the least intimation from you, I stood and still am ready to resign, and to spare you the pain, which I am sure you will feel, if making the removal.

Your namesake, "the last of our Mohicans," is remarkably well, and is an improvement on all his predecessors. He is three years old, and looks like a statesman!

With our highest regards to Mrs. Polk, . . . .

JOHN NORVELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 30, 1848.

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Washington City

Sept. 25th 1848

Dear Marshall:

I have received through the Engineer Department, the "conduct Report," in your case, for the last month,<sup>223</sup> and am glad to perceive that the number of your Demerit marks, has been reduced from 12. in July to 3. in August. This is certainly a commendable improvement, and I hope soon to find no Demerit in "conduct" charged against you. I am happy to find that your cousin Cadet L. Marshall Walker had no Demerit mark for August. Can you not do as well?

I observe on examining the last annual Report of the "conduct Roll," that there were Nine cadets who had not a single Demerit charged against them during the whole year. Eight of these stood very high in their studies in their respective classes, and the ninth held a respectable rank. These facts justify the remark, that as a general rule, those cadets who are regular in their conduct and avoid Demerit marks, are more attentive to their studies and stand highest in their classes. I do not make these remarks in the spirit of complaint, but to impress upon you the great importance of regularity in all your conduct, and of close application to all your studies and duties.

You are now approaching manhood. Th[e]<sup>224</sup> present is a most important period of you[r] life, and much will depend upon the mann[er] in which you may improve the great

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223 Report and any accompanying letter from the War Department's Engineer Department, probably by Joseph G. Totten, not found.

224 Letter or letters here and below cut off side of page.

advantages you possess at the Military Academy, what your future standing as an officer of the army, should you continue in military service, may be. Should you pass through your course at the Academy, with reputation and afterwards desire to resign and engage in civil pursuits, the profitable improvement of your time, will be equally important to you. You should remember that no other opportunity, for acquiring the knowledge which you may now obtain, will ever occur, and that if neglected, the loss can never be repaired.

I shall look with anxiety for the Report of your standing in studies in your class, at the January examination, and hope it may be a favourable one.

Tell your cousin Cadet L. M. Walker, that I would be pleased to receive a letter from him.

Your Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y.

FROM ZACHARY TAYLOR

Baton Rouge, La

Sept. 28, 1848

Sir,

I have had the honor to receive your communication of July 3d, and with it the Gold medal voted by a joint Resolution of Congress as a testimonial of my services in the reduction of Monterey. I beg leave to express my deep sense of the distinguished honor which the Houses of Congress have seen fit to confer upon me by the presentation of this medal, an honor which is enhanced by its reception at the hands of the chief magistrate of the Republic.

Z. TAYLOR

L, copy, in William W. S. Bliss's hand. DLC–ZT. Addressed to Washington City. Published in New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 6, 1848; Washington Daily Union, October 17, 1848; and other newspapers.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

[Washington City]<sup>225</sup>

Sept. 29th 1848

Dear Sir,

Will it suit your convenience to visit the Navy Yard to-day, at 2 O. Clock? I have apprized the officers, and we will be expected but it will depend on your arrangements.

J. Y. MASON

[Washington City, September 29, 1848]

I will do so.

J. K. P.

ALS and AEI beneath letter. DLC–JKP. ALS addressed locally. From Polk's AE on cover: ALS received September 29, 1848.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Washington City

Sept. 30th 1848

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225 Place here and place and date below identified through content analysis.

Sir

I invite your attention to two publications, which appeared in the New York Evening Post of the 28th of July, and were republished in the National Intelligencer of the 1st of August last, the one bearing the signature of Benjamin Tappan and the other that of Francis P. Blair. A short time Before<sup>226</sup> I entered upon my duties of President of the United States, I addressed a letter to you, and invited you to accept a place in my cabinet. You signified your willingness to accept the position tendered to you, and arrived in Washington on the 5th of March 1845, (the day after my Inauguration) and on that day I nominated you to the Senate, as Secretary of War, and your nomination was confirmed by that body. I was from that period upon terms of confidential and unreserved intercourse with you. No opinions which I entertained upon any public subject, upon which we may have conversed were with-held from you. The subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States, in pursuance of a Joint Resolution which had been passed by Congress, at the preceeding session, was one of the first which was considered by me, in my Cabinet. As it may become proper that I should at some future period, take some notice of the publications of Mr Tappan and Mr Blair, I request that you will furnish me, with a statement of all you may know, of any opinions views or acts of mine, relating to the subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States. I desire that you will state any conversations which I may, at any time have held with you, and any opinions I may have expressed to you, either individually or in Cabinet on the subject of the Annexation of Texas; and also all that you may know, if any thing, in relation to the matters set-forth by Messrs Tappan and Blair in their publications. I desire that nothing I have ever said or done on the subject should be concealed from the public. The Annexation of Texas was a measure of the highest national importance, conceived and consummated with pure and patriotic motives, and it may become proper, and especially after the publications referred to, that the opinions, views and action, of all the public functionaries, interested at any stage of its progress, with its management should be fully known.

With this object in view I address you this letter.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–WLM. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Liverpool [England].

2n Octr. [1848]<sup>227</sup>

My dear Sir

Mr. Bancroft will I suppose present a leave of absence. (as I expect never to return) My situation has been made verry uncomfortable here. My conduct has not been what it should have been, and I regret it sharply.

But what I aske of you now My dear Sir is this, Take no action on this appointment untill you see or hear from me. I have been cheated and Scandled by them untill I am half mad without a friend to stand by me. Englishmen will support Englishmen even in Normandy.

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226 Polk capitalized "Before" before inserting "A short time" with a caret.

227 Year identified through content analysis.

A Democrat rates below a negro. Our [Capts]<sup>228</sup> with exceptions of course, are bitter down cast whigs. The English hate you, but Despise Cass. I hope he is Elected to their mortification. Frank Lydon has been at work to affect me here in every way. He wants the office. He has no claims to any thing. He is now an Englishman.

I will write you by next Steamer. In the mean time my dear friend dont [transfix] me to such [insult].

Hold it up, I wish to Resign at Home, or to Exchange my office in some way.

I look to you as my only friend and hope and trust you do nothing in this matter untill you see me.

R ARMSTRONG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>229</sup>

Oct. 3d 1848

Dear Sir!

We reached Columbia two days ago, after a long and disagreeable trip, rendered so by the low stage of water in the Ohio River. Our reception was warm and pleasant, and so far Mary seems highly pleased and contented “with the wilds of the West.”<sup>230</sup> Mother has changed but very little in the last year, indeed I think she looks better than when I made her a visit last year. The political prospects in Tennessee are more flattering than I anticipated, the Democrats seem confident—say they have the state thoroughly organized, and rely with great hope on the lethargy and inactivity of the Whigs. My impression, however, is that sufficient excitement, does not exist, nor is sufficient interest felt by either party to prevent the election from going by default—it is all chance—it is as doubtful as the cast of the dice. The feelings of the people are not enlisted—they cannot, as in former days, be induced to swarm in crowds to hear discussions—their striking indifference is calculated to chill the leaders of both parties.

I will probably remain in Columbia until after the Presidential election—I think of entering the canvass—will make probably a few speeches in the lower counties of this district to identify myself with the contest.

I notice that Mr Martin Chargé d’Affaires at Rome has recently died. Who will succeed him? I cannot entertain a desire myself, being shut out by propriety, but would suggest, if agreeable to your feelings, that something might be gained hereafter by the appointment of Lewis Cass jr—if I am infringing the rules of propriety by even making such suggestion you will please pardon me, for the future is so dark to me, that I am glad to snatch at any light to dispel its gloom.

Make my best respects to Sister Sally, and assure her that I remember her many acts of kindness with sincere gratitude.

WILLIAM H. POLK

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228 Word here and below uncertain.

229 State identified from postmark.

230 Closing quotation mark missing.



ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From James K. Polk's AE: received October 13, 1848.

FROM ANDREW LANE

New Haven Ct.

4th Octo. 1848

Most excellent Sir,

Although some considerable time has elapsed since my last communication,<sup>231</sup> still, believe me, my thoughts have not been far away from my heart felt desires for your health and happiness; and that God would grant you his protecting care, and wisdom to discharge your arduous duties to the end, satisfactorily to himself, and hence, for the best interest of our common country. And I will take occasion here to remark, that after carefully watching and criticising every inch of your administration, I have seen nothing whereof to object; unless perhaps, the late Oregon Bill. Had I been in your place, I think I should have vetoed that; but still I am not so clear that I should have acted more wisely, all circumstances considered, than yourself in signing it.

In the little pamphlet "a comparison of slavery with abolition," a copy of which I sent you, the rights of the South I think are fairly vindicated; and the only means of maintaining them clearly and distinctly pointed out.<sup>232</sup> As soon as the Presidential election is over I hope they will organise, carefully examine their rights, and coolly determine to maintain them at all hazards. Not another moment is to be lost; and if they will unite to a man and go energetically to work and persevere to the end, they will get every amendment to the Constitution pointed out in the little pamphlet; and moreover, secure their share of the newly acquired territory. But if they will postpone and postpone, waiting for a more favorable opportunity, all is lost; and themselves and their posterity enslaved to the north, "whose tender mercies are cruelty!" Onward is the word. The little pamphlet, before alluded to, cost me a great deal of labour to collect the authority and condense it in its present form, and still making it lucid and conclusive. As soon as they were published I ordered

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231 Lane to Polk, August 3, 1847.

232 Enclosure or separate mailing not found. Lane refers to a pamphlet that he wrote, like this letter, under the pseudonym "Amor Patriæ": *A Comparison of Slavery with Abolitionism; Together with Reflections Deduced from the Premises, Touching the Several Interests of the United States* (New York, 1848). Composed as a letter to Lyman Beecher, the antislavery president of Lane Theological Seminary, Walnut Hills, Ohio, the pamphlet quotes the Bible to establish God's approval of slavery and asserts that the institution benefits not only Southern slaveholders but also Northern manufacturers and slaves themselves. Alluding to the Wilmot Proviso, Lane warns that the discussion of abolition in Congress may cause "blood [to] be shed" there and "through the length and breadth of the land." He predicts that Southern members of Congress will demand a constitutional amendment (1) increasing slave states' congressional representation by counting their full enslaved populations; (2) defining interference "with the domestic concerns of any other State, and especially with the institution of Slavery," as "treason"; and (3) "guarantee[ing] to the South the peaceable possession of their property" by providing federal reimbursement for unreturned fugitive slaves. The amendment's failure, according to Lane, would lead to the secession of every state outside of New England.

three hundred sent to Congress for the use of each house, where they arrived about a week before the adjournment, and if I am correctly informed, created quite a sensation. Indeed I never knew any thing of the kind to receive so many extravagant compliments, and it is quite amusing to hear them gessing at the author. All agree however, that it is one of the best things they ever saw, and unanswerable; and ought to be put into every house in the United States—that the people want light upon this all important subject; and here they have it in a shape they can comprehend; and once in possession there would be no danger of a dissolution of the Union nor a violation of the rights of the South; on the contrary, there would be peace quietness and brotherly affection the whole length and breadth of the country. But as it is, they never hear but one side of the subject, and that from designing demagogues and political priests, and hence it need not be wondered at if they are led blindfolded to their own destruction and that of their country. If they are ever furnished with the necessary light it will be by Congress; and that they could not dispose of the peoples money more to their advantage than to appropriate a sufficient amount to put one of the little pamphlets into every house, and much more in accordance with their duty than taking their money to buy books for themselves. These remarks and the like of these I have heard repeated over and over, and I fully concur.

Now allow me to ask, would it not be a good thing to mention in your next annual message, and especially as it will be your valedictory, this great subject, that it is dividing our country, and growing stronger and stronger every year, and must, if not arrested, sooner or later, deluge it in fraternal blood? and then speak of the little pamphlet as you think its merits require and recommend Congress to order a sufficient number to put one into the hands of every voter in the US.

I ordered but a thousand copies published, five hundred of these I have given away including those sent to Congress and I have allowed the publisher to sell the remainder at not less than ten cents a copy. But I think they could furnish to Congress by the quantity at not over 6 1/4 cents a small amount to bestow upon each voter out of his own money, and that too when there is so much at stake.

I have authorised my friend A. Lane Esq., at the Tontine New Haven, Ct. to make any arrangement in relation to them he may think proper. And through him I should be very hapy to receive a line from you if you feel inclined to write.

This Van Buren abolition party flatter themselves that they are agoing to carry every thing by storm; but instead of injuring the South, and the Democratic party as the Whigs were in hopes of, the probability is they will destroy the latter and secure the election of Mr. Cass. The Whigs are exceedingly troubled just now! But should they after defeat go over to the Buffalo party, as some suppose, and form a great Northern party against the south, there is no knowing what the consequences may be. Give the people light, and they have in a nutshel in the little pamphlet, and there is no danger.

AMOR PATRIÆ

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>233</sup>

Octr 4th 1848

My Dear Sir,

I understand from a letter received from Majr Lally, that he is anxious to get the appointment of Commissioner to survey & mark the Boundary line between the United States & Mexico. I have no doubt of his entire qualification for the proper discharge of the duties incumbent upon the appointment he desires. He is gallant, chivalrous, & brave, with intelligence and honor—and devoted to his friends & thoroughly Democratic in every impulse of the heart.

He is among those who never falter, and I love him for the virtues which enoble his heart. You know the manner in which he sustained himself under the most trying circumstances in the army. He is in all things the very man for that place, and I need not say how much I would be pleased to see his wishes gratified. I hope you will pardon the warmth with which I express myself. He deserves all I have said & more too.

I beg to call your attention to the merit & worth of Capt Bernard of the city of Philadelphia, who so greatly distinguished himself as an officer of the Voltigeur Regt in storming Chapultepec.

It was he, who so gallantly seized the Flag of that Regt, after the second or third Standard Bearer was cut down, scaled the wall in the face of a deadly fire & lead forward the assault to the very door of the castle. This fact, & his distinguished gallantry appear in all the official Reports. Such officers should be known to the Govt. & while it is under your direction, I am sure they will be cared for.

I should be exceedingly gratified to have him provided for.

Your Brother William & his Lady, Squire Walker & his family with Picket & Lady all spent the day with me. Your mother is in good health. I was anxious for her to have come out also, but she would not do so. She was delighted with her Cameo Likeness of yourself. When you visit Tennessee, or more properly when you come home in the spring; I hope you will bring Mrs Polk to my house and make it head Quarters until your House is ready for you. Mrs Pillow joins me in tendering you the hospitalities of Clifton, with assurances of the pleasure your acceptance of our invitation will afford us.

I shall start south in 2 weeks to look after my planting interest. I found my business greatly neglected & expect my southern interest has suffered still more from my long absence in Mexico.

I am & have been all the summer; suffering much from the affects of my last wound. I have been compelled to decline an active participation in the Campaign now waxing hot in Tennessee, because of my very crippled condition.

Both parties are sanguine of carrying Tennessee. My opinion is that the state will vote for Cass, but the contest will be close. I regret the necessity of leaving before the election, but it is now 3 years since I visited my plantation & having to make arrangements for the removal of my hands I feel that I am obliged to go, or suffer greatly in an interest all ready greatly neglected.

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233 State identified through content analysis.

My wife joins me in desiring to be kindly remembered to Mrs Polk & J. K Walker & Lady.

GID. J. PILLOW

Folliot T. Lally to Polk, October 20, 1848; marked "Private."

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Washington

6th October 1848

Dear Sir,

I recd yours of the 18h of September inviting my attention to the letters of Messrs. Blair & Tappan published in the N York Evening Post of the 28h of July and in the National Intelligencer of the 1st of August last; requesting me to state fully every thing within my knowledge, of your views & opinions in relation to the annexation of Texas, whether derived from private & confidential conversations in or out of the cabinet and any thing within my knowledge in relation to the matters set forth in those letters.

In reply I have the honor to state, that for some years before my selection as a member of your cabinet as well as afterwards we were upon terms of the utmost intimacy and our intercourse, of the most unreserved & confidential character. You conversed with me frankly & without reserve upon all questions which exerted public attention.

The Texas question, which had been made so prominent in your election, exerted much interest & feeling in Congress about the time of your arrival in Washington as the President elect; and particularly so, after the Report of the committee of the Senate, recommending a rejection of the Resolutions which had passed the House of Representatives and a postponement of the whole subject; and after the introduction of Colo. Bentons Bill in the Senate, proposing the admission of Texas or a part of it as a state, so soon as the terms & conditions of such admission should be agreed upon between the two Governments. I was at the time a member of the House, had voted for the Resolutions of the House & felt the deepest interest for the success of the measure. The merits of the two propositions were freely discussed among the members in private circles & others at the seat of Government. They were treated as antagonist measures—and strong doubts entertained whether either could pass both Houses. It was frequently urged by those favoring the proposition of Col Benton, that under it, commissioners would be appointed, composed of the most distinguished citizens of the country taken from each of the great parties and that the terms, could be thus better & more satisfactorily adjusted than in any other way. The names of distinguished citizens were mentioned as the most suitable to compose the commission. During the pendency of these propositions, you conversed with me freely in relation to them and expressed great anxiety for the adoption of some measure before the adjournment of Congress. You urged that one or the other or indeed any measure should be taken, which would secure annexation, rather than do nothing. It was understood, that either of the proposed measures pledged the public faith to the final accomplishment of this great measure; and it was hoped would put an end to the intrigues of Foreign agents for its defeat; and would relieve your administration from the embarrassments that might arise, if left as an open question.

I did not understand you at any time, expressing a preference for the proposition of Col Benton over that of the House, nor is it indeed probable that you would have done so as the whole body of your friends in both Houses, with the exception of four or five

senators, favored the mode of annexation proposed by the resolutions of the House. Your uniform course was to urge the adoption of some measure, one or the other of the pending propositions; so as to have the question settled & you frequently said, if the Bill of Col. Benton should be adopted by Congress, that the most distinguished men of the country ought to compose the commission but I do not recollect that any individuals were named by you as the proper persons to compose it.

The idea of uniting the two propositions and leaving it to the Pres to select which to act on, I do not remember to have heard suggested, until the evening of the 27th of February, when the amendment of Robert J Walker then a Senator from Mississippi, was offered & adopted; & the Resolutions thus amended passed the Senate the same evening & finally passed the House the next day. Although the questions arising out of the measure as adopted were frequently subjects of conversation, I do not recollect that you expressed any opinion as to the proper course to be pursued until they were submitted to the cabinet. They were the first questions of importance brought before it by you.

It appeared that Mr. Tyler had taken up the subject and decided to act under that branch of the Law, known as the Resolutions of the House and had despatched a messenger with instructions to our Minister in Texas. There was much discussion, as to the influence, the course adopted by Mr. Tyler should have upon his successor and as to the danger that would arise to the final success of the measure itself by any delay in executing the law, from the intrigues of the agents of foreign Governments, who were then understood to be actively engaged, and using every effort to defeat it. It was finally decided, as I now recollect without a dissenting voice in the cabinet, to abide by the decision of Mr. Tyler and secure annexation if possible in the manner prescribed by the resolutions of the House. You concurred entirely with the cabinet and I do not remember to have heard a preference expressed by you for one proposition over the other until that time.

Knowing the relations existing between you & Mr. Blair at the time and the above circumstances I could not but feel surprize upon reading his letter.

The Amendment of Mr. Walker, combining the two propositions & giving the right to the Pres to select either, was first made late in the day of the 27h of February and was finally acted on in that body the same evening. The Whig Senators were taken by surprize & urged delay for an hour or two to consider the proposition; some of them threatening to speak out the balance of the session if it was then pressed to a vote and after a short adjournment for dinner was finally decided. I could not understand how the existing relations between yourself & Mr Blair, should have induced him, to have hunted you up, submitted to your consideration the important proposition of Mr Walker, have obtained your decision & reported it to certain Senators for the purpose of securing their votes for annexation, in a few hours after its introduction. I did not believe that you would have decided so important question, so hastily, without consulting with the friends you intended to call around you nor did I believe you would have communicated such a decision through Mr. Blair. The selection of some other paper in lieu of the Globe and some editor more friendly to yourself than Mr. Blair, had been under consideration of yourself & friends, particularly Gov. A V Brown & myself, before that time and had been determined on by yourself, if a suitable person could be had. Mr. Blair, had admitted into the columns of the Globe the most vile attack made upon you before the Baltimore nomination. He had

omitted to publish in the *Globe*, the proceedings of conventions & other public bodies, urging your nomination for the Vice presidency. His course had been so marked, whilst pretending neutrality between the candidates for the Vice presidency as to call forth the remonstrance of some of your friends here & lead to a correspondence between you & myself in relation to it.<sup>234</sup> In addition to this, Col Benton declared from his seat in the Senate, upon the introduction of the amendment of Mr. Walker that he would vote for it, which was regarded as an unerring index to the course of the other senators who had acted with him in opposition to the House resolutions, thus leaving no time for Mr Blair to have searched you up and obtain your decision, to be communicated to Senators to control their votes. In addition to these things I may add, that after the adjournment of the Senate, when it was publicly known what decision you had made, as no nominations had been sent to that body for commissioners, Mr Blair urged upon me, as a member of your administration and your personal friend, the importance of retaining the *Globe* as the organ of the Admn., explained the causes of the appearance of that unfriendly article in his paper, expressed the utmost confidence in you as a politician and a man and said with much emphasis, that if the *Globe* should be retained, he would "strike down" the enemies of your administration as he had done those of Genl Jackson.

Whatever communications may have been made to Judge Tappan, they could at the time have had no influence upon his feelings of friendship toward you or your administration or probably on his vote. More than two years after the commencement of your administration, he repeatedly declared in my presence that he & his friends were the only true friends of the administration in Ohio, that he was the only one, able and willing to advance money to sustain it, that he should continue to do so, not from any expectation of reward but because he believed the President to be an honest man and regretted that the President had committed himself so early against running a second time as he thought it probable that he was the only man that could unite the democratic party at the next election.

It is somewhat remarkable that this alledged fraud to secure the votes of certain senators for annexation has been permitted to sleep for three & a half years until it was distinctly ascertained that the influence of your admn. could not be brought to favor the nomination of Mr. Van Buren whose friends seem to claim the right for him to succeed you by virtue of what they seem to have considered the last will & Testament of Genl. Jackson and that it was your duty to have it executed. Very soon after his nomination at Utica, it seems, an issue is attempted to be made with you, as the head of the Democratic party whereby the votes of those opposed to your admn., or who had been soured by disappointment, might the more readily be secured for the Buffaloe nominee, on his new plat form.

C JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received October 14, 1848. See also L, copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC–JKP.

FROM WILLIAM L. HELFENSTEIN

Boston.

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234 This correspondence comprises Johnson's letters to Polk of January 13, 21, and 31, February 6 and 25, May 3, 5, 8, 16, and 31, and June 1, 1844, and Polk's to Johnson of January 21 and May 14, 1844.

Oct. 10. 1848

My Dear Sir,

I am here for this day on business connected with my Cumberland Coal interests, & having a little leisure I embrace the opportunity to express to you my thanks for yr prompt & polite attention to my father's request in furnishing me with letters in anticipation of my trip to Europe.<sup>235</sup> I have delayd my departure for some months, & one reason is, that I did not wish to be absent from the Country pending a struggle of such importance as that, which now interests & occupies the mind of the American People. Ineed not say, that my humble mite has been contributed to the success of Democratic principles.

It may not be improper for me to say to you, as yr term of Office is drawing to a close, how proud I am of yr Administration, & with what pleasure I remember & ever shall do so, that I sustained & voted for yr election. I have not sought, nor desired Office. I have lookd on with the deepest interest upon yr measures, & yr career & I am constrained to express my highest pleasure at the signal ability, the high integrity & the devoted patriotism with which you have sustained yrself. As long as the history of the Country shall endure, yr Administration & yr name will occupy a high & enviable position. And in a few years, when the full benefits of some of the measures of yr Administration will be developed, there will be but few who will not mention yr name with love & with reverence.

Yr person & private bearing & character have nobly sustained the honor & dignity of yr high station, & you have happily illustrated, that morality & profound respect for Religion add beauty & lustre to the most exalted station.

Mrs Polk, yr most excellent lady, has contributed her full share in sustaining the dignity & honor of her high position. Her cheerful courtesy & unwearied kindness to all, a jealous regard for all the proprieties of domestic & social life, her faithful adherence to the exalted principles of her Church & of the Christian Religion, allowing neither custom, nor fashion to trample upon them, has won for her the respect & the love of the whole Nation. Whilst you will retire, having performd nobly yr high duties, carrying with you the respect & confidence of a great Nation, yours is the exalted pleasure to have had a wife during the term of yr arduous & embarrassing [duties], Office<sup>236</sup> who has filld the measure of her countrys house, in her appropriate sphere, by filling the full measure of the character of an American Woman.

I wish for one other honor yet to be acheived for yr Administration, which will be ever verdant, & as fresh & enduring as truth itself. Public sentiment in relation to the suspension of Sunday Mails is becoming more & more unequivocal. This will be accomplishd, till throughout the whole Nation, the Government will pay proper regard to the Sabbath. Why may it not be mainly accomplishd during yr Administration? I see the Post-Master General thinks favourably of it. The unborn generations of coming centuries will mention with the deepest affection, the name of the man, who will be fortunate enough to confer such a blessing upon the Country & upon the World.

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235 John P. Helfenstein to Polk, June 14, 1848; Polk's letters of introduction for William L. Helfenstein have not been found.

236 Helfenstein struck out "duties" and replaced it, though after the comma, with "Office."

I hope yr retirement, will be peacefu[l]<sup>237</sup> tranquil & happy, & that belovd & respected you will enjoy many years & have the grateful satisfaction of seeing all yr measures crown'd with abundant success & at length with the approbation of an entire People.

Accept the assurances of my warmest personal regard & beleive me . . . .

WM. L. HELFENSTEIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Private" on the cover.

From Polk's AE: received October 13, 1848.

FROM PHILIP T. TYSON

Baltimore

10" October 1848

Sir.

I have the honor of submitting to your consideration, some notes in reference to the mineral resources of our vast territorial possessions, facing the Pacific Ocean.

I recently addressed the Secretary of the Treasury upon this subject, in consequence of its bearing upon the trade & commerce of our country, and of the world. And as it seemed to me, that the immense annual saving to the government, to be effected by the use of coal mined upon our own Pacific coast, made the subject deserving of the serious attention of the Departments of the War & the Navy, I addressed a joint letter to the Gentlemen at their head.

I also took occasion to tender my services, for the purpose of making such Geological & Chemical investigation, as the interest of the country may render necessary.

Whilst at Washington, it was suggested to me, by those whose opinions were entitled to weight, that a subject of so much importance should be brought to the notice of your Excellency.

Our countrymen, true to their Anglo-Saxon spirit, have busied themselves, for some years past, in investigating, or rather in expressing their opinions, as to, the value of those territories. Oregon has had some share of attention, but many circumstances have conspired, frequently to bring up for discussion, the question of the usefulness of our territorial acquisitions from Mexico, and for which the country is indebted to your policy. The proneness of mankind to form conclusions with a slight knowledge of facts, has produced frequent expressions of opinion adverse to the value of the territories in question.

We have often heard of the sterility of most of the country west of the Rocky Mountains, and many will scarcely admit of its possessing anything worthy of notice, beyond that of harbors of refuge for our whalers.

My own pursuits and tastes have led me to the consideration of the mineral constitution of the country, & of the effects that may be produced by a full and timely developement of them. It has occurred to me, that, if we efficiently avail ourselves of the advantages of the position and resources of those regions, results will soon follow, little anticipated by those who are ordinarily satisfied with looking merely at the surface of things.

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237 Letter cut off side of page.



Had our attention been turned to the subject of the mineral resources of California, some quarter of a century ago, we should possibly have cared little for any others than the more costly metals. But it is far otherwise in the present day.

The successful navigation of every sea, has been achieved in our day, by means of steam, which must give rise to new channels of trade, and occasion many important changes in mundane affairs. Our country will be obliged to prepare for them, or be left behind in the great political and commercial race of the world.

As a knowledge of the mineral resources of the territories on our extreme west seemed to me a subject of great interest, I recently visited the Seat of Government for the purpose of collecting information in reference to them. I regretted to find that so little was certainly known upon the subject, and was strongly impressed with the necessity that exists for a thorough and systematic investigation of the mineral resources of California & Oregon, lying westward of the Sierra Nevada & Cascade ranges of mountains.

I have received a copy of an interesting memoir addressed to your Excellency by Ar H. Palmer Esq. of New York, upon the subject of the productive trade and resources of the countries bordering on, or enclosed by, the Pacific Ocean.<sup>238</sup> This Work, which reached me a few days since, relieves me from the necessity of troubling you with extended remarks, upon the importance of increasing our facilities for trade with the productive regions referred to by him.

Mr. Palmer proposes means by which our enterprising merchants may become better acquainted with the capacities for trade, of the Eastern portions of Asia, and the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, and it is to be hoped, the course he suggests will be adopted; but at the same time it may be remarked, that no mode of increasing trade is so sure as that of lessening the time & cost of traveling between the different trading marts. As matters are at present, too much of the valuable time of the merchant would be consumed in sailing voyages of 5 to 8.000 miles. What now takes 3 months, will be performed by steamers in one. Experience clearly proves that trade will take those routes on which cheapness and rapidity of motion are combined, especially if our countrymen are concerned in it.

The waters of the great Pacific are unquestionably destined to be crowded with steamers, and the important question arises, shall we take means to enjoy our proper share of this vast trade? or shall we fold our arms and leave it all to Britain and other foreign Nations? Shall we not, at least, make an effort to turn a good share of it into our Pacific Ports?

The commencement of a steam communication with India & China &c, will no doubt consist of a line of mail Steamers, supported mainly at the expense of the public treasury. At present, the cost of sustaining such a concern would be so great as to present a serious obstacle to its institution. This mainly results from the heavy cost of shipping coal from England and this country. The expense of coal delivered at our California ports, [I am informed by Commodore Skinner, who is now taking measures to supply the naval steamers]<sup>239</sup> is sixteen Dollars per ton!

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238 Aaron H. Palmer to Polk, January 10, 1848, and enclosed memoir.

239 Brackets in manuscript.

If we could mine it in convenient localities, near the coast, it might be produced for one fourth the sum, in California & Oregon.

In all future time, we must have abundant supplies of fuel for the use of the Steamers of the Navy, and yet we are not aware of the position of a single available coal bed, on our own soil on the Pacific. What, Sir, will be our condition, if we should be involved in a war with one of the great maritime powers? Russia possesses this all important resource near Bhering's Straits, and Britain as you will perceive by the appendix,<sup>240</sup> has already secured for herself the most ample means of supply at many points. There are strong grounds for the apprehension, that, in the event of a war, she will have it in her power, by means of her steam marine, to exclude our vessels entirely from the waters of the Pacific.

If we are to have an efficient steam marine in the Pacific, (as I had the honor to point out to the secretary of the Treasury) and this applies to the commercial, as well as to the public steamers, it will require a new basis, a basis of its own. It must have its Foundries, its Dock Yards, and its workshops; it cannot subsist by coal transported from here or England, nor can the machinery be refitted or replaced from the Atlantic. Means must be provided at one of our magnificent harbors in California where anything needful can be done; otherwise the delays that would occur will be almost fatal to its existence.

The production of Iron also, is nearly as essential to our full participation in the advantages of a steam marine, whether during peace or war. The cost of transporting iron for the purposes of the foundry in California is more than its cost in England at the present time. In reference to the probability of finding available beds of coal in California or Oregon, there is little to be said; but that subject will be referred to, presently. If coal fields of the "true" carboniferous era should be ascertained to exist, it is highly probable, to say the least, that the usual iron ores will exist in them; and besides, we have reason to expect, in the mountains, the rich magnetic oxide, and the specular oxides, so valuable in other parts of the world.

The journeys of our Military officers, in those countries, have usually been of a hasty character, and often with enemies around them. We could not therefore expect much information in regard to Geological details. The Civilians who have written and spoken, so far as I can find, give far less specific information, than our intelligent officers.

Allow me to say that my remarks upon the subject of coal have reference, exclusively, to the coal of what is called by the Geologist, "The Carboniferous formation, or era."<sup>241</sup> This is the coal of commerce and is often called "true coal" in contradistinction to the fossil fuel of the newer Geological eras, such as the Oolite & Tertiary, which goes by many names, viz: Brown coal, Bovey Coal, Lignite &c. This coal abounds in various parts of the world, and gives rise to many pretended discoveries of coal. It is always inferior, and rarely used except for the coarsest purposes. It occurs at Panama, and in large deposits along, or near, the Western coasts of So. America, as well as in Oregon.

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240 Tyson may refer to a later paragraph of this letter or to Palmer's memoir. If the latter, however, he erroneously refers to chapter 6, not an appendix; chapter 6 discusses British sources of coal more explicitly in the revised edition.

241 Closing quotation mark missing.

The high cost of coal induced the agent of the British South Pacific Navigation Co., to mine (a few years since) this kind of fuel near Conception in Chili. It seemed to be purer than usual, and was found to answer tolerably well at first, but the latest accounts are unfavorable and that company continues to send their coal from England.

We have had, and will no doubt continue to have, all kinds of reports of the existence of coal and every thing else in California & Oregon. But my experience in connection with mineral matters, has given me abundant evidence of the proneness of mankind to accept for truth the smallest trace of evidence in such matters.

This is more especially the case when a strong wish exists that such announcements may be true.

I shall therefore, in laying before you what I can learn of the probability of the occurrence of coal, within our territories on the Pacific, confine myself to the most authentic authorities, and pay no regard to most of the stories upon the subject.

1. Mr Palmer (in the memoir before referred to) says, on page 54. "Coal of an intermediate species between bituminous & anthracite, burning more easily than the latter, but a little harder than the former, has been found in large strata, in the vicinity of Francisco." This is exactly the kind best adapted to the use of Ocean Steamers. The authority for the statement is not given, & it is to be regretted that we are obliged to conclude that no such strata are known to exist in California.

2. Lieut Col. Emory affirms, as I have been informed, that no coal of practical utility has been met with.

3. Lieut Col. Fremont informed me, that the only coal known in California was a thin & useless seam, near San Luis Obispo, but whether even that belongs to the true Coal era, there are no means of judging.

4. I have been obligingly furnished by the War Department with an extract of a letter from Col R. B. Mason, Com[mandin]g<sup>242</sup> in California dated 18 Ap'l 1848. The Col. seems alive to the importance of the subject, and, as you will perceive, took such means as were at his disposal, to ascertain the truth in reference to the various reported discoveries of Coal. The extract is as follows.

"Feeling the vast importance of coal to a country like California, I many months ago directed Lieut. Warner to explore the country north of Monterey, and to visit some reported beds of Coal. He visited every place where coal was said to exist, and in one place found a single tree imbedded in rock and converted into carbon: of course it was of little or no value. He also found a thin film of coal of no value whatever; but most of the reported coal beds, consisted of Clay or sand, impregnated with Bitumen, which is very abundant on the coast especially at Santa Barbara.

The best bed of coal is 15 miles this side (north) of San Diego, in a high bank overhanging the sea. It is a stratum not exceeding at any point eight inches in depth. Two California gentlemen are engaged in working it, hoping, as they penetrate deeper into the earth, it will become thicker: but as its outcrop can be examined for many miles, at no point of which it exceeds eight inches in thickness, little or [no] reliance can be placed upon it for a supply

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242 Letters or word here and below inserted to complete probable meanings.

of coal for the mail steamers. This bed was examined by Lieut Warner, but he found no pieces thicker than two inches."

This at least is authentic & dispels the illusion hitherto existing in the matter. And it shows conclusively that no workable or useful Coal was known to exist in California six months ago. The account of the eight inch seam, near San Diego is of peculiar interest, because from the uniformity of the seam over an extensive space, we have reason to believe, that it belongs to the true "Carboniferous era" inducing strong hopes that workable beds may exist in its vicinity, or elsewhere in the western portions of California or Oregon, & which may brought to light by means of a Systematic Geological survey of the country.

The "two Californians" will have reason to regret their useless labor in the 8 in. seam. It will not increase in thickness as they penetrate into it.

In one of the papers addressed to the Sec'y of the Treasury, it was stated that there was reason to believe, that the two Geological formations, between which the Carboniferous or Coal formation is found, exist in Alta California. The official reports seem to lead to this conclusion. It would also seem from what we have learned of the territories both of Oregon & California, that if coal should be discovered, it will in all probability be found at no great distance from the coast.

In conclusion I may say that I have forbore to call your attention to any other minerals except coal & Iron, not because others of value, & of great importance to commerce do not exist there, but simply because these are of paramount interest, sufficient to call for the prompt action of the government.

We know that gold, silver mercury copper & lead are found in our new territories. It may be presumed that a careful investigation of the country would develop valuable resources, & it is to be hoped, would aid in turning the ignorant mineral hunters from many profitless & abortive operations.

For the mercury of California there is a market near at hand. It is required in large quantity in Mexico.

In China also we have a market for a vast quantity of both Lead & Mercury.

We need not fear a want of markets for the productive industry of California & Oregon.

As ample development of their resources will attract a large share of the enterprising & industrious of our race who will not fail to regulate their pursuits by the wants of the innumerable markets presented to them by their positions. They will have half of the population of the world to trade with, without leaving the waters of their own Great Ocean.

PHILIP T. TYSON

ALS in Tyson's and an unknown hand (Tyson wrote the last paragraph and his signature).  
DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

London

13 October 1848

My dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 9th of September, 1848 and have read Mr Tappan's printed letter to the Editor of the Evening Post of the 21st of July last & that of Mr Blair to Mr. Tappan of the 7th of July.

On your arrival in Washington in February 1845, I joined you there at your request, took lodgings in the same hotel, & was very often with you. The subject which mainly engrossed the attention of Congress was the Annexation of Texas. That measure was one of the issues, on which the people had decided by your election; you expressed yourself to me anxious that the declared wishes of the Democratic party should have effect. A division of opinion on the proper form of annexation prevailed in the senate. You were indifferent as to the form, provided the substance was secured. You advised conciliation & union, the adoption of a form of resolution which would produce harmony and successful action, and you gave as your motive for this advice, your deep interest in the passage of the measure itself. You looked at the possible rejection of the measure, as a blow in advance at your administration. You seemed to me indifferent whether the house resolution prevailed or a substitute; I never heard you express an opinion about the details or form of the measure; and when an option of forms was proposed and accepted by the senate, you applauded the spirit of harmony which it manifested, but took care never to hazard the success of the measure itself by siding with either of the parties on questions of form. I remained to the last ignorant as to which of the two forms you would adopt; and had no reason to suppose that either was dissatisfactory. I never myself heard you discuss the relative merits of the two forms; still less did I ever hear you express a preference; nor did I hear in conversation with others, that you had done so.

My nomination as one of your cabinet was not confirmed till the tenth of March. As soon as I heard of this, but not before, I repaired to your mansion, and was shown into the room where the cabinet had been deliberating. The election of the first & second sections of the Joint resolution had been already approved, & Mr Buchanan was on the point of going away in order to forward a despatch to Mr Donelson. Conversation ensued; and I was informed, that the decision which had been made before I was a member of the cabinet, had been the result of the unanimous advice of the other five members. The reasons, which were given for their preference were: That Mr Tyler and Mr Calhoun had already made an election, which, it was found, could not be disturbed without some confusion; that Mr Donelson was a remarkably prudent man, who might be relied upon under Mr Buchanan's instructions to conduct his part in the affair quietly & without irritating; that the first & second sections of the Joint Resolution were more favorable to peace with Mexico, as they expressly reserved to the general government full power to negotiate a boundary with Mexico; that Almonte had already, by demanding his passports on the mere passage of the resolution, rendered prompt action on our part imperative; that to delay action by the tedious process of a commission was but opening the way to Mexico to inflame the public mind; that the delay would be almost an invitation to England & France to employ commissioners on their part to prevent the consummation of annexation; and that the appointment of commissioners on our side to treat with Texas on the terms of annexation would be almost a temptation to Texas to make exorbitant and unreasonable demands, which the administration pledged as it was to the measure of annexation, would have found it most difficult to resist.

I never heard from any one a hint, that the consultation of the Cabinet or your own decision, was in any embarrassed by any previous declaration as to the option which you would make.

On the contrary, I always understood that the united Democratic party in the senate intended and desired to leave your judgment free; and when on the tenth of March 1845, Mr Berrien attempted to draw from the senate an expression of opinion in favor of the third section of the resolution, the Democratic Senators on the eleventh of March signified their unwillingness to embarrass you by postponing Mr Berrien's motion indefinitely.

Your approval of the election which Mr Tyler had made, was immediately known. It did not change Mr Blair's willingness to be the confidential editor & organ of the administration. He remained desirous of that post.

I remember well our summer's drive, a year later, to Mr Blair's house at Silver Spring. His reception was most cordial, as I had expected. He walked with us over the grounds nearest the house, & showed us his various improvements. Of your administration he expressed himself in terms, such as I had repeatedly heard from him, & such as were most gratifying to me to hear in your presence. He congratulated you on your good fortune in carrying out your measures, of which he expressed his approbation without qualification & without reserve. I never heard any man give a tribute to your administration more comprehensive or that seemed more from the heart.

I will add, that in all the stormy days which I witnessed in Washington, & among all the complaints which always will follow the exercise of power, I never heard of this complaint of Mr Tappan; nor any fault found with your course on the annexation of Texas, except by those who did not want it annexed at all.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Bancroft's other letter of October 13, 1848. See also L, copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Published in BP, pp. 118-20.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

London

13 Oct. 1848

My dear Sir,

I send you today my reminiscences on the annexation of Texas, as far as your opinions were concerned.<sup>243</sup>

I add two considerations. Tappan says your election of the House resolution placed "the United States in a state of war with Mexico ." The man is beside himself. The Senate's action was quite as unmindful of Mexico, & even more so. This shows how Tappan's memory & judgment are both at fault.

Next. For Senators to have voted a compromise on which you were to be arbiter, & to have solicited your decision in advance, would have been dishonest. The compromise implied freedom of election on your part. It would have been a fraud on the majority of the Senate, to have passed a resolution with an alternative, when there was to be no alternative at all. Mr Tappan's charge lies heaviest on himself. I do not think the subject merits much of your attention. The calumny is foolish. In substance the two modes proposed are identical. Each annexes Texas, & with or without the leave of Mexico.

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243 Bancroft enclosed his other letter of October 13, 1848.

I most ardently hope for your sake, for the sake of the country, for the sake of Europe, for the sake of the world, that Cass may be elected. The whole conservative force of England prays for his defeat. His success will be your own triumph. I wish I could witness it.

Pray find time to write me, but above all, in your last message, do not fail to speak in words that will make Europe leap. Speak specially in favor of the federative principle.

In Austria a plan to have the Ban of Croatia come & take Vienna, has led to a new & a more determined insurrection. The bad faith of kings, at a time, when if they were honest, they could do great good, leads to convulsions & will lead, alas, through bloody scenes to republican forms of Government. If France would but learn the benefit of States Right, of provincial liberties, she would redeem Europe.

Best regards to Mrs Polk. Will you come to Europe after the close of your wearisome but most glorious struggles?

GEORGE BANCROFT

[P.S.] Perhaps it might be well to read to the Cabinet my narrative of their statement of the reasons of their advice. I think Marcy, Buchanan, Mason & Walker must all remember it.

As to Johnson I do not so distinctly remember about him on that day, but think he was with you.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." Postmarked "NEW-YORK/SHIP/OCT/26." From Polk's AE: received and answered October 27, 1848. Published in BP, pp. 120–21.

TO LYDIA ELIZA POLK CALDWELL

Washington City

Oct. 14th 1848

Dear Sister:

Mrs. Polk has received your letter, in which you inform her that Addison had left my place in Mississippi and was at your house.<sup>244</sup> I am glad that you had determined to send him back immediately. His account of my overseer must be exaggerated, and I have no doubt is false. Mr Leigh who is a highly respectable old gentleman, and who lives adjoining my farm, writes to me that he is a humane man, that he treats all my people well, and that he has never known a better manager.<sup>245</sup> He has certainly attended well to my interests during my absence. Addison's story is probably made up, to excuse himself for leaving. Mr Leigh was here last year, and told me the same thing which he has since written to me. I wish you as soon as you receive this letter, if it has not been done before, to hire some faithful man to take Addison back to my place. I will write to the overseer not to treat him harshly. As one of my mules is dead and another will be needed on the place, if Addison has not gone when you receive this letter, I wish you to request your son James to buy a mule for me, or get some one in the neighborhood to buy one for me, and let Addison ride it down to the place. I wish you to call on Samuel P. Walker of Memphis, (to whom I will write) and he will pay you all the expenses you have been or may be at, on account of Addison including the price of the mule if one is bought. This is the first instance of

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244 Caldwell's letter to Sarah Childress Polk not found.

245 John T. Leigh's letter not found.

any of my people running back to Tennessee, since I left, and I was in hopes they, had abandoned or forgotten their old tricks. I will be at my plantation next year, and will put all right which may be wrong.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed “To Mrs. Eliza L. Caldwell/Haywood County/Tennessee.”

TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

Washington City

Oct. 14th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I return to you the letter of Mr Fallon respecting Cuba, which you enclosed to me for my perusal.<sup>246</sup> From what I had before learned from an Official source, the information which Mr F. gives, did not surprise me.

The result of the late election in Pennsylvania was unexpected, though I am far from believing that the state will be lost to the Democracy in November. I have not heretofore regarded the success of the Democratic party in the Presidential election as doubtful, or that any thing was likely to happen to make it so. If however the great state of Pennsylvania, should give way, and vote with our opponents we may be defeated. Can this be possible? Will you give me your opinion on the subject? I am aware of the embarrassment which is produced in some of the Northern States, by the secession of a few prominent democrats, and their Union with the Abolitionists, under the more popular name, of the advocates of free soil, but I had hoped and believed there were but few such in the staunch old Democratic state of Pennsylvania. Surely these Democratic leaders must now see, that the only effect of further persisting in their course, must be not to advance their own single idea, but to aid the Whigs to overthrow the Democratic party and policy. If they persist in their course, the effect will be the same as if they were to vote for the Whig candidate. Some of them I know are ready to go this length, to gratify their personal revenge upon the Democratic party, for failing to appreciate, as they think they should have done, their merits, but I hope there are very few of this class. My attention was called a few days ago to a statement of a letter-writer in a New York Barn burner paper, to the effect that my old friends Judge Kane and Mr Horn were in favour of the free soil ticket as it is called. I could not believe the statement & hope it is not true. They have always been democrats, and though they may retain strong personal attachments for Mr V-B., they surely cannot on that account, be willing to see, the great principles and the policy they have so long approved & supported, reversed and over-turned, as it would be, by the defeat of the Democratic candidates in this election. With kind salutations to Mrs. Dallas and your daughters: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Private collection of Dan Hamelberg. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked “(Private).” See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

TO SAMUEL P. WALKER

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246 Neither Fallon’s letter nor Dallas’s letter to Polk has been found.



Washington City

Oct. 14th 1848

My Dear Sir:

My sister ( Mrs. Caldwell ) writes to me that my boy Addison had left my place in Mississippi and was at her house.<sup>247</sup> I have written to her and requested her, to buy a mule for him to ride down, and to hire some faithful man to take him immediately back. The mule I will need on my place. I have written to her to call on you, and have informed her that you would pay to her all expenses, she may have been at, on account of Addison including the price of the mule. This I request you to do, and to retain the amount you may pay her out of the price of my cotton, when it may be sold. I have directed my present year's crop to be shipped to your House in New Orleans as heretofore. I take it for granted that insurance against the dangers of the River, will be taken out by your House.

The price of cotton is still at a very low point. Should the troubles in Europe be at all quieted I think it must soon rise. Under all the circumstances however I conclude to say to you, and you can so instruct your House in New Orleans, that they are authorized at their discretion to sell, both crops, last year's and this, or such of the latter as they may have [ . . . account]<sup>248</sup> at an average price not less than 6. cents per pound. If I cannot get an average price of 6. cents per pound, I will retain both crops for another year. I do not think it probable that the disturbed state of Europe [s]hall continue to be such as to keep the price down at the present point much longer.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I think you need not be alarmed, at the result of the late election in Pennsylvania. I still think that State is safe for the Democracy in the Presidential election. What is your opinion of Tennessee. No effort should be spared to carry that State, and I hope our friends may be able to do it. The vote I know is very close, but I think, if the Democracy make the proper exertions, the State will be secure. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Memphis.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Washington City

Oct. 15th 1848

Dear Sir:

My Sister ( Mrs. Caldwell ) who resides near Dancyville in Haywood County Tennessee, writes to me that my boy Addison had left you and was at her house.<sup>249</sup> She informs me that she intended to send him back to you. I have written to her and requested her to buy a mule for him to ride down, and to hire some faithfully man to take him back. His conduct

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247 The president probably refers to Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell's letter to his wife, Sarah Childress Polk, which has not been found but is discussed in James K. Polk to Caldwell, October 14, 1848, which in turn is referenced in the following sentences of this letter to Walker.

248 Words here illegible or uncertain and letter below missing, light ink transfer.

249 The president probably refers to Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell's letter to Sarah Childress Polk, which has not been found but is discussed in James K. Polk to Caldwell, October 14, 1848, which in turn is referenced two sentences hence in this letter to Mairs.

is not to be excused, but still when you get him, I do not wish you to treat him harshly. As he has received no countenance at Mrs. Caldwell's he will not be apt to repeat the visit. I suppose the mule I have directed to be bought will be needed on the place, as Addison informed Mrs. Caldwell that one of my mules was dead. The last letter which I received from you was dated on the 9th of September. I expect another soon giving the weights of the cotton bags which you have made; and how the crop is likely to turn out. I will return home in March, and will visit the plantation, as soon afterwards as I can leave home with convenience.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]<sup>250</sup>

Oct. 16th 1848

My Dear Sir:

In February 1791, President Washington called upon the members of his Cabinet for their written opinions, on the constitutionality and expediency of a Bank of the United States. These opinions were given to him, and have been published. Will you direct one of the clerks in your Department to turn to them and send them to me?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

Washington City

Oct. 17th 1848

My Dear Sir:

A due regard for the proprieties of the public position which I occupy, must necessarily prevent me from mingling as a partisan in the pending Presidential election. I am at liberty however to express freely and without reserve my opinions, and these I do not conceal. I am then, free to declare that I have never known a period, when the result of any political contest was of greater importance to the country. My administration I venture to hope has been reasonably successful, and it is very natural that I should desire to see my public policy maintained and carried out by my successor. Should Genl. Cass be elected I have great confidence this will be done. The country is prosperous in spite of the embarrassments to her foreign commerce which must be temporary,<sup>251</sup> produced by the political disturbances abroad. During my term, Texas has been annexed, the Oregon question has been settled, the Mexican war closed by an honourable peace, adding an immense empire to our territory, and I flatter myself with the belief, that at no former period,<sup>252</sup> has our country, stood higher in the respect of all Europe than at the present. Should Genl. Cass be elected, (as I think he will be) the important question

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250 Place identified from Polk's diary.

251 Polk may have meant to place "which . . . temporary," which he inserted with a caret, between the commas.

252 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

of organizing Territorial Governments in California and New Mexico, upon principles of mutual concession and compromise, which shou[ll]d<sup>253</sup> be satisfactory to all sections of the Union, wil[l] be settled without difficulty. Should our opponents succeed, this will be kept an open qu[es]tion for political agitation, and will destroy t[he] harmony, if not endanger the Union itself, by dividing the country into geographical parties. If Cass is elected I have great confidence, that it wi[ll] give my administration such strength, as will enable me to settle this only remaining question of difficulty before I retire. Should our opponents, by any possibility come into power, their President must, from his total want of civil qualifications, be in the hands, and wholly under the control, of such political leaders as Corwin , Badger , Baldwin , Truman Smith , Bell &c. &c. and the whole policy of my administration Foreign and domestic, must be reversed and overthrown. Can the country desire this? I hope not. The chances are greatly in favour of Genl. Cass's election, though, the division of parties in several states is so close, that there is a possibility of his defeat. The vote in the late State election in Pennsylvania has been unexpectedly close. Causes however operated in that election which cannot be brought to bear in November, and I am far from believing that we are in any serious danger of losing that great state. Ohio I consider perfectly safe. Next to carrying the general election I feel the greatest anxiety, that Tennessee (my own state) should by her vote endorse her approval of my administration. I know that the contest must be a close one, but I believe with the proper exertions the state may be carried, and it might possibly happen that her vote would decide the result. I was exceedingly gratified to learn from Cave Johnson on yesterday, that he had received a letter from your neighbour Joseph L. Williams , avowing his intention to vote for Genl. Cass and expressing his opinion that he would carry the state.<sup>254</sup> Williams is a clever fellow and an honest man. I have always been upon excellent personal terms with him, and greatly desired his election to the Senate of the United States. He ought to have been elected and could have been if our Democratic members of the Legislature ha[d] acted with any prudence and common-sense. The old issues, of Bank, tariff &c, o[n] which we differed, are no longer issues. H[e] agreed with us, upon the Texas question, the Mexican war, and I have no doubt will agree with us upon the Territorial questions, in New Mexico & California, and there is nothing of principle therefore to prevent him from acting with us hereafter. The Whigs and especially the leaders in Tennessee, Bell, Foster, Jones &c., have no political sympathies for him. His friends in the State must hereafter be among the Democrats. From his position he has it, at this moment in his power to control more votes than any man in the State. If he could be induced to make a single political speech, assigning his name for the support of Cass in preference to Taylor , the fact that he had done so, would as soon as known, control hundreds of [votes]<sup>255</sup> among his old friends. If in addition to this, he would make a tour on the eve of the election, through Blount, Sevier, [Knox,] Granger, Anderson & Roane, I should consider the result of the election in the State as certain for Cass. If he would do this, the whole democracy of the state would

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253 Letter or letters here and below cut off side of page.

254 Letter from Johnson, if any, not found.

255 Word here and below uncertain, light ink transfer.

be under lasting obligations to him. When you see him, make my respects to him, and communicate to him, how much I am gratified, at the information given to me on yesterday by Cave Johnson . You may too if you choose, express to him my hope, that he will for the few days which will intervene before the election, give to us his active aid in this our time of need.

Will you give me your opinion of our prospects in East Tennessee?

With my respectful regards to Mrs. Ramsey and your whole household: . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Mailed with Polk's other letter to Ramsey of October 17, 1848; addressed to Mecklenburg, Knox County, Tenn.; marked "(Private)."

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

[Washington City]<sup>256</sup>

Tuesday Oct. 17th 1848

My Dear Sir:

In casting my eye over the accompanying letter, which, was written at a late hour last night, after the close of a day of unceasing attention to business in my office, I see no objection to your submitting it to the perusal of Joseph L. Williams if you choose to do so. It was not written with any such view, but it occurred to me, when I was about addressing it to you, that it might be gratifying him to know my views and opinions upon the topics to which it relates. If you shew it to him, you will of course do so, confidentially, as all my letters to you which are marked Private are intended to be.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Mailed with Polk's other letter to Ramsey of October 17, 1848; addressed to Mecklenburg, Tenn.; marked "(confidential)."

FROM SIMON CAMERON

Phila.

Oct. 19, '48

My Dear Sir

We have just terminated a private conference of our friends, the result of whose deliberations is that we can carry the state, with proper means; All the active men of the party seem determined to work, with all their might. We have arranged a system of operations that will reach every neighborhood in the state and we have all contributed our money liberally. It has been determined to apply to our friends at Washington, for assistance, and with this view Mr Brenner, a merchant, and a disinterested democrat, will call on you. He will be accompanied by Mr. Jones, a reliable democrat from Berks county. I beg that you will give your influence to operate upon the heads of department the Auditors, &c. Let them contribute as they should do, and we cannot fail of success. All we need to ensure victory is to have our voters out, & the means must be provided, or we will fail.

SIMON CAMERON

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256 Place identified through content analysis.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City or delivered by Brenner and Jones.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

London.

20. October. 1848

My dear Sir,

I wrote to you last week<sup>257</sup> in reply to yours of the ninth of September. The more I think of the matter, the less seems to me the importance of the effusions, which malice engenders in friends of disappointment, & which find an audience only during the moments when public passions are heated by political contests. After the seventh of October,<sup>258</sup> nobody will think of listening to anything so foolish as the suggestion that one branch of the Joint Resolution for annexing Texas made war with Mexico more likely than the other. Tappan had in his memory confused a motion of Benton's of an earlier day for negotiations with Mexico. His own statement destroys itself. It is [whird]<sup>259</sup> only to give annoyance. No one can attach moment to it.

The eyes of the world are on you. I am very anxious that your final message should be a faultless document: every way suited to the condition of a country which is looked to as an example by every people in the civilized world.

Mr. Brodhead, now secretary of this Legation, is you know desirous to be appointed to the Office poor Martin held at Rome. He is a most amiable man, and one who, of all the men I know, would make himself most useful and most acceptable to our country men traveling to Rome. He has skill in eleven languages, is a prudent man, and has had experience in Diplomatic usages & life. He has been to me a very pleasant associate; and I could not do less than bear this testimony to his merits.

This country, in the midst of all the revolutions around it, is as full of apathy as possible. There is no movement: no combing of the fabric; no rending of the wall. And yet there is a deep foreboding of the future. How it will come I cannot certainly foresee: but it seems to me, the form revolution will take here, is through the finances. The questions about the income tax & the corn-law will shake England pretty thoroughly, when the income-tax requires renewal, & when the corn laws reduce materially the price of corn. But as yet habits of Subserviency to the aristocracy are so branded into the national character, that the people generally are satisfied with their institutions. They keep down pretty well their envy at our success, their consciousness that we are going forward full of hope, while their future is clouded; but a growl against the results of your administration is sometimes heard; and they dread the very name of Cass, as of one who would swallow Pococatapetl at a bite, make but one mouthful of Canada, and help the Irish any way he can. But after the seventh of November, they will speak of him in more kindly terms. The candidate of the Whigs may pass current with his party, if England's endorsement of him is sufficient. My best regards to Mrs Polk.

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257 Bancroft to Polk, October 13, 1848 (both such letters).

258 Bancroft probably meant to write "November."

259 Word here and below illegible or uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City. Extract published in M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *The Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), pp. 39–40.

FROM FOLLIOT T. LALLY

Portland [Maine]<sup>260</sup>

20th October 1848

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose herewith a communication from my excellent and gallant friend Genl. Pillow.<sup>261</sup> Having made no direct application for the situation alluded to by him, I should not now have presented his letter had it not contained matter of a nature private & personal between you. I feel that I do not merit the high eulogium he has seen proper to bestow upon me; but should my friends be gratified in my appointment to the office of Commissioner I can only pledge my best efforts not to disappoint their expectations, nor disgrace the source from which I receive it.

F. T. LALLY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>262</sup>

Oct 21st 1848

Dear Sir!

I received a letter from William Voorhies, in which he mentioned that he had held a conversation with you on the propriety of my accompanying him to California, and concluded by insisting on my joining him. I am entirely at Sea with regard to my future movements, I am trammelled by my Wife's Northern prejudice against a Southern home. I feel the necessity of moulding some bold design by which prosperity and possibly fame may be the reward, but in all candor, I know not where to begin. Can you suggest a beginning point? If you think it best for me to "pull up stakes" and go immediately to California, please favor me with the considerations that forms the opinion. I know you would not advise me without proper reflection, and I entertain great deference for your judgement.

The prospect in Tennessee for our cause is growing more satisfactory—from all I can learn—from all the indications—I am decidedly of the opinion that we will carry the State. In forming this opinion, I am entirely controlled by the evidences, suggested by the general tone of the public mind. Our friends are confident, the reasonable Whigs admit a doubt. We have a preponderance of the active talent in the field, and if the State is not carried in the present contest we never can carry it. I have made some speeches in this County, and the best sign is, that the Whigs seem disposed to reason, not in the spirit of their accustomed violence, but with a decent forbearance. The Central Committee is active—

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260 State identified through external research.

261 Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, October 4, 1848.

262 State identified from James K. Polk's AE.

nearly every County in the State is thoroughly organized. Every effort is being directed to bring out our full vote.

Coe is with Jones and I learn defending your Administration with warmth. I will attend their meeting at Mt. Pleasant on the 23d, when I will be better able to give you a correct idea of his manner of debate. He may have reasoned himself into a proper estimate of his folly in bracing himself against you, however after hearing him I can better judge.

Write me without delay, for if a movement toward California has to be made, I must be preparing to make the move. My Wife sends her respects to Mrs Polk. Mother is very well!

WILLIAM H. POLK

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "(Private)." From James K. Polk's AE: received November 1, 1848.

FROM JOHN, ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA AND VICAIRE OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE

Frankfort.

October 22 1848

Highly honoured and Well Beloved Friend.

The Constituent Assembly at Frankfort, on the 28th of June last, elected me Vicaire of the German Empire. The Resolution of a free people, and the patriotism of its Princes, have confided to me, until the definitive establishment of the German Constitution be completed, a power which is thus called to take a new and legal place, in the Councils of Nations.

Germany will not forget the amicable manner, in which the United States of America responded to her enthusiastic efforts, to rise to legal liberty and unity, and acknowledged them, even before the existence of an official organ, which could, as I now do, present the news of this great movement, to the knowledge of the American Nation. I hereby inform you, My Most honoured and highly Beloved Friend, of my acceptance of the provisional direction of the Government of Germany; and I appoint Frederick Ludwig von Roenne, formerly accredited at Washington, as Minister of Prussia, who will deliver to you this letter, as my Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, near the United States.

It was the most ardent desire of the Provisional Central Power of Germany, even before information had been received, of the appointment of an American Envoy, in the highly acceptable person of Mr Donelson, to be, without delay, represented at Washington, by an Envoy accredited to its Government, in the usual form. Nothing besides the care required to select a representative, in every respect worthy of this honourable and important post, has delayed the dispatch of an Envoy, until this period. The personal knowledge which I have, of the qualities of F. L. Von Roenne, and the good services which he has already rendered, in the international intercourse for the advantage of Germany as well as the United States, afford me a guarantee, that his exertions will henceforth be, in a still greater degree, beneficial to the two countries.

I therefore pray you, My Most highly honoured and Well Beloved Friend, to receive my Envoy with kindness, and to grant to him a favourable hearing and entire credit in all that he may say to you, on the part of the Central Power of Germany, most especially when he expresses the amicable and sincere wishes of Germany for the welfare of the United States of America. I remain . . . .

JOHN

L, translation. DLC—JKP. Letter is titled "Translation of a Cabinet Letter from the Vicaire of the German Empire." Delivered by Friedrich Ludwig von Roenne, probably on January 26, 1849.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

Oct. 27th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I received to day, your letter of the 13th Instant, together with the one enclosed of the same date, in answer to mine of the 9th of September, for both of which I thank you.

I heartily unite with you, in the wish that Genl. Cass may be elected and I think he will be. The unexpectedly close vote in the late State election in Pennsylvania, has given an intensity of interest to the Presidential election which it did not before possess. Causes however, (which it is not necessary to specify) operated in that election, which no longer exist, and my information induces the confident belief, that the electoral vote of Pennsylvania will be given for the Democratic ticket. If I am right in this, the question is settled. That Ohio will vote for Cass & Butler is no longer a matter of doubt. Even without Pennsylvania Genl. Cass's chances are the best, but the contest in that case, would be close, and the result might be a matter of some doubt.

I agree with you, that in the present condition of the world, my closing annual Message to Congress will be an important one. It has so happened that my administration, has occurred at an eventful period<sup>263</sup> in the history of our own country and of the world. Great questions have arisen foreign and domestic, which it has been my duty, to meet—with what success must be left to the future historian to record. You kindly suggest that in the next Message I should speak in terms that will "make Europe leap," and especially of our federative system. The theme I know is an ample one. In treating it, you from your position possess many materials which I cannot have. If you were with me a single day you could aid me much. As it is, My Dear Sir: I should esteem it a personal favour, if you would put down in writing, any views which you may think proper to suggest and transmit them to me by the return Steamer. Congress, will meet on the 4th of December and on the following day according to usage, my message will be sent in. If the outward and homeward passage should be of the ordinary length, there may still be time for me to receive your views. Should they be too late for that occasion, there may be some other during the Session, when it would be proper to use them.

I am most anxious to receive from you copies of the documents in the British archives relating to the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in May 1775, and every thing, which may relate to the proceedings of the people in that part of North Carolina, about that period. My own immediate family were active participators in those proceedings, and therefore every thing connected with them, will be of peculiar interest to me.

With my respectful salutations to Mrs. Bancroft — . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

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263 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.



ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

TO JOHN K. KANE

Washington City

Oct. 27th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I was gratified to receive your letter of the 21st Instant.<sup>264</sup> I hope you may be right in the confident opinion which you express, that Pennsylvania will give her electoral vote to the Democratic candidate at the approaching Presidential election. One apprehension which you express, gives me some concern, and it is in truth our only danger in Pennsylvania or elsewhere. It is, that the Free Soil men of the Whigs will to a great extent desert their candidate, and go for Taylor, while the Democrats of the same creed will more generally hold to their ticket. Can nothing be done, during the few days which yet remain to prevent this? Surely the Free Soil Democrats must see, that the only effect of th[is] course<sup>265</sup> must be to endanger the election of the Democratic candidate. I cannot believe, if the subject is presented to them in the proper light, that they can be willing, to overthrow their party and its principles, by with-holding their votes, and thus contributing indirectly to the election of Taylor. I hope many of them who have heretofore approved and supp[or]ted the Democratic policy, may reconsider their determination to vote for a ticket tha[t] can by no possibility succeed, and that they may yet act with their old friends. With the vote of Pennsylvania, I consider our success as certain beyond all doubt. Without it we may succeed, but the contest, will be very close and must be regarded as doubtf[ul]. Tennessee you know has been for years a debateable state. In the present contest my information is, that our chances are decidedly the best. Can nothing be done to convince the Democrats of Wilmot's District, of the danger of adhering to the Free Soil ticket. They cannot desire Taylor's election. Mr. Wilmot himself I learned shortly after the Baltimore convention, avowed his intention to support Genl. Cass. If he could be induced to return to that ground he would contribute largely, to place the State beyond doubt. Are you intimate with him? Regarding the present election, as of vast importance, no honourable means should be spared, to secure our success. I am retiring, and can have no other intrest in it, than that which is common to every citizen, who believes as I do, that upon the continuance of the existing policy, will depend the future prosperity of the country. If our opponents should come into power, (though they may make no such professions before the election) I regard it as certain that, the existing policy will be reversed, and all the leading measures of my administration be over thrown. I am much gratified that you take so deep an intrest in the matter, and I hope you may be able to convince, some of our erring Democratic brethren, & induce them to act, with their old party and their old friends in the great trial, which is just at hand.

I think very well of the capacity and fitness of the Democratic friend whom you recommend for office, and would be glad to gratify his wishes. I am under some embarrassments in

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264 Letter not found.

265 Letter or letters here and below cut off side of page.

regard to the particular position you name, and cannot now speak with certainty, as to what I may deem it my duty to do, in regard to it. In any event, I hope I may have it in my power before the close of my term, to serve the frind you name. I have hertofore sincerely desired to do so, but have been so embarrassed by the circumstances around me as to prevent it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked “(Private).”

FROM WILLIAM A. WYSE

City of Mexico

October 27th 1848

Sir

Having a claim against the Government of Mexico for services in its navy under Commodore Porter and others, I was on the point of having it paid by their own positive order before the war as were settled those of other foreigners in similar cases, but being an American it was withheld from me and I was otherwise persecuted on the same account.

Since the restoration of peace I demanded payment again, and have been answered that it was just, right and proper that it should be paid, although they plead at the same time the excuse of some law, which they pretend is against it at present, notwithstanding they have appropriated to themselves other money of mine as a motive of paying it; but the most weighty reason against it which they do not express, is, their well known animosity to Americans in general since the war and particularly to me and others who like myself have been associated with the American Army here.

Under these circumstances it is in vain for me to think of obtaining said payment without some countenance, aid or support from the U.S. Government, and as they have confessed that they are bound to pay it, and it being besides an injury which has resulted to me on account of the war, I most respectfully solicit, that your Excellency will be pleased to have issued such instructions as may be deemed proper, to the American Minister here in favour of it, supposing myself entitled to some consideration on the part of the Government at home, not only as an American citisen, but also for my services to the American Army whilst here, in whose toils and dangers I participated in the staff of the first division, and to every Department of which I rendered more or less assistance.

WM A WYSE

ALS. DNA–RG 76. Probably addressed to Washington City. From William Hunter, Jr.’s AE at top of letter: received at State Department December 13, 1848.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

[Berlin]<sup>266</sup>

Oct. 30h 1848

My dear Sir,

My son Lieut Donelson, who seperated from me in Switzerland, with my Daughters, to visit Rome, has been so much interrupted in his route, that he has not yet joined me again.

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266 Place identified through content analysis.

The consequence is that the benefit of his trip to Europe, as an opportunity to examine the military works, will be lost, unless you grant him the favor of an extension of his furlough to the 1st of April for which I have applied without his knowledge to the War Dept. His conduct at West Point is a pledge that the favor asked will be improved to the benefit of the country. His piety, intelligence, and thirst for information, inspire me with great hopes of his future usefulness, and I shall regard it as a great favor to have this request gratified.

Mr. Bagby remained a few days here with me. He seemed confident of the Democratic victory in the present election: but the papers continue to show that the race is a close one. According to my count the event turns on Ohio, and as I have never had much faith in the politics of that state I have never been sanguine of the success of our ticket. There is a charm in Genl Taylors no party declaration which added to his military merit, prepare me to hear that Mr. Bagbys anticipations are not realised.

The free soil movement is the most dangerous one made against the harmony of our Union: Assisted by the Foreign vote which will be hereafter increased by the process of emigration from Europe it may be considered a trial for us almost as dangerous as the socialism of Europe to her peace and tranquillity. But I will not tax you with my thoughts on the subject. I congratulate you that you are near the close of your arduous labors, and that your administration has been so successful.

The papers will give you the details of the siege and capitulation of Vienna. Affairs are not much better here. The Assembly and the King are preparing for a great conflict. Ministers succeed each other on the stage of Politics, with as much rapidity as on an ordinary Theatre. All is disorder.

Read my despatch no. 99, containing a recent interview with the King. It must gratify you to see the increasing respect felt for our country and that as difficulties increase here Kings are willing to take advice from so poor a character as I am.

I am pressed by the Arch Dukes friends at Frankfort to return, but I hope to receive first powers to negotiate. It is more than I can bear too to stand the expenses of frequent visits of that kind, unless I can be allowed an outfit which I think I am fairly entitled to. A little reflection will satisfy you, that at such a period as this, thrown into contact with all the excited political elements of Europe, it is impossible for me to practise the economy which is usual with our ministers.

I gave Baron Roenne a letter to you.<sup>267</sup> He is an amiable man, not weighty enough for the storm which is now blowing, but in peaceable times would have been a good counsellor for the King.

With kind regards to Mrs. P & to Mr. & Mrs. W we remain . . . .

A J DONELSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM JAMES D. WASSON

Post office Albany N.Y.

Oct. 31. 1848

Dear Sir

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<sup>267</sup> Letter not found.

It is sometime since the free soil party, that portion of them that formerly belonged to the Democratic party in this State, have entirely dropped the good old name and adopted the name of, free soilers, (the leaders I mean) who under that name intend, to, and do, spread their sails so wide, as to take in, all sorts and complexions of parties, provided always, that they are opposed to all the old & established usages of the Democratic party including regular Nominations and among the leaders, I am sorry to say the evidence is too strong for doubts, is our old friend, Jacob Gould Esq the Marshall of the Northern part of this State, an office which he holds under you, through the great & Successful struggle of the Democratic party of 1844.

If as I believe there can be no doubts, he has voluntarily abandoned the Democratic party, and declines to sustain their regular Nominations, he has no longer any claim to their patronage. I hope you will appoint as his successor Frederick Lansing Esq of the County of Herkimer a gentleman every way well qualified, to discharge the duties of that office, to the satisfaction of the government, and the people, and from the great number of influential Democrats from different parts of the state who come to his aid for this situation, I think the President will be satisfied we all consider him, as he has been, a valuable man to the Democratic party and one they will feel gratified, to see honorably Noticed.

JAMES D. WASSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “Confidential.” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received November 3, 1848; “Private.” Polk’s AE: “Private.”  
FROM LYDIA ELIZA POLK CALDWELL

[Haywood County, Tenn.]<sup>268</sup>

Nov. 1st 1848

Dear Brother

Your Boy Adison has been very ill since I wrote you.<sup>269</sup> At one time I apprehend Danger but he is again up. He was attacked with the Influenza and as all do here ended in Typhoid Pulse. He lookd very bad when he came from exposure I thought. He is now walkng about and will be able the Dr says to go home in a few Days. I have made him a suit of clothes got him shoes and a Blanket to travel with and will start him in Irons Just as soon as the Dr says it will be safe so to do. I paid all attention to him when he was sick got him up as soon as I could. I have procured you I think a very good Mewl. As I got two in the same Lott for myself by takng three got I think a Bargain; when I received your letter<sup>270</sup> I hastened to act from it. I should of written you but I disliked to write while Addison was sick thought it best to wait until he was out of Danger. I would of started him home the Day he was taken every thing was ready but we cant help these things. I feel thankful he got well atall as there was many Died suddenly Near here with it. Some call it the Tyler Grippe. It has gone through my family with out the Loss of one but many have Died of it in Brownsvill. It has

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268 Place identified from postmark of Dancyville, Tenn.

269 Caldwell probably refers to her letter to Sarah Childress Polk, not found but discussed in James K. Polk to Caldwell, October 14, 1848.

270 Polk to Caldwell, October 14, 1848.

been very fatal. I have written to your Overseer where Addison was fearing he might lose time Looking after him. I remain your Affectionate Sister

L E CALDWELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 11, 1848.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Memphis

Nov. 1st 1848

Dear Sir,

I recd. your letter of \_\_\_\_\_<sup>271</sup> a few days ago. I immediately wrote to Aunt Eliza to give an order on me for whatever money she might need to buy a mule & for other expences, or to write me what amt she had paid out & I would either pay the money over to her son Sam, or send it to her as She miught desire.

She wrote Sam that Addison had been sick. I advised her not to send him until he was well and out of danger of a relapse. I expect to hear from her in a few days.

As the election approaches we are getting up a little excitement in Tennessee. If we can get out our full vote I hope we may carry the state. The whigs live near the towns & voting places & Are more apt to go to the polls than the Democrats. I dont think we will make Any gain in West Tennessee—will be satisfied if we vote as we did in the last Governor's election. If we can do this, I think Middle Tennessee will give us the state. The vote must be close & the chances are about even.

As to cotton I am very much discouraged as to the prospect ahead. The crop will be a large one & unless we have more quiet times abroad we cant look for much improvement.

If I had cotton & was not obliged to have the money I would not sell it at present.

Chester, who is well informed about Wm H Polk's lands, advises me, very decidedly to take the offer of \$1250— for both tracts. What do you think of it?

SAML P WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 12, 1848; "Relates to my Private Business."

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville Tenne.

Novr. 3rd 1848

Dear sir

I had your house Insured Immediately on geting your letter of the 11th Octr. and directed the cirtificate to be forwarded to you which I have just learned from Mr. Butler clerk in the office was done. I had retained Insurance on the wing & considered Mr Hughs bound for the balance of the house until the keys were delivered which is certainly the case & Insured by your orders because I concluded that you would rather pay a months insurance than have to recover of Mr. H.

Mr Hughs did not desire to make you a cheaper finish in making the flooteed columns with wrought capitals but to make one more expensive because he thought it handsomer. He

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271 Polk to Walker, October 14, 1848.

will make the sliding doors as per contract but is doing nearly all the work finer than was promised as he always told me he would. Your house except the plastering will be the finest inside finish in Nashville & therefore I have been much tempted to order the front halls & Parlors to be handsomely finished with cornices & centre flourishes as is now being done in all the fine houses here. The cost as represented to me by Hugh who is anxious to have it done would be slightly over two hundred dollars additional making your whole improvement say eleven thousand dollars. If you desire this & say so by Telegraph it probably will not be too late.

Our Election is all mixed up so much so that there is no knowing what will be the result; there has been and still is much excitement all sprung up within a few days in which your Brother William H had something to do but it has all been today closed the party with whom he had difficulty having declined to answer his call &c.

We have more hope within a few days, how it will result I do not know but hope and almost believe right for us.

V. K. STEVENSON

[P.S.] Mr Hughs is five times over good for and able to rebuild your house if burned before delivery of keys or I should have had this Insurance attended to long ago. I had spoken to him once or twice of the propriety of insuring but he said he was able to take the risk & knowing he was I left it so. V.K.S.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 11, 1848; answered November 11 and 12, 1848; "Relates to my Private Business."

FROM JOSEPH L. WILLIAMS

Knox County [Tenn.]<sup>272</sup>

3d Nov. 1848

Dear Sir:

I was sorry to learn from Cave Johnson, & thro' Doct. Ramsey, that there was some apprehension at Washington, of Taylor's election. It should only prompt his opponents to increased exertions. The proposal to elect him is simply disgraceful & an insult to the good sense of the Union. It invokes a morality, lying deeper, if possible, than politics. I learned confidentially from Doct. Ramsey, & directly from our friend Cave Johnson, what you & he thought I might accomplish in our end of Tennee. Had the fears entertained, as to the general result, occurred to us, a month earlier, & thus, the probable deciding importance of this state, there is nothing in my power, that I would not have contributed, unasked; for, ever since the nominations, I have been operating on individuals of the old Whig party, &, with considerable effect; mostly dissuading them from voting, where I could not get them into an affirmative position for Cass & Butler. I am confident I have affected two or three hundred in this way in E. Tennee. This, I thought, might somewhat counterpoise the inroads into the democratic forces, with which Taylor evidently started out, this side of the mountain. I still believe Cass will finally get Tennee. by fifteen hundred, by non-voting of Clay Whigs. If this be not so, then I am profoundly in the dark. Had I the funds to spare I would freely give ten thousand dollars to defeat Taylor, especially defeat him in Tennee.

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272 State identified from Polk's AE.

if that would decide the election; so important in every aspect, do I regard Cass' election at this time. But you are mistaken in supposing that any one man could do so much, as you ascribe to me, so immediately before the election. When we heard from you,<sup>273</sup> it so happened that I was, & had, for weeks been perplexed & my time annoyed & consumed by a multiplicity of deviltries—such as hunting night & day for some of my negroes, run away by instigation of d—d abolitionists here & also other of my negroes levied on for judgements obtained on notes got from me by extortion; & I was in the midst of my efforts to enjoin those scoundrelous judgements when I heard from you & Johnson. Actually the most that my time enabled me to do, was, to publish a short analysis of the Taylor absurdities; selecting only a topic or two, to demonstrate by. You will perceive, if you should happen to see it, what sort of people I tried to get at, squaring as far as possible by my former course. It was too late, to do much. It could accomplish but little compared to my steady operations for months with individuals. Nevertheless, if it be worth five votes directly or relatively for Cass, the suggestions of Mr Johnson & yourself, tho' so late, will not have been wholly in vain. The suggestion thus made by the President thro' Doct. Ramsey, will be known only to ourselves. Otherwise, Bell might hang you, hereafter, under some ex post facto freedom-of-elections-law.

J. L. WILLIAMS

P.S. The mail is closing; & in the absence of five minutes' time to write our friend, Cave Johnson, please say to him I am yet candidly sanguine as to Tenee. J.L.W.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 11, 1848.

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Nov. 4th 1848

My Dear Sir:

In three days more the period for speculation in regard to the result of the Presidential election will have passed. I have high hopes of success. My hopes greatly preponderate over my fears. Still when I reflect that there are not less than ten or a dozen states, in which the parties are so nearly equally balanced, that an accident, or superior exertion on the day of election may carry them either way, I cannot conceal from myself that there may be a possibility, a bare possibility of defeat. The States referred to are, Connecticut New Jersey , Delaware , Pennsylvania , Maryland N. Carolina , Georgia , Florida , Louisiana , Tennessee , Iowa & Wisconsin . I do not include Ohio in the list regarding her as certainly safe. I received a letter to day from Dr. Ramsey of Tennessee, written on the 26th of October, expressing the confident belief that we will carry Tennessee, by "a slender majority."<sup>274</sup> He informs me that Joseph L. Williams for several years a Whig member of Congress, from the Knoxville District, would be out on the next day, in a letter to his old Whig supporters, renouncing Whiggery, and assigning his reasons for voting against Taylor & for Cass & Butler . He lives in the strong Whig part of the State, and

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273 Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, October 17, 1848.

274 James G. M. Ramsey's letter not found.

I hope much from the effect of his letter. I think from all the information we have that we must carry Pennsylvania, and if so all is well. Col. Thomas of New York has written to me since his return from Detroit.<sup>275</sup> I was glad to learn from him, that you were in good spirits, and thought your election secure. So [mak]<sup>276</sup> it be.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Detroit and marked “(Private).”

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Washington City,

November 6th 1848

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th of September last, and in compliance with your request to furnish you with a statement, so far as within my knowledge, of all your opinions, views or acts, as well before as after your inauguration as President, relating to the subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States, proceed to reply as fully as my memory will serve me at this date, detailing at the same time the progress of this question in the Senate of the United States.

On the 4th of February 1845, the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Senate, to which had been referred the consideration of the joint resolutions which passed the House for the admission of Texas as a state of the Union, reported in favor of the rejection of those resolutions. On the succeeding day Mr. Benton introduced his bill to provide for the annexation of Texas to the United States. A motion was made by an opponent of the bill to refer it to the same committee on Foreign Relations which had but the day preceding reported against the annexation of Texas. This motion was resisted by me, and failed by a single vote. Upon that occasion, on referring to the files of the Congressional Globe of that date, I find by my remarks as then reported, that whilst my decided preference of the House resolutions was expressed, it was accompanied by the avowal, in case of the failure of these resolutions, to take into consideration the bill of Col. Benton. On the conclusion of this speech, I was addressed in the Senate chamber by Mr. Francis P. Blair, then the Editor of the Globe, who seemed much gratified by my remarks, and requested me to retire with him for the purpose of an interview on the subject. We accordingly proceeded to the room of the Committee of the Judiciary of the Senate, where Mr. Blair stated to me that the House resolutions could never pass the Senate, designating the names of several democratic Senators whom he stated as of his own personal knowledge never would vote for those resolutions, and requested me, as the only means of preventing the defeat of the measure, to agree to support the bill of Mr. Benton, assuring me, if I would do so, that it could be substituted as an amendment in the Senate to the House resolutions, pass that body, go to the House and be concurred in and become a law. I told Mr. Blair that I was bound in good faith to support the joint resolutions of the House, and besides, I preferred them, as more prompt and certain, and as conforming to my own plan of admitting Texas as a State as proposed by myself in that form in 1844, 1835 and 1826. I told him that it

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275 John Addison Thomas to Polk, November 2, 1848.

276 Word uncertain; Polk may have meant to write “make” or “may.”



was quite possible that Mr. Benton's bill might by a united whig vote, with the aid of such democratic Senators as were opposed to the House resolutions, be substituted for them in the Senate, but that if this were done, the whig Senators opposed to the annexation would then vote against Mr. Benton's bill, and as I feared also would several southern democratic Senators, and that in this way the great measure of annexation would be defeated. I then told him that there was one method which had occurred to my mind, growing out of the remarks made by the Senator from Missouri, under which the question could be saved; that Col. Benton in his speech that morning had made it an objection to the House resolutions, that Texas would reject them, and prefer his plan; that such was not my opinion, but I was willing to submit the decision to her judgement, and that I would suggest for his consideration, whether it might not be preferable to offer Mr. Benton's bill as a new section to the House resolutions, presenting the alternative for Texas to decide which she would prefer, and that in this manner the friends of the House resolutions might in a manner perfectly fair and honorable unite with Mr. Benton and his friends in supporting the whole measure thus associated and amended. Mr. Blair seemed much pleased with this suggestion, and said he would consult Col. Benton upon the subject, and a day or two afterwards he informed me that Col. Benton would support the measure in this alternative form, rather than that annexation should be defeated. It will thus be perceived, that I was the first to propose the uniting of Col. Benton's bill with the House resolutions as an alternative, which facts, together with my avowed preference for the House resolutions will be found stated substantially by Mr. Blair in an editorial of the *Globe* of the 26th of March 1845. Upon receiving this information I prepared the amendment, a copy of which is annexed,<sup>277</sup> to offer as an additional section to the House resolutions, leaving the choice between Col. Benton's bill and the House resolutions to Texas. The original amendment as thus prepared by me, is now in my possession, and was shown to many of the friends of Texas at that date. I think this amendment was put in form by me on the 8th of February. Various efforts subsequently were made to ascertain with certainty whether the resolutions thus amended could be adopted; and I entertained hopes that the measure would succeed in that way, until, I think the 24th of February, when I was informed by Mr. Haywood of the Senate that there were several democratic Senators who would not vote for the resolutions in that alternative form, which assurance he gave me as of his own personal knowledge as a settled and unalterable fact, and he stated to me that unless my amendment as proposed to be offered, could undergo some modification, the great measure of annexation would be defeated, for the success of which Mr. Haywood expressed, and I believe felt the utmost solicitude. From these representations made by Mr. Haywood to me, and which I then believed and still believe, that the amendment in the form in which it had been drawn by me could not succeed without some modification, I asked Mr. Haywood to suggest the modification which in his judgement would carry

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277 Walker enclosed a copy of his original amendment, which (1) gave Texas the option "to negotiate with the United States for admission into the Union" and (2) gave the president, if Texas selected that option, the choice between codifying the resulting "terms" in a "treaty" or in "articles to be submitted to the two Houses of Congress." D, copy, possibly in McClintock Young's hand. DLC-JKP.

the measure. He then assured me that if I would change my proposed amendment so far as to leave the alternative to the decision of the President of the United States in lieu of Texas, that Mr. Benton and his friends would all vote for the amendment, and that if I would support it he entertained no doubt but that the Senators friendly to the House resolutions would then give it their vote, and that in that form the measure could succeed. He suggested also the importance of the amendment being offered by me, to which I assented, in case I became satisfied that the measure would succeed in that form and no other. I then changed my own amendment so far only as it substituted the President of the United States for Texas in deciding which should be preferred, the House resolutions or the bill of the Senate, and after consulting with some of my friends in the Senate, became convinced that they would support it, and so informed Mr. Haywood, who assured me that Mr. Benton and his friends were still all determined to vote for the resolutions in that form; whereupon, at six o'clock on the evening of the 27th of February, the hour being thus noted on the Senate journal, I offered the amendment, convinced on that day for the first time that success was certain, and that in no other form could the measure be carried; and on that same evening my amendment was adopted by a vote of 27 to 25, and the joint resolutions of the House as thus amended passed the Senate the same evening, subsequently passed the House and became a law. It was not until the morning of the 24th of February according to my recollection that the suggestion of changing my alternative amendment was first made to me. This communication, as before stated, was made to me by Mr. Haywood, and I never communicated with you in any manner on that point, nor, so far as I know, did you have any knowledge of the change proposed, or of my determination upon the subject. Indeed, notwithstanding my intimate relations with you at that time, being about to become a member of your cabinet, I did not feel disposed, as a Senator of the United States, to confer with you as to this particular form of amendment, when, by its provisions, you were to be made the umpire upon the subject, nor would I have ever consented to offer the amendment if you ever had expressed to me any choice between the two alternatives. Nor did I know how you would decide the question; nor did any one ever intimate to me that you had ever been consulted upon the subject, or that you had either formed or expressed any opinion in regard to the choice of alternatives. After the resolution, as amended by me, passed the Senate, you expressed to me your gratification at the result, and again when it passed the House, but without alluding in any way to your opinion as to which alternative ought to be adopted, nor did I ever express any opinion to you on that point until the question was introduced at our first Cabinet meeting. Then I learned that President Tyler had acted already upon the subject, and adopted the House resolutions on the 3rd March 1845, the last day of his official term. At this Cabinet meeting, you presented the question for the consideration of the Cabinet as to what course ought to be pursued by you in regard to these alternatives, giving no opinion yourself upon the subject, and having formed none, so far as was known to me. It was then suggested by some member of the Cabinet, but by which of them I do not recollect, that President Tyler having already acted upon the subject, and decided the question which by the law

he was authorized to do, and despatch[ed]<sup>278</sup> the messenger with that decision to Texas, the question possibly might be regarded by some as placed thus beyond your control. On that question of power, I am not aware that any decision was made by the Cabinet or yourself, because we were all at once unanimously of opinion that it was best under all the circumstances of the case to adopt the alternative presented in the House resolutions as the most certain to secure annexation. You listened attentively and without interruption or expressing any opinion yourself of the views given thus promptly and unanimously by your Cabinet, when you announced your concurrence in opinion with them, and it was resolved that the Secretary of State should send a despatch to that effect to Texas, confirming the selection made by President Tyler. I was confident then, as I am now, that you had never committed yourself in any way on this subject. If you had, it certainly must have been known to some member of your Cabinet, and if you felt embarrassed by any such commitment, you might very readily have relieved yourself by placing the decision upon the choice already made by the President, your predecessor, under the powers devolved upon him by law. I will here add, that I never heard even a suggestion that you had committed yourself in any way on this subject, or expressed any preference for the Senate or House resolutions until I read the letters of Messrs Tappan and Blair in the Evening Post of the 28th of July last. I think it possible you may have stated to Mr. Blair, either when Mr. Benton's bill was pending alone, or when it was offered by me as an alternative, that if that mode of annexation were adopted, you would appoint the most able men in the Union of both parties as Commissioners, but that you ever did say that you would yourself select Mr. Benton's bill as an alternative seems to me absolutely impossible, and I have no doubt that this idea is the result of a misapprehension of your views on this subject, which might have arisen very readily in case you had said that if Mr. Benton's bill were adopted as the alternative, you would appoint such commissioners. It would have been more satisfactory if the parties who labored under this misapprehension had stated the date of this alleged conversation with you, because the amendment as originally proposed to be offered by me, and which was drawn up and considered for several weeks and intended to be offered, left the decision of this alternative to Texas, and rendered it impossible that you should undertake to decide the question. Nor was it until the 24th of February that any change in this alternative was suggested to me, nor until the 26th that I finally agreed to offer it. It was offered by me on the evening of the 27th and passed the Senate the same evening without adjournment. There could then have been but little time after the suggestion of leaving the alternative to the choice of the President of the United States for such a conversation with you, and still less time to have conversed with the several Senators friendly to that mode of annexation, and to have communicated your views to them, and still more extraordinary that this important fact should have remained unknown to me and as I believe to every member of your Cabinet until divulged in the columns of the Evening Post in July last.

R J WALKER

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278 Letters either absent or cut off side of page.

LS. DLC—JKP. Enclosed in Walker to Polk, November 13, 1848. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received November 13, 1848. (Polk wrote separate AEs for the November 6 and 13 letters, writing that for the former on the addressed cover.) Walker read a draft to Polk at the Executive Mansion on November 9, 1848. Published in LTT , pp. 164–69.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>279</sup>

November 8<sup>th</sup> 1848

Dear Sir

Receved yours Dated the 15 Of October. I have ritened you won day ted the 8 or 9 of Oct to Ber.<sup>280</sup> Sir we are all gitin in good heth a gane. We have had a good deal of sick ness but the cases has ben mild xcept the case of caroline Henly whodyed. The Dr thort hir case was & old cronick disease had bin patched oup.

Sir the corn crop is turning Out fine.

The pee crope is good. We have 80 hogs to slaughter some beens & the crop of coten is turning Out tolerrable. We will I think make 190 or 200 Bals waing 2100 lbs. We have the negros winter clothing a bout ready. We have packed 73 bags of coten.

The stock all Lcks as well as could be expected. Mr J. T. Leigh has imployed me to at tend to your besness.

November 8<sup>th</sup> 1848<sup>281</sup>

Dear sir The back numbers I have sent on to you<sup>282</sup> but if you have not Receved them I have them on your farm Book.

[JOHN A. MAIRS]

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 22, 1848.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

Washington

9 November 1848

Sir/

I have received your letter of the 30th September last, inviting my attention to two publications in the New York Evening Post of the 28th July, bearing the signatures of Benjamin Tappan & Francis P Blair; and requesting me to furnish you a statement of all I may know of any opinion, views or acts of yours, as well before as after your inauguration as President, relating to the subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States. It is proper before I proceed to state my knowledge upon this subject, that I should declare, in answer to one of your inquiries, that when the subject of the annexation of Texas was

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279 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

280 Mairs to Polk, October 9, 1848.

281 This section of the letter is preceded by a table, which begins the second page and is titled "the wats of coten bags made." It lists the weights of cotton bags numbered 19–73, totaling 27,839 pounds.

282 Mairs enclosed, in his letter of October 9, a table of the weights of bags 1–18. They total 9,006 pounds, though Mairs erroneously gives the total as 8,905.

before the Senate of which I was then a member, I had no knowledge nor information of the statements made by Messrs Tappan & Blair in their publications.

On the day, or the day but one, after your arrival in this City on the evening of the 13th February 1845, you tendered me the office of Secretary of State. Between that time & the day of your inauguration, I saw you frequently and had several confidential conversations with you on various topics connected with the policy you intended to pursue as President of the United States; but in none of these did you ever express any preference either for the House Resolutions, or the Resolution of the Senate, for the admission of Texas into the Union, nor had I ever heard it intimated that you had expressed such a preference to any other person. I might add, that according to my best recollection, I had no knowledge of which alternative you would adopt until Monday the 10th March 1845, the day of the first regular Cabinet meeting.

On the morning of that day I was qualified as Secretary of State before Judge Catron & immediately entered upon the duties of the office. Afterwards, on the same morning, I read in cabinet, the Despatch of Mr. Calhoun to Mr. Donelson, dated on the 3d March 1845, by which the latter was instructed to present to the Government of Texas, as the basis of the admission of that State into the Union, the two first resolutions as they had passed the House of Representatives. Some member of the Cabinet, I do not now recollect the individual, suggested, that as President Tyler had already made his election in favor of the House Resolutions, it was doubtful whether President Polk possessed the power to reverse this decision of his predecessor & adopt the third resolution or amendment of the Senate. This question was not decided; because it was found, after a brief interchange of opinions, that yourself & all the members of the Cabinet, without hesitation, were clearly & decidedly in favor of the House Resolutions, in preference to the Resolution of the Senate. We all then believed, as I still believe, that the selection of the Senate's amendment would have delayed & jeopardized, if it had not altogether defeated the annexation of Texas. There was not the least hesitation, on your part, in arriving at this conclusion.

This point being settled—after consultation with the Cabinet, you deemed it important that a Despatch should be immediately transmitted to Mr. Donelson confirming the selection which had been made by Mr. Tyler of the House Resolutions; but modifying Mr. Calhoun's Despatch in certain particulars which I need not specify. I then left the Cabinet in session, completed my despatch of the 10th March & obtained your approval of it on the same evening, & sent it off to Mr. Donelson by the late Governor Yell of Arkansas.

[In all our subsequent intercourse, I have never heard you utter a sentiment inconsistent with the strong opinion which you expressed, at the first Cabinet meeting, in favor of the House Resolutions.]<sup>283</sup>

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and delivered by hand. From Polk's AE: received November 9, 1848. Buchanan delivered an earlier version on November 8 but took it

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283 Buchanan struck out this paragraph in the ALS. It has been transcribed from the ALS, probably press copy.

back on November 9 before delivering this revised version later that day. See also ALS, probably press copy, PHI-JB, and L, copy, PHI-CF. Published in WJB -8, pp. 240-42.  
FROM JACOB BIGELOW

[Washington City, c.]<sup>284</sup>

November 10, 1848

The undersigned has no doubt of the Utter incompetency of the Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds to discharge the duties of his Office.

A buisness man would be surprised to find so limited a knowledge of business, in the commonest Merchants Clerk. Such is the Commissioners ignorance of the way of executing the public works committed to his hands, that he daily wastes the public Monies, and has already rendered himself a laughing stock to practical men.

J. BIGELOW

ANS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally. On same sheet as James Crutchett to Polk, c. November 10, 1848. Later enclosed with Polk's AEI, dated November 10, 1848, to Elexius Simms et al. to Polk, September 9, 1848, and thus probably enclosed in Charles Douglas to Polk, November 24, 1848.

FROM GEORGE M. BRIGHT

[Beech] land [Ky.]<sup>285</sup>

Nov 10, 1848

Dr. Sir

The returns of the election is to me & I have no doubt to most of our friends unexpected. What can be the cause of the loss of Pennsylvania I can not amagin. I did not think before the meeting of the Baltimore convention that we could nominate a man that could not be elected, although I then beleaved that we would be with you most certain of sucseess, and I am now convinced that my judgement was then correct. With you I do not beleave we would have at this time been beten, and it is to you the democrecy of the nation four years from now must look to be again triumphant & renew the measures of the party which I fear with the administration which is coming into power will be overthrown. This you may think & perhaps is making an early calculation on the events of four years but they are now my candid opinions. Pleas present my regards to Mrs Polk & beleave me . . . .

GEO M. BRIGHT

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 18, 1848.

FROM JAMES CRUTCHETT

[Washington City, c.]<sup>286</sup>

November 10, 1848

Sir.

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284 Probable place identified through content analysis; approximate date identified from AEI with which letter was later enclosed.

285 Town name uncertain, light ink transfer; state identified from Polk's AE.

286 Probable place identified through content analysis; approximate date identified from AEI with which letter was later enclosed.

Having been requested by the Committees of Public-buildings of the Senate & House of Representatives to prepare a description and estimate of suitable and necessary fixtures for lighting the public grounds, Pennsylvania Avenue & the residence of your Excellency, in which it was required that the Iron pillars & Lamps &c should be of heavy weight and suitable design to correspond with the general character of the Buildings and places where they may be located; And appropriations having been made by Congress designed to carry out the same in the best manner & with the understanding that all the necessary fixtures for completing the lighting thereof should progress without delay so as to be in readiness for the ensuing Congress, I feel it my duty to apprise your Excellency that I have ascertained that Lamp posts, Lanterns &c have been contracted for by the Commissioner of Public Buildings of improper weight & description, not anticipated or intended by Congress or fit or suited for the places intended, or even for the public streets of any City much less the Public Buildings. I would also state that numerous difficulties are interposed by the said Commissioner calculated to prevent the execution of these works till a late period of the ensuing year if continued in, that these interruptions are of a nature uncalled for & of an improper character & believe the whole to arise from the great want of competency in the Commissioner of Public Buildings which is further evinced by the manner other public works under his supervision are being done.

Knowing no other mode to pursue than to address your excellency on the subject I have so far trespassed with a view to prevent the Misapplication of Monies & ensure the accomplishment of works intended by Congress.

I would only further state, I have no interest in anything relative to the above, more than a common Citizen . . . .

J. CRUTCHETT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. On same sheet as Jacob Bigelow to Polk, c. November 10, 1848. Later enclosed with Polk's AEI, dated November 10, 1848, to Elexius Simms et al. to Polk, September 9, 1848, and thus probably enclosed in Charles Douglas to Polk, November 24, 1848.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Washington City

Nov. 11th 1848

My Dear Wife:

I have heard nothing from you since you left. I take it for granted, that you reached New York safely. I hope your visit may be a pleasant-one. All things here are in statu quo. Not an incident has occurred that is worth relating. The House is very quiet. Augusta Maria and myself sit down to dinner alone, or at least did so on the first day. After that I invited Hal to join us as a guest during your absence. He is delighted at his promotion from the pantry, is very prompt in his attendance and is the first at the table. Augusta and myself expect of course to be in the parlour on next tuesday evening, and you may calculate to learn that we gave a grand reception to our visitors.

As you leave home so seldom I hope you will take full time for your visit. I am anxious that you shall go to West Point, if you can do so with convenience. I shall not expect you at home before next Monday week.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

[P.S.] Since writing & sealing the within I have recived yours of yesterday.<sup>287</sup> J.K.P. <sup>288</sup>

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York City.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Washington,

Nov. 12th 1848

Sir:

I have received your letter of the 30th of Sept. last, calling my attention to a publication, in the New York Evening Post, of the 28th July Ult., of two letters bearing the signatures of Benjamin Tappan and Francis P. Blair, and requesting me to furnish you a statement of all that I may know in regard to any opinion, views or acts of yours, as well before, as after your inauguration as President, on the subject of the Annexation of Texas to the United States, and the mode of its accomplishment.

On your arrival at the seat of Government, in the month of February 1845, I called to pay my respects to you. I did not again meet you, until at your invitation on the first day of March, I visited you at your lodgings, and was requested to accept a situation in your Cabinet. In that, and another interview which took place on the next day or the day after, when I accepted your offer, we had a frank and unreserved conversation on the measures of your administration. One of the most prominent was to complete the Annexation of Texas. The accomplishment of this object, you considered as one of your highest duties, in connection with the circumstances of your election. There was no intimation, whatever, that you had formed any opinion, or indicated any preference as to the mode in which the measure of annexation, already so near its consummation, was to be effected. As a member of President Tyler's Cabinet, I had advised the adoption of the plan proposed in the House Resolution, as preferable, because more simple and more certain of success than that proposed in the amendment of the Senate.

When the subject came before your Cabinet for consideration, on the 10th of March, the despatch of Mr. Calhoun to Mr. Donelson on the subject was read, the opinions of the members present given successively and unanimously in favor of the alternative selected by President Tyler. You listened to the opinions of the members, without interruption or remark, and stated your concurrence with-out hesitation, and without the slightest appearance of embarrassment or doubt. Mr. Bancroft subsequently came in, and expressed his concurrence in what had been done. My position in reference to the question made me a close and anxious observer of what passed: And I unhesitatingly declare, that there was nothing in your manner, or your remarks, which left on my mind the slightest doubt, that you had approached the examination without any commitment or preference in favor of the Senate proposition.

I had no reason to doubt that the alternative propositions had been fairly adopted by Congress, and the selection left, in good faith, to the Executive, without pledge or commitment by him in favor of one or the other. And I never heard an intimation that any

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287 Letter not found.

288 Polk wrote his postscript on the cover.



such preference had been indicated by you, much less any pledge given, until I read the publication referred to.

At the called Session of the Senate, which immediately followed your inauguration, you made no nomination of commissioners to treat with Texas, which was conclusive evidence that you had not adopted the Senate plan. At the next session of Congress you communicated what you had done; and in all the conversations which I held with you, confidential and unreserved, I never saw in your manner or acts, or heard any thing to justify a suspicion, that you had disappointed any just expectation, of a course of conduct on your part, in regard to annexation different from that which you had pursued.

J. Y. MASON

LS in John Etheridge's hand. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received February 17, 1849. See also AL, draft. ViHi-MF25.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

Washington City

Nov. 12th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I wrote to you on yesterday in answer to your letter of the 3rd Instant in which I left it to you to decide, whether the additions you proposed in the finish of the front Halls and Parlors, should be made or not. I informed you that I did not understand distinctly what they were, but left it to your judgment, to decide on the propriety of making them. I could not understand what the "centre flourishes," you mention, meant. Majr. Graham has just called in, and I enquired of him. He at first thought they must be figures drawn on the floor to dance around. Over this idea we had a laugh. He presently bethought himself however, that they must be figures in the ceiling over-head. Whatever they may be, I conclude to say you that I think the \$200. which they will cost will be worth more to me than the additi[ons]<sup>289</sup> or improvements which you propose. The Hous[e] will cost me more than I at first supposed & I prefer to have it finished according to the contract, without any additional expe[nse]. You wrote to me when you made the contract with Mr Huges <sup>290</sup> that my letter to you of the 12th of February last, was incorporated into the contract and made a part of it. By turning to that letter, of which I retained a copy, you will find the following passage, viz., "If in the progr[e]s[s] of the work you discover any addition or improvement, proper to be made, you ha[ve] a right to direct it, and they are to d[o] the work, so as to make the establishm[ent] a complete one, with out extra charge fo[r] it."

If this clause is a part of the contract, as I understand it is, the manner in which the work shall be finished, is entirely under [yo]ur control, and the additions if any, which you [m]ight direct, should be made without further [c]harge. All however that I mean now to say [i]s that I prefer to have the work done according to the contract & your understanding of it, without being subject to the payment of the additional two hundred dollars. I prefer to pay no more than I have contracted to pay.

JAMES K. POLK

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289 Letter or letters here and below cut off side of page.

290 Stevenson to Polk, April 23, 1848.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Washington City

Nov. 13th 1848

My Dear Wife:

I have just received your note of yesterday.<sup>291</sup> It is not often that you leave home, and I hope you will not hasten your return, until you are perfectly ready. I suppose you will of course leave before all your purchases, are ready to be shipped. Knox will know how to make all the arrangements, about sending them off. He had better collect them all at our House and leave directions to have them insured and shipped. You inform me that Mr & Mrs. Butler had left their cards for you. This was very civil and manifests some magnanimity. I hope you will not leave New York without returning their call. Under the circumstances I think you should make it a point to return the call. We are very quiet here. Nothing of interest has occurred. I wrote to you two days ago, but it seems you had not received my letter when you wrote, on yesterday.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Just as I had finished this letter Senator Douglass of Illinois called in, and informs me that he was invited this morning to attend a Dinner party, to be given to you by Mr Aspinwall on Wednesday next. So you see by what an accident I have been informed of what is going on in N. York. I<sup>292</sup> [sober-seriousness],<sup>293</sup> I do not see, why you should not accept some of the marked civilities which are extended to you. Suppose it does protract your absence a few days; what of that! No body would be the loser by it but me, and I will submit to it.

You will conclude I fear, that this, is very much like a woman's letter, the Postscript the main part of it. Tell the girls that they have forgotten their promise to write to me alternately every day. J.K.P.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York City.

FROM HENRY SIMPSON

Philadelphia

Novr. 13th 1848

Sir,

From the commencement of your administration You have committed nothing but blunders, and the first and greatest was your calling that old Federalist & Hunker, to be your Secretary of State, or prime minister. Your conduct to Messrs. Van Buren & Wright respecting the honorable and honest A. C Flagg, deserves never to be forgotten, the wilful misrepresentations you made to them should cause the blush of shame to tinge your cheek, while you have blood circulating in your veins. You well know the facts—and that the integrity of that lamented statesman Silas Wright could not lie, you know you wrote

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291 Letter not found.

292 Polk may have meant to write "In."

293 Word or words uncertain, part of text obliterated by tear.

to both Messrs. Wright and Van Buren, to say, who they wished to be Secretary of the Treasury, and that they answered Mr. Flagg, and that you agreed, and said it should be so, yet afterwards appointed candid R. J. Walker!

In short, you have defeated the Democratic party in this state and the union. You have made many bad appointments and shown yourself an ingrate.

With due respect & good by, yours,

HENRY SIMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “private” on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received November 13, 1848; “This man was applicant to me for office, & importuned me for months, after I became President; He was disappointed; & this letter proves him to be destitute of principle, honor or truth.”

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Nov. 14th 1848

My Dear Sir:

You cannot regret more deeply than I do, the unfortunate result of the late election. I regret it on your own account, and still more on account of the country. It would have been most gratifying to your numerous friends to have seen you elevated to the high-position, which by your long and valuable public services, you so well merited. In your hands, even your opponents must admit the Government would have been ably administered, and your political friends know that sound principles would have marked our public policy foreign and domestic. But it is useless now to indulge unavailing regrets. Your friends have one proud reflection, and that is, that you openly avowed your principles, and with the dignity which becomes a candidate for the Presidency stood upon these. Neither yourself nor your friends, made secret pledges or wrote, inconsistent letters to different sections to defraud the people and secure votes. Though defeated, you stand to day, more honored than those who have resorted to such despicable means. You have the further consolation that you had a great party who stood by you to the last, and you will continue to have their respect and their admiration.

I take it for granted that the heterogenous mass of Federalists, Natives conservatives, disappointed office-seekers and the odds and ends of every faction, which, from any cause has fallen off from the Democratic party, for the last twenty years, who, by their combined efforts and frauds upon the mass of the people, have elected General Taylor, will require him to reverse the whole public policy, under which the country is now so prosperous.

Indeed such are already the unmistakeable indications in the National Intelligencer and in other Quarters. Genl. Taylor, poor old man! can have no mind of his own, for he has no fixed principles, and is totally ignorant of public affairs. He will probably have but little more to do, in directing public affairs, than Queen Victoria did when she ascended the British throne. It is the first instance in our history, in which the Government will be committed to a ministry. It is not difficult to foresee that such an administration, made up of discordant and heterogenous materials cannot long adhere together, and I predict, that before the middle of the first session of Congress after its installation, it will be not only a total failure, but that the party which brought it into power, will dissolve into its original elements and go to pieces. The misfortune is, that the country will be the sufferer. Until the eve of the

election I did not believe the result which has taken place possible. When I last wrote you I thought defeat possible, though my hopes greatly preponderated over my fears.<sup>294</sup>

During the remainder of my term, I will do my duty, holding firmly to our principles, and hope to leave a record behind me, of which my friends may not be ashamed.

I am aware of the desire of your son, to succeed Dr. Martin as charge des' affairs to the Papal States. It will give me sincere pleasure to appoint him. When I saw him four or five days-ago, the result of the election was not positively known, though your defeat was probable. Though I had at that time made up my mind to appoint him whatever the result of the election might be, I did not tell him so, and he may have left under the impression that I might not appoint him. I did not inform him of my intention at that time, because I thought, it might not strike the public favourably, if at that moment I made the appointment. You can inform him that he will receive the appointment. I will either appoint him now or postpone it until the meeting of the Senate as you may deem advisable. Will you write me on the subject, and I will be governed by your advice as to the time of making the appointment. I antiipate not the slightest difficulty in his confirmation by the Senate.

Will you present my kind regards to Mrs. Cass , and believe as ever . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU-C. Addressed to Detroit and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

FROM WILLIAM M. MISSEMEN

Mercersburg [Penn.],

Nov 14th 1848

Dr. Sir,

As your honored name has always been upheld and praised for benevolence towards the poor and miserable of this vale of tears, and as I claim to belong to that class of wretched beings. And having been very unfortunate, in our glorious war with Mexico, in the battle of Buena Vista, where I fought with all the valour of a true soldier, until a ball from A Mexican Carbine passed through my right arm, shattering it so much that amputation was necessary. When I arrived at home, I was made acquainted with the woful news of the death of my dear wife. So I am now left in this world with nine children looking to me for support, without having the means to do so. Hon'd sir let me intrude upon your benevolence, and permit me to ask, a pittance in aid of a poor and wretched being. Any sume sent will be thankfully recieved & acknowledged. May God bless you.

WILLIAM M MISSEMEN

We the undersigned citizens of Mercersburg do sincerely recommend Mr. Missemen to your benevolence, as we are fully aware that the facts herein stated are veritable.

J O CARSON<sup>295</sup>

LS possibly in James O. Carson's hand. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 18, 1848.

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294 Polk to Cass, November 4, 1848.

295 This paragraph, written in the same hand as that signed by Missemen, is signed by James O. Carson and seven others.

FROM JOSEPH L. WILLIAMS

Knoxville [Tenn.],<sup>296</sup>

Nov, 14th 1848

Dear Sir:

Pressed as I am just now by several engagements, I snatch a few moments before the mail of to-day closes, to write a line or two of condolence upon the national disaster, & degradation of the 7th instant. Our disappointment, here, & hereabouts, & throughout Tennee., is great indeed; not greater, however, than it is throughout the thirty States. Gov. A. V. Brown's most careful & searching calculations, were utterly set at naught. Knowing that a considerable & most respectable accession of old Whigs had voted for Cass, we were utterly confounded when we were told the vote of Knox county. The result here (which I suppose to be a type of the State) was a mystery to us, until the next day revealed to us the fact, that something more than two hundred of the hard-fisted democracy had been engaged on the 7th in being scared at home or appearing at the country polls for Taylor. The non-slaveholders, even in slave regions, have been reached by Taylorism & Northern Free Soilism, by a species of masonry which has distinguished this election from all I have ever heard of. Positively we find ourselves in this region unable to hear of any military enthusiasm as having been connected with the result. The Tennee. Whigs, you know, are conscientiously! opposed to partaking of the spoils! Yet, I already hear that the friends of Jno. Bell & Jas C Jones, respectively, speak of them for a place in Taylors Cabinet! Jno's official despatches, if without other merit, would at least be lengthy. Jimmey's, I suppose, with the aid of Old Zack himself, would be strength-y.

Now, you must pardon me for naming another subject. I refer to our friend Doct. J. G. M. Ramsey. I named the subject to him. He admitted his contingent desire upon the subject, but expressing, most candidly, his distrust of his qualifications, said, he would not, for ten thousand dollars, lower himself in your estimation, by naming a wish that might not be compatible with your duty or, with the public interest. He prides himself on your personal regard & would certainly interdict this communication if he knew I was making it. If the appropriation for the Board to adjudicate claims under the Mexican treaty, should be made, in time, the coming winter, I suppose you would appoint three Commissioners to sit at Washington. I believe it has been usual to constitute such Boards of at least one Lawyer, a practical commercial man, &, indifferently, a third man of some other profession. In the latter category, I thought of the Doct. I thought of him because I knew he desired, before long to have a History of Tennessee, he is about completing, printed in Phil or N.Y. & I thought a sojourn in Washington for a while, would enable him by frequent communications through the Telegraph, to superintend the work. I only make the suggestion. You know, far better than I can know, what would be your duty on such a subject. I see no man quite so sad about the result of the election as the Doct. In addition to his patriotism disappointed, he has been particularly annoyed & bedeviled by the course of his brother-in-law, Jno. H. Crozier.

J. L. WILLIAMS

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296 State identified through content analysis.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM STEPHEN ADAMS

Aberdeen Mi.

15th Nov. 1848<sup>297</sup>

Dear Sir

The election has resulted as in 1840. and by the same means: Yet you are not to take this election as a condemnation of your administration—the Whigs refused to take issue upon any one measure of it. But if the election has settled anything, it is, that the people in the non slave holding States are in favor of the Wilmot proviso, and in the Slave holding States opposed to it; as General Taylor was run—North as a provisoist and South as opposed to it, and this was the great issue both N. & S.

Now Sir, I take it for granted that you will recommend to Congress the Organization of our new Territories, with perhaps a compromise on the slavery question—this cannot pass. If Cass had been elected it would. Our Northern & Western friends will not sacrifice themselves to sustain us, when we have refused to sustain them, and abandoned our own principles. The bills then, if past at the approaching Session will be sent to you with the W. proviso attached. You will of course use that great conservative power placed in your hands: the Veto. This I desire to see, as the climax of your perfect Administration (except your favorable opinion of T. Benton). The Whigs have made some capital out of your sanctioning the Oregon bill—this they have done for the want of information upon the part of our political friends; Where I have met them upon the stump or in conversation—I have placed it on this ground, “That the Territory is a portion of our Louisiana purchase in 1803 or at least it was designated as Louisiana to 49. by France & England in the Treaty of Utrecht; and the Missouri compromise act (in the same words of the Ordinance of 87 & the Wilmot proviso) extended to all the Territory N of 36. 30. (except Missouri) known as the La purchase. This question was then settled in 1820 by Mr. Clay. It had been the Law since that time (if constitutional) and repeating it in the Oregon bill did not change or alter the subsisting Law. If the proviso had been stricken out, the law, in all its bearings would have been the same then as there was no proposition to repeal the old Law and as it was only repeated in the new one. You had no excuse or pretext for withholding your sanction. Wherever I have used this argument your enemies have failed of a successful reply, and many have admitted, that if I am correct in my premises, you are not to blame.

The Whigs are to go into power, not upon principle, but by a deception practiced upon the people. I would say much more but I know you have not time to read. I hope to see you some day, when public duties will not press upon you, and we can talk over these things. I will only add that you could have carried this state by the usual democratic Majority.

S. ADAMS

P.S. Since writing the above, I have learned that Mr Bledsoe the U.S. District atto has resigned. If so—(a thing I never expected) I am an applicant. It is in the line of my profession, and would be serviceable these hard times. If General Taylor desires to turn me out let him do it.

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297 Adams may have written his postscript later in November.

Court comes on at Pontotac on the 1st Monday of December. I have not written to any one, and shall not do so. S. Adams

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Private” on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received November 30, 1848; “Private etc.”

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY

Tallahassee [Fla.]

Novr. 17. 1848

Dear Sir

This is probably the last letter that I shall write to you, during my public life. The whigs here, are so completely intoxicated with their late extraordinary success, (which by the by, is to me a matter of overwhelming distress) that in their proscriptions, they are even determind (as I have been informed to-day) to eject me, from my office, almost one year, before it expires under the constitution. When Anderson visits Washington, he can explain my meaning. Unfortunately for them however, the same construction of the constitution, which ejects me, nullifies most of the acts of the first assembly; and cuts off one year, from Cabell. But for this, they care nothing. For my part, I am disgusted with Florida, and would be glad of an opportunity to leave it, (at least) temporarily. My successor, has not his equal in the thirty states of this Union. By the way, can’t you send me on a three months tour? It would be a salve, to my wounded feelings. I shall be certain not to accept; unless it is very profitable, and the term, a very short one.

But to the object of this letter—my most worthy and good friend Major Beard, son of Lewis Beard, the friend of your father, has a son, William Beard, who is anxious to get the appointment of Cadet at Wt Point. Can’t you help him? Major Beard, is my friend; and I feel proud of his friendship. He was once wealthy; but is now poor. He has a large family, and will probably be the next Democratic candidate for Govr in this state. By the way, if he had been at the last election, instead of Genl. Bailey, we would not now be disgraced, by having for our Govr., the present Whig Govr elect. Major Beard, is at present, Register of public lands in this state, with a salary of \$1000. He will be proscribed most certainly, and it will be truly unfortunate for him; for this is his only means of supports. William his son, is now eighteen years old, a most exemplary young man, and entirely worthy of public confidence. His appointment would be highly satisfactory to his many friends in this state.

I wrote to you, in relation to my own son, (William) while he was in Mexico.<sup>298</sup> He is now at home, appears to take no interest in anything, but militay matters. I understand that he behaved well in Mexico. I do not know, that he wishes to leave home, unless he could be engaged, in active service. I suppose there is no vacancy in the army, and of course he cannot expect an appointment. He was a Liut of dragonos in the 3rd Regt., and I believe served under your brother. I have a daughter in New York, who has been absent at school for six years. She will probably return this month, or next. I have directed her to come by Washington, only to see you. She will probably do so.

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298 Moseley to Polk, July 16 and 17, 1847.

In conclusion, I have written my message for the next assembly, which meets on the 4th Monday in this month. If the whigs allow me to send it to them, I will forward a copy to you. I am not ashamed of the sentiments therein expressed.

W. D. MOSELEY

P.S. I have recently seen a letter published that was written by my old friend T. O. Larkin, navy agent in California. The auophobia seems to run high in those parts. If the mines are half as valuable as they are represented to be by him, The acquisition of that Country, was not as small a matter as Black Dan in his hatred for every thing American, has represented it to be. W.DM

ALS. DLC-JKP. Marked "Private" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received November 30, 1848.

FROM ALFRED O. P. NICHOLSON

Nashville

Nov. 17th 1848

Dear Sir:

Your controversy with Mr. Bass in regard to the Grundy Avenue was brought to a close in the Chancery court to-day and I hasten to inform you of the result. The question was brought up by a petition in your name which was answered by Mr. Bass for himself and the other heirs—he denied that the avenue was embraced in the contract, insisted that Mr. Grundy in his life time had dedicated it to the public as a public street and that his executors had not undertaken to convey the legal title but contended that all the title which remained in Mr. Grundy should continue in his heirs. We took the depositions of Gov. A. V. Brown and Judge Catron both of whom proves that from all that Mr. Bass said and did at the time of the sale and during the negotiation they understood him as selling and you as buying the avenue as much as the other grounds. No other proof was taken. Messrs. Fogg and E. H. Ewing argued the case elaborately for Mr. Bass—Mr. Humphreys and myself argued it for you. Mr. Fogg took the ground that Mr. Grundy in 1831 by a deed to W. H. Hunt dedicated the 50 feet avenue as a public street—that by this dedication he divested himself of all title and therefore that there was no title in his heirs on which the Chancellor could make any decree. He rested his case mainly on this point and read the case in 6 Peters 431. to sustain it. I feared at one moment that he was making an impression on Judge Cahal. Mr. Ewing took the same ground besides insisting very earnestly that the avenue was not embraced in the terms of the contract. Having the conclusion of the case I first took up Mr. Fogg's point and in answer to it cited 3 Kent 432. and cases referred to in the note—and then took up the case in 6 Peters relied on by Mr. Fogg and showed that it was in fact an authority for us. Having established the position that the legal title to the avenue together with all other rights not inconsistent with the rights of the public was in Mr. Grundy I then announced to the Chancellor that I should next inquire to what extent this avenue had been dedicated to the public and what rights Mr. Grundy had reserved in himself—that altho these were questions not involved in this case yet they were important to be looked at in order to show the value of this avenue to the premises purchased. Whilst I was discussing these points Judge Cahal stopped me and remarked that I had said enough—that you were entitled to a decree for all the title which Mr. Grundy had and as to any rights of the public in the avenue they could not be settled in this case



—that Mr. Grundy clearly had the legal title in the avenue and that together with all rights not given away to the public you were entitled under the contract to have decreed—he said he was satisfied that when the contract was made both sides understood the avenue as embraced in the terms thereof and that the objection now set up by Mr. Bass was an after-thought, for which the executor must pay the costs. If you were not a lawyer I should not have troubled you with so much of the details, but as the case has to be again tried in the Supreme Court and as you may have leisure to make some suggestions I have thought it would be satisfactory to you to know the points on which the case has so far turned. I have prepared a decree in which the title is vested by mites and bounds according to the measurement of Mr. Nance. I will send you a copy of the decree as soon as the Clerk enters it. Mr. Bass takes an appeal—the other heirs have given no attention to the matter. It is my understanding that you wish to exercise the right of controlling the avenue so as to beautify it and protect it from injury by a gate at Church street. I don't know that it<sup>299</sup> be worth any thing to you but I give it any how as my opinion that Mr. Grundy did nothing in the way of dedication, which will prevent you from carrying out your purposes. That question however can only arise when you undertake to execute your purpose—at present all we can have settled is the question of title and I congratulate you upon the successful settlement of that. I shall send you a copy of the decree that you may make such suggestions as occur to you which I may use in drawing the decree in the Supreme Court in the event of our success there of which I see no reason to doubt.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 28, 1848; answered January 9, 1849; "Relates to my Private Business."

FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE

Concord N.H.

Novr. 17, 1848

Dear Sir,

It has not been often, that matters connected with your appointing power have excited in me any particular interest, but the intelligence of the death of our accomplished friend Dr Martin and the rumour designating Mr Burke as his successor at Rome forms an exception.

Under existing circumstances, I fancy, that the appointment would be highly gratifying to Mr B. who officially and with his pen unofficially has given to your noble Administration a support earnest, effective and untiring. It strikes me, that a nomination more satisfactory could hardly be made. Can it be conferred upon a man more competent or more deserving? We of course should feel no little State pride in such a selection and perhaps you may deem our present attitude one, in connexion with the eminent qualifications of the individual, not unworthy of such a compliment. I would not certainly desire to interfere with your purposes, tho' I shall feel truly gratified if the rumour prove well founded.

Please to present my kindest regards to Mrs Polk and believe me ever . . . .

FRANK. PIERCE

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299 tk Leave space even if line breaks here.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. See also AL, copy. DLC–EB.  
Enclosed in Pierce to Burke, November 17, 1848. ALS. DLC–EB.

FROM THOMAS BROWNELL

New York

November 18<sup>th</sup> 1848

Respected Sir

I feele assured that your Excellency will pardon this intrusion upon your time and upon your known kindness. I am Sir the more encouraged from the fact, that I am about to pleade for forgiveness at the Hands of your Kind Lady, through you.

She has been in this City for sevrall days, and I admit that she had a perfect right to expect all the attention from Mrs B and my self that we could pay her. If it appears that we have not done so, by doing which we should I assure have been the most pleased party; I beg to be heard. When Mrs P arived Mrs B. was much unwell, but as soon as she was able to go out, we calld and left our Card, Mrs P. being out. I after wards calld alone, and was informed (as I under stood it) that she had left. Judge then Sir my surprise & mortification this morning on learning that she had yesterday paid a visit to my favorite Ship, the Washington, & I not present; believe, me<sup>300</sup> Sir it was so greate that I cannot find words to express my mortification, and permit me Sir to ask that you will be pleased to so inform Mrs P. Your friend would not be guilty of any such want of Attention to those, from whom he has received such marked attention, and his appoligy for thus addressing your Excellency must be, that he is unwilling to rest under any such imputation with out explanation, and he feels assured that in your heart he will find a ready response, and in the fair Ladys a forgiveness.

Again Sir you are undoubtly aware that there are dificulties with Contractors, in carrying Out the Contract, in building the Steam Ships which you Honored me with the Superintendence; they the Directors have had meeteings daily, to derive ways & means to carry forward this greate measure. This has been the Case for the last 10 days. This state of things has nessarilly occupied much of my time, in the hope of giving a helping hand towards the consummation of this greate national measure.

I am Sir with the hope, that this explanation which I felt was do, to you and your Lady, that I shall stand excused . . . .

THOS BROWNELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 19, 1848.

FROM LYDIA ELIZA POLK CALDWELL

[Haywood County, Tenn.]<sup>301</sup>

Novr 20th 1848

My Dear Brother

Mr Fort who took your Boy home has returned home. He got Addison home safe and found all well at your place with the exeption of Maria & one other women and thy

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300 Brownell probably meant to place "me," which he inserted with a caret, before the comma.

301 Place identified through content analysis.

were not considered Dangerous. I had Addison as Ironed and chained every Night. The Overseer was very moderate with him. He corrected him but not bad. Mr Fort you know is a Near Neighbour ad you may depend on him. He thinks you have a first rate Man your Overseer. You have plenty of old corn and plenty of Meat and it is he says a Superiour Season; I was ressently calld to Dyers Burg the day before Mr Fort started as James is in Arkansas—and directed Mr Stills my overseer to send Addison to Dancivill with my waggon in order to secure him thare at the Shop—and directed my Overseer to take the Mewl I got you on to Dancyvill for him to ride and directd him to take it his self. Contrary to my orders he put a Boy of mine on the Mewl. The Boy was sixteen years old. He mounted the Mewl ad whipped him at my Door ad the Mewl never stoppd until he thrw my Boy against the Stable and he was killd for a while and is still seriously injured ribs Broke—Dr. Haywoods thinks in time he may recover. I think it doubtful. He spits Blood. Well to the point they in my absence thought it best to leave the Mewl I got for you and took one of my Mewls bought at the same time and the same price. I was satisfied that they done so for your Boy Ironed might of got hurt. The Mewl they took is equally as good a one but not quite so Large. I purchased them alltogether and my Neighbors got out of the same Drove at the same price. Your Buisness Mr Fort says is going on well. I was satisfied of the fact after you wrote me and I shewed Addison no [Faving]<sup>302</sup> nor did I allow him after your letter to ever speak to me. Mr Fort says he will never try it again.

I furnished him with good woollen Suit of cloathes good shoes and socks Hat Blanket as he had been sick. He lookd very well and stood the trip well. Mr Fort said the Mewl never even lookd tired and all got down well. Mr Fort charged one Dollar per Day and I found him. I have paid him all and I expect to go to Memphis tomorrow and will do as you directed see S. P. Walker and he will arange it with me.

Dr. Haywood Made no charge for attending Addison. It is a Nephew of the one you know but he had been at your farm with Jim and did not charge you a cent so I am particular to tell you all.

I have 30. Bales of to Day on the Natchez and will make thirty more; 500 a Bale cotton is very low indeed I cant make it at the present prices. I think of Hiring my Men out all but Wally ad the women ad Boys and still live here ad raise corn. I can get one fifty for my Men. I can Hire five out. What do you think of it? I have to rent feed if I keep them.

We are badly beat. Old Taylor will certainly take that chair. There was no excitement here atall. Tell Sister Sarah that I will meet her at Columbia Next Spring. I will direct ths letttr to Mrs Polk so that no one will see it but yorselves.

James speaks of setting in Memphis and sending his Hands to Arkansas if he likes—S. P. Caldwell is doing very well with Col. Richason. Thy are making Money. It is said S P C. is very studious indeed has a fine Library ad studies all the times and proposes to James the use of his Library and his Office. James speaks of exepting it if so I will spend next Summer with Mother. My Health is very good all the time. Oh I am such a farmer could you see me.

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302 Word uncertain; Caldwell may have meant to write "Favoring."

Tell Sister Sarah to write me if she has time. Th[ere i]s<sup>303</sup> but one thing gratifyig in the Defeat of Cass to me and that is that those that have lived of the fatt of the Land will have to come home or root Hog or Die, and others get in that cant be more undeserveing than many that are in now. Every day shews me more and more the ingratitude of Man.

I stayed at your old friend Dr Barbys.<sup>304</sup> He was a school mate of Brother Marshalls. I had a Big 2 yrs. Note in Dyers Burg; I got some money and took what pork I needed ad a Mewl. I am like my father. I do believe I can out trade Samuel but not Jim he can trade well.

yours affectionately

L E CALDWELL

[P.S.] Excuse this awful letter. I have so much Buisness on my mind I cant write with any sense.

I talkd with Brother Bill by Telagraph. All was well.

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Enclosed in Caldwell to Sarah Childress Polk, c. December 1848. AL. Polk Memorial Association.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

Washington

Nov 20th 1848

Sir:

In reply to your letter of the 30th of Sept. last, I state, that I had no communication whatever with you after your election, except your letter inviting me to be a member of your cabinet,<sup>305</sup> until my arrival in Washington on the 5th of March 1845.

I do not recollect of having had any conversation with you in regard to the annexation of Texas—and as to the mode of doing it under the resolutions which had been recently adopted by Congress, I am sure I had none, until the subject was brought up at the first full meeting of your cabinet which was held, as I believe, on the 10th of March. On that occasion you first submitted the matter to our consideration without any indication of your own preference for either of the modes contemplated by the resolutions.

The action of your predecessor on the subject was then made known and the despatch which had then been sent off was read. The question was thereupon raised, whether the selection of mode made by him was not conclusive; but as, it appeared to be the opinion of each member of your cabinet that the mode which had been already selected was preferable to the other alternative, and as such also appeared to be your own opinion, that question was not expressly decided. It was determined to confirm and carry out the proceedings which had been commenced by the previous administration.

Neither to your cabinet, to others or to myself did I ever hear you say or intimate that you were embarrassed by any opinions previously expressed on the subject, or that you had ever done or said any thing to any person whatever which did not leave you perfectly free to choose either alternative presented by the resolutions of Congress, nor did I ever hear until the appearance of the publications referred to in your letter that you had ever said any

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303 Text uncertain, obliterated by hole.

304 Name uncertain.

305 Polk to Marcy, March 1, 1845.

thing to justify an expectation in any quarter that you would select the alternative in what has been called the Senate's branch of the resolutions.

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Marcy to Polk, March 25, 1849.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville Tennessee

Novr. 22nd 1848

Dear sir

The extra work spoken of was an handsome cornice around the Ceiling of each parlor & both halls to reach 18 inches down the wall & 12 on the ceiling from where the Ceiling & wall Joins all round & a handsome centre piece to each room from which a chandalier would suspend in the parlors & a lamp in each Hall.<sup>306</sup>

This style of finish is adopted in St Louis & is now being adopted in all new houses of Style here but as you do not think it worth the Cost I have this morning ordered it discontinued though they had Commenced to work und[er] you[r]<sup>307</sup> letter of the 11th Inst.

I Should not have thought of it but that Mr Hughs has his pride up about your wood work & has made it much finer than the understanding for it is finer than any house here & I felt disposed for the small expense not to fail to have all in unison but you are I have no doubt right at any rate your purse has to be Consulted. But I think I Should Cut off some dinner from Champaign & thus save enough to finish the Ceilings.

I leeve on Friday for Pa. & Carolina & shall not be at home for a month.

V. K. STEVENSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 30, 1848; "Relates to my private business."

FROM CHARLES DOUGLAS

Washington,

Nov 24, 1848

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt from you of certain papers impugning my conduct and capacity as a public officer, referred to me under date of the 10th instant, with your directions that I report to you on the subject of their contents.<sup>308</sup>

Congress at its last session made large appriations for public works within the limits of this City, providing that the several sums appropriated should be expended under the direction of the Commissioner of Public Buildings; and in reference to neither of them was

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306 Stevenson here responds to the confusion expressed in Polk to Stevenson, November 11, 1848, and Polk to Stevenson, November 12, 1848.

307 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

308 Polk had forwarded to Douglas, with the president's November 10, 1848, AEI to Elexius Simms et al. to Polk, September 9, 1848, not only Simms et al.'s letter but also Charles B. Cluskey to [John F. Callan et al.], November 8, 1848; James Maguire et al. to Polk, September 9, 1848; Jacob Bigelow to Polk, c. November 10, 1848; and James Crutchett to Polk, c. November 10, 1848. Douglas probably returned the letters herein.

he subjected to the control of any person as to the plans or estimates for the contemplated works, but the whole discretion as well as the whole responsibility of the expenditure, was, by the act of appropriation, made to rest on him.

Even before the appropriation bill had received the final action of Congress, I found myself surrounded by hungry expectants, who were eagerly watching its progress, determined, if possible, to make its provisions, more beneficial to themselves, than I, impressed with my official obligations, could permit them to be made. These persons from the moment of their disappointment became, as I had reason to suppose they would, my personal enemies.

The two petitions, dated September 9th, are undoubtedly the bitter fruits of the hostility of these persons, and were intended to prevent me from pursuing a course which I believed to be most promotive of the public weal, by raising a clamor against me in regard to the manner of executing the work on the Indiana Avenue. Most of the signers of these papers are unknown to me, and must, consequently, be incompetent to judge of my qualifications for the duties of my office.

These petitions, after alleging my incapacity, ask my removal solely on the ground that the interests of the Corporation of Washington and its citizens are deeply effected by my acts. Now, Sir, I have on the subject of these petitions only to report, that so far from having incurred the censure of the Corporation of Washington by my acts in the work referred to, I had the satisfaction to meet the cordial approbation of that body; and so well convinced were the getters up of these petitions of this fact, that the papers were held to await a more favorable opportunity for attack. This opportunity they suppose has now occurred, and the petitions, though prepared on another occasion, and upon a different ground of complaint, are used to strengthen and support charges brought against me by the Washington Gas Light Company, or persons in its interest, evidently with the intention of deterring me from the faithful performance of my duty in relation to the unrighteous conduct of that Company. Congress having made an appropriation for lighting the Capitol grounds, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the President's House with gas, I took the earliest means, after the passage of the bill, to inform myself fully, by communications personal and written with the best informed practical and scientific men in the United States connected with gas works, as to the best manner of accomplishing the object. I then entered into a contract with the Washington Gas Light Company, hoping at the time that it would, for its own credit and ultimate advantage, cause the work to be executed both skilfully and faithfully, in accordance with estimates prepared by Mr Charles Roome, Superintendent and Engineer of the Manhattan Gas Works, New York, and Mr Robert Cornelius of Philadelphia, both of whom are thoroughly acquainted with the business.

I am sorry to inform you that I have had occasion deeply to regret the making of this contract, as its terms, meaning and intent, have, in my opinion, been violated by the Agents of the Company in several particulars, but especially in the laying of the pipes in a very imperfect and unfaithful manner, that the Company might make an undue profit from their contract.

Believing that the joints of the pipes were badly made, I felt myself in duty bound, as the work progressed, to have them subjected to a test by means of an air pump, and could obtain no higher pressure than four inches of mercury, while in the opinion of Professor Henry twelve or fifteen inches should have been reached, Eighteen or twenty in the

opinion of Professor Cresson, Superintendent of the Philadelphia Gas Works, and at least fifteen inches in the opinion of Mr Roome, Superintendent of the Manhattan Gas works, New York.

Under these unfavorable circumstances, with the joints of the pipes not air tight and consequently not gas tight, I resolved to protect the public interests committed to my charge at whatever cost of slander and abuse to myself. I therefore determined to advance to the gas Company no more money than would be sufficient to pay for the pipes delivered in Washington, believing that the half-done work upon those which have been laid is worse than useless, as it leaves them in a leaky condition.

This refusal on my part, to sanction, by the payment of such sums of public money as were desirable to the gas Company, a gross violation of their contract, has subjected me to the charge of incompetency by the agents of this Company, and those who have united with them in their unrighteous vocation. To this sweeping charge, which contains no specifications, I can only reply that of the several works placed under my direction by the act of Congress, all but one have been prosecuted thus far in a manner, both as respects economy and quality of work, that will, in my humble opinion, meet the approbation, and, perhaps, receive the commendations, of those capable of judging correctly in relation to such matters. The one exception is the gas lighting, and in this it is true there has been both unnecessary delay and unfaithfulness: whether these have grown out of the incompetency of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, I respectfully submit upon the foregoing statement.

Among the papers referred to me, I find a letter, without date, from Mr James Crutchett. It was my fortune to incur the implacable enmity of this individual, soon after I entered on the duties of my office, by opposing the erection of the long pole on the dome of the Capitol. Of his letter I have briefly to say, that all the statements which it contains as to my having contracted for fixtures of an "improper" weight and description, and having "interposed" difficulties, calculated to prevent the execution of these works until a late period of the ensuing year,"<sup>309</sup> are, to say the least of them, wide from the truth. I have made no contract, and have proposed to make none in connection with gas lighting, except as herein-before stated; and so far from having interposed any obstacle to the execution of the work, I have endeavoured to hasten it by every means in my power.

Mr Bigelow, the personage who figures on the same sheet with Mr Crutchett, is an active and very influential office-holder in the Washington Gas Light Company, which has hitherto been so unfaithful in the performance of the contract made with the Commissioner of Public Buildings. This individual, who seems to be far more avaricious than wise, and who, when in the hot pursuit of gain, evidently rushes onward regardless of consequences, very modestly pronounces upon my utter incompetency, but specifies no instance of incompetency, or in which "he daily wastes the public monies." Had I permitted Mr Bigelow and his coadjutors to pocket the "public monies" in the way they desired, not a word would have been written by him respecting my incompetency or wastefulness. I should undoubtedly have secured not only his friendship, but also received from him the highest

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309 Opening quotation mark missing.

commendations for my frugality in expending the "public monies," and consummate wisdom and ability in the performance of my official duties. But this I have not done, and therefore I am subjected to his vituperation and abuse.

It only remains to notice the letter of Mr Cluskey. This individual who has "his private grief," which can be readily and directly traced to the long pole, recently taken from the dome of the Capitol. A short time prior to the removal of that monstrosity, as Mr Webster termed it, Mr Cluskey requested from me the Superintendence of its removal. I granted his request, with the understanding that Mr Waters, Boatswain of the Navy Yard at Washington, with such seamen as he should select, should arrange and manage the ropes required in taking it down. A short time prior to its removal, Mr Cluskey again called upon me, and wished me to inform him when he should commence the work. Without delay was my reply, provided Mr Waters and his seamen manage the ropes. To this proviso he objected, saying that he must have the sole control, if any, of the undertaking. I replied that Mr Waters would not be controlled in the performance of his duty, but that a good understanding could be effected between them without difficulty, and proposed that he should confer with Mr Waters on the subject. To this proposition he objected with much warmth of feeling, and immediately left me. Since then our personal intercourse has ceased, and Mr Cluskey has become my enemy.

His letter contains but two or three statements which I deem it proper to notice. He alleges that the brick culverts that cross Pennsylvania Avenue have been injured in laying gas pipes. This I am confident is true, but the injury was done by the Gas Company without my authority or knowledge, and the moment I became aware of what had been done, I called the attention of the Mayor of the City to the fact. Mr Cluskey further states that the pipes are "placed at an unnecessary depth below the surface." By the terms of the contract between myself and the Gas Company, the pipes are to be laid in trenches two feet deep, which is one foot less than the uniform depth at which they are laid in New York, and is believed to be the least at which a uniform temperature can be reached. A large number of pipes in Penn. Avenue, I am satisfied, are laid in trenches less than eighteen inches deep, and were placed in the ground and the trenches filled up, without my knowledge or consent, and before the contract was signed.

The regret of Mr Cluskey that there is "not an Engineer attached to the civil" department of the Government is not to be wondered at, as he is undoubtedly very desirous to have such a place made for his particular accommodation, and will spare no exertions to accomplish his object.

I am happy to state, Mr Cluskey's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, that the lamp posts, which he avers "are totally unfit for the purpose and out of character," were highly approved of by Mr Cornelius, and are required in the Specification to the Contract between the Gas Company and myself, prepared and penned by Mr Roome, to be "placed along the Avenue and around the Capitol grounds at such points as the Commissioner shall direct."



But I forbear to enlarge on this unpleasant subject, and take leave, most respectfully, to solicit your attention to the accompanying letters, marked Nos 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.<sup>310</sup>

CHARLES DOUGLAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 24, 1848.

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Nov. 26th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I received this morning your letter of the 21st Instant.<sup>311</sup> More than a week before the date of your letter, I wrote to you, & informed you, that I would appoint your son, charge d' affaires to Rome.<sup>312</sup> As my letter bore my frank and you make no mention of having received it, I fear it may have fallen under the espionage of some unprincipled person as it passed through the Post office. As it related to other matters, besides your son's appointment, I will thank you to inform me whether it reached you. If it did not, it is certain, that it has been purloined from the Post office. In that letter I left it to your decision whether I should appoint your son, before or after the meeting of the Senate. It is now so near the time of the meeting of that body, that it will probably be best to postpone the appointment, and send the Nomination to the Senate, during the first week of the Session.

I am glad to learn from you, that it is possible you may accept a re-election to the Senate and be in Washington this winter. My opinion is, that under the circumstances of your position, you ought not to hesitate, to accept an election to the Senate. The whole Democratic party I am sure would be highly gratified to see you, again a member of that body, where you would have the opportunity as you have heretofore so ably done, to vindicate and maintain the measures of the Democratic policy, upon the success of which, I am thoroughly satisfied the enduring prosperity of the country must depend. Your friends every where would be pleased to see you restored by the voluntary choice of your State, to a theatre, upon which you could by your acts, put to shame, some of the vile assaults which were made upon you, in the late political canvass by the Federal opposition.

Though greatly disappointed, & deeply regretting that I cannot at the close of my term, surrender the Government into your hands, yet as the decision which has been made

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310 Douglas enclosed, and numbered in this order, Charles Roome to Douglas, August 28, [1848]; Roome to Douglas, September 7, 1848; John C. Cresson to Douglas, September 11, 1848; Roome to Douglas, September 15, 1848; Roome to Douglas, September 22, 1848; Roome to Douglas, October 12, 1848; Roome to Douglas, October 23, 1848; Cresson to Douglas, November 1, 1848; and Roome to Douglas, November 6, 1848. ALS. DLC–JKP. Roome and Cresson decline to visit Washington City, as Douglas asked, but give him technical advice on the gas lighting project. Roome also discusses his writing the contract between Douglas and the Washington Gas Light Company and his planning to send an expert to oversee the work in Washington City.

311 Letter not found.

312 Polk to Cass, November 14, 1848.

cannot be reversed, it will give me personal pleasure, to meet you again in Washington, and in your former position. Hoping soon to do so: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU—C. Addressed to Detroit and marked "(Private)." From Cass's AE: received December 5, 1848. See also ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Columbia Tennessee

Nov 29th 1848

Dear Sir!

The Planters Bank, this day sold at public auction the Store house formerly owned by Mr S Walker, for fourteen hundred dollars. It was purchased by Robert O. Potter, Circuit Court Clerk of Maury County, who desires to buy your store house and lot adjoining it, and requested me to write you and know if you wished to sell, and if so, to ascertain your price and terms. The Bank sold the Walker Store House on a credit of one, two, & three years, and he mentioned that he would desire the same time should he purchase your property. If you desire to sell, you can write to Robert Campbell, or in his absence to his son John Campbell, who will I doubt not take pleasure in attending to the sale for you. I think it is the only chance you will have to make an advantageous sale.

My movements are uncertain, I am alive to any adventure which promises honor or proffit—I think of visiting Little Rock Arkansas and judge of its advantages as a permanent location. I have abandoned all idea of settling at Memphis—first because in a buisness point of view it is now crowded to suffocation, and in any other light affording no flattering inducements. At Columbia I can make a good living, but other considerations render it unpleasant as a residence—politically I might succeed, but the squabbles and conflict would be long and violent, for aspirants for Congress in this District, live in every hedge—and are fully versed in all the insidious tricks of the hedge hog—that is work under-ground. I believe, if I would throw myself into the contest—I could succeed—indeed I have every inducement to do so—with the most flattering prospects of success; but am restrained by an inclination to opperate on a new theatre, in some new Country.

Mother and my Wife are well. Nothing new. My love to Sister Sarah.

WILLIAM H. POLK

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received December 7, 1848.

FROM LEWIS CASS

Detroit

Dec. 5. 1848

My dear Sir,

Tho I presume my last letter<sup>313</sup> has reached you long ere this, yet for fear it has not, I think it best to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 26th instant, and to tell you that the preceding one, stating your kind intention, respecting my son,<sup>314</sup> came safe to hand. The

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313 Letter not found.

314 Polk to Cass, November 14, 1848.

irregularity of the mail, resulting from the uncertain navigation of the Lakes, at this Season of the year, occasions us much d[e]lay<sup>315</sup> in the transmission of our letters.

I have nothing to add, to what I have already written you, and your time is too precious to deprive you of it unnecessarily. I cannot close, however, without renewing my thanks, my warm thanks, and without wishing you all happiness, publick and private.

LEW CASS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received December 11, 1848.

TO JOHN Y. MASON

[Washington City]<sup>316</sup>

Der. 5th 1848

Dr Sir:

Will you send me your Report & documents as early this morning as they can be prepared?

I have but little time to arrange the Documents, which are to accompany my message.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Private collection of John C. Wood, Jr. Probably delivered by courier.

FROM JONATHAN F. FENN

Tallmadge [Ohio]<sup>317</sup>

Dec. 11th 1848

Dear Sir,

I have read attentively your message to both houses of Congress and as a general thing concur with you in sentiment.

You speak well of our Union. It is a glorious union indeed! and would continue a glorious union were it not for a certain vexed question. Does not the evil become greater the more it is extended?

You understand the history of the formation of this government and must know that it was the expectation of such men as Jefferson Madison & others that slavery would be confined to the states where it then existed. You know that it was actually excluded by the ordinance of 87 from all the then territory of the United States.

Had it not been for the evil genius of Henry Clay there would never have been the Missouri Compromise. It was the expectation of the founders of our government that slavery would not increase but would gradually diminish.

Thomas Jefferson said that the fathers who had fought the battles of the revolution when they had achieved our liberty felt as though they might retire and allow their sons, who had sucked at the paps of liberty, to carry out the principles of liberty. But alas he says our sons went to sleep and the dark spirit of slavery instead of being annihilated increased upon us. I give this sentiment of Jeffersons from recollection. The fathers knew that slavery was opposd to the principles which they were wishing to establish, and they simply

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315 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

316 Place identified through content analysis.

317 State identified from postmark and Polk's AE.

allowed it to remain temporarily supposing it would gradually be abolished in the states one by one until slavery would cease to exist. Now we all know that if the union is ever dissolved it will be in consequence of Slavery. Is the existence & extention of slavery of more consequence than the Union?

My Dear Sir You can render your name immortal. Come out for the Wilmot Proviso sign the bill and Posterity will rank your name with that of Jefferson.

Let the Wilmot Proviso be now passed and the danger is over. We shall have no more slave teritory & the Union will be preserved.

The philanthropists of the world look upon this subject with intense intrest. They look upon this as the turning point with us. The enemies of our union desire to see slavery extended. They see in it the worm gnawing at our vitals. Who will be injured by the passage of the Wilmot proviso? Provided it should become slave teritory the northern man will have as good a right to buy slaves & take them there as a southerner. And provided it should continue free teritory The southerner will have as good a right to go there as the northern man. The idea that the slaveholder has any exclusive rights to that teritory is not philosophical.

Does not sectional interest or self interest have more to do in this matter than principle?

It is in your power, Honored Sir, to do your co[untry]<sup>318</sup> a great good and yourself lasting honor.

Let pure democratic principle influence you. Slavery is the opposite of democracy. We as a nation simply have the name not the reality. O! that we were consistent! I am proud of my nation but O,! how it humbles me to think of the foul spot upon our escutcheon. If slavery can not be abolished where it now exists I pray that it may not be extended. Hoping that you may be influenced upon this subject by great broad & philanthropic motives—I subscribe myself . . . .

J. F. FENN

N.B. An answer to this would be highly esteemed.<sup>319</sup>

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received December 24, 1848.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

[Washington City]<sup>320</sup>

Decr. 11th 1848

Dr Sir:

I desire to send to the Senate to day, the nominations for promotions & appointments made during the last receess; and also the Menomanee Indian Treaty. Will you send them to me before 12. O.Clock.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKPor. Probably delivered by courier.

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318 Letters missing, tear.

319 Fenn wrote his nota bene to the left of his signature.

320 Place identified through content analysis.

FROM OPHELIA CLARISSA POLK HAYS TO JAMES K. AND SARAH CHILDRESS  
POLK

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>321</sup>

Dec 12" 48

My dear Sister & Brother

I have intended writing you ever since my return & have frequently sat down for the purpose, and would get the commencement written, then there would be a stop. News; News; I would run up, & down, the vocabulary of news, & scandals of our Village, and find that I had written so very frequently to Virginia, that there was nothing left worth communicating, to your Ladyship. Think's I to myself I will not write to my daughter for a considerable time, & collect a very large budget of writing material for a letter for my Sister, & send by way of mail, but I am very sorry to say those good resolutions like all others passed from my mind, & I was so completely absorbed in driving Dull Care away by writing to Virginia, who occupied the most of my thoughts, that I failed to do my duty. Now that I have grown somewhat <sup>322</sup> accustomed to the separation I think I shall write you as frequently as you could desire, (ie) if my letters are deemg worthy of a reply.

Dr. Hays & I very frequently speak of your and my brother's great kindness to our dear daughter, & feel exceedingly grateful to you both. Jeannie very rarely writes without mentioning your delight in contributing to, her & Sallie's happiness, & that their slightest wishes are cheerfully gratified by you, & her Uncle. The separation from home she bears much better than was expected. That we attribute to her situation being rendered happy by her "Mate" (Sallie). They seem through divine providence to be the cementing branches of the two families. My greatest wish is for time speedily to roll on & Jeannie return, & in due time have a visit from Sallie, & then how I will strive to make them enjoy themselves.

Brother William thinks of going to Little Rock, Arkansas. He wrote to an acquaintance there as to the prospect for a Lawyer or politician. His reply was favorable to his [setling]<sup>323</sup> there. His wife has the traveling mania, thinks of [setling] no where. He could do splendidly if he would here, or elsewhere. He has been received by the citizens of this place with great hospitality. Likewise sister mary, she professes to like this place very much, but my opinion is candidly she is too stingy to do what is her duty, & would probably rebound to her benifit. She seems willing to go to Little Rock, but it is to get to Memphis & New Orleans, which she says is the reason she assents to his going. She however behaves much better here than she did in Washington. I wish she had been any where else when I was there!!! Mrs Mack is some little better. She thinks each day that she is to die the next, & that she is unprepared & will be lost. Is it not lamentable?

The Presbyterian Church is a perfect facsimile of the Episcopalian Church, one story. Matilda has had a very severe attack of Pleurisy but is now going about. Columbia is very dull owing to several death's & sickness.

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321 State identified from postmark.

322 Hays emphasizes "somewhat" with a dotted underline. In all other instances, italics represent a solid underline.

323 Here and below the bracketed word may, alternately, be "setting."

"Kiss the babies for me."

Present my regards to (old) Mrs Pleasonton & tell her one of my most pleasant thoughts in visiting Washington was to have the pleasure of seeing her once more, & that I was very much disappointed indeed in not seeing her.

"My love" to brother James, & accept the same yourself.

With great esteem your  
affectionate Sister

OPHELIA

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to "Mrs Presidentess Polk" beneath the letter and to James K. Polk, at Washington City, on the cover.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

[Washington City] Tuesday—Morning

[December 12, 1848]<sup>324</sup>

Dear Sir

I have several long reports (in addition to the annual) to send in this morning to Congress, & therefore will not be able to come to Cabinet meeting unless something very important requires my presence this morning.

Should such be the case please send for me.

You see I have imitated your example as to the length of the Message—the report is about the same.

I am glad to say my health is unimpaired by the confinement & incessant labor of the last two months and that I will be able to give you my humble but zealous aid to the close of your administration which posterity certainly & I think the present generation will acknowledge to be the most glorious & successful the country has ever seen. As our sand is nearly run out, I may talk thus freely.

R J WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by courier. From Polk's AE: "excuses himself for not attending the Cabinet meeting this the 12th Decr. 1848."

FROM RAFAEL ACEVEDO

Washington

14 Decbr/48

Rafael Acevedo presents his respects to H[is].E[xcellency].<sup>325</sup> President James K Polk and regrets to inform him that he will not be able to meet at the invitation with which he has been honored for Thursday the 21st instant<sup>326</sup> because he leaves this afternoon for Philadelphia and will not be able again to settle in Washington for fifteen days, as I have stated to Mr Buchanan.

[RAFAEL ACEVEDO]

Translation, by Michael David Cohen and John C. Pinheiro, of AN in Spanish. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

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324 Place identified through content analysis; date identified from Polk's AE.

325 Letters inserted into translation of "S[u].E[xcelencia]." to complete probable meaning.

326 Letter, if from Polk, not found.

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Decr. 15th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 5th Inst. acknowledging the receipt of mine of the 26th Ultimo, and am glad to learn that my previous letter<sup>327</sup> had been received by you. I nominated your son to the Senate some days ago, as charge d' affaires to the Papal States.

Great diversity opinion, I learn, prevails in Congress in regard to what action shall be had upon the territorial question. The first impression of many Democratic members was, to do nothing at the present session, and leave the question to be managed by Genl. Taylor . This was the first & perhaps a natural impulse, but is I think giving way to calmer reflection. My strong apprehension is, that if no Government be provided for California , at the present session, there is imminent danger that, that rich and fine country may be lost to the Union. Attracted by its mineral wealth & commercial advantages, the emigration to it, will probably be rapid without example, and I should not be surprised, if before the end of August, there were an hundred, perhaps an hundred and fifty thousand people there. They will be in a state of anarchy, and without Government of law. Among them will probably be men of enterprise of energy, and of adventure; men of talent, of ambition and of capital. In this condition, of things, if Congress shall do nothing at the present session, they may, and in all probability will, organize an Independent Government, calling it, the California or Pacific Republic, and may endeavour to induce Oregon to join them. Should this occur, of which there is great danger, and should this be their condition, when Congress shall meet next December, I fear that the Federal party, in order to relieve Genl. Taylor , from the embarrassment in which he is placed on the Wilmot Proviso, may be willing, and some of them, even desire to give up the country. There is serious ground to fear such a result. We know that the Federal party have always been opposed to the extension of our limits. They were opposed to the acquisition of Louisiana, of Florida, of Texas, and more recently we know that they were opposed to accepting any territorial indemnity from Mexico. These are my apprehensions. I have so expressed them to several of my frinds, and have said to them, that though, Genl. Taylor 's administration might be embarrassed, by having the question open, we should remember that "We have a country to serve as well as a party to obey," and that it was in my judgement our solemn duty to provide governments for the new territories at the present Session. I hope this is now becoming the prevailing opinion, but in what manner governments are to be provided is the question of greatest difficulty. The opinion prevails with many, that neither of the propositions of the last session, can be carried, without being clogged and embarrassed with the Wilmot Proviso . You will have seen my recommendations in my message. As an original question the non-interference doctrine, as laid down in your Nicholson letter, is unquestionably the true doctrine. Either of the others I was willing & am still so, to take as a compromise. If it is attempted to extend the Wilmot Proviso restriction South of 36°. 30"., it would produce a flow of

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327 Polk to Cass, November 14, 1848.

excitement, dividing the country by geographical lines, that I verily believe would shake and endanger the Union. To avoid that dangerous question Senator Douglass has introduced a Bill to erect the acquired territory at once into a State. I have heard objections urged to this plan, though I think it is gaining strength. What the result will be, it is impossible to foresee. Mr. Douglass's Bill requires modification. If it be confined, to the erection of a state embracing California alone, and with some other modifications, postponing action in relation to the remainder of the territory for the present, it is possible it may pass, and the Proviso difficulty be avoided at least for the present. God grant that our beloved country may have a safe deliverance, from this delicate & most dangerous question.

In my letter of the 26th ultimo, in answer to an intimation from you, that you might be returned to the Senate,<sup>328</sup> I expressed the gratification it would afford me to see you again on the theater on which you have rendered so much valuable service to the country. It is due in the frankness which one friend should always observe towards another, that I should now, say, that I did not then see the fearful difficulties which are likely to arise upon the territorial question. You are committed to the opinions expressed in the Nicholson letter, and I have no doubt would maintain these opinions in your action, if you were in the Senate of the United States. One of your best friends in the Senate, (without any intimation from me, that I had had any correspondence with you in relation to your return to the Senate) mentioned to me a day or two ago, that it was said in the City, you would come back to the Senate, and that some Whigs had remarked to him, that you would come to the Senate, and that you would be instructed by your Legislature to vote for the Wilmot Proviso. In that event he said you would be compelled either to obey or resign. To obey would be impossible, without revoking the constitutional opinions expressed in the Nicholson letter. Your political opponents calculate that you would be placed in this dilemma, and that take what course you might, your political destruction, they would calculate, would be certain. If you obeyed you would utterly ruin yourself throughout the whole South, if not throughout the Union, because that would be a departure from the ground on which you were supported by the Democratic party in the late election. If you either disobeyed instructions or resigned, you would make an issue with your own State. After what I had written to you, I deemed it my duty to submit these views to you. If you can come to the Senate uninstructed, you would have no embarrassment, could render essential service to the Democratic party, and under such circumstances I repeat I should be most happy to see you there. But if instructed, upon this vital question, your position, would be such, that you would be compelled, to adhere to the doctrines of the Nicholson letter, and thereby disobey, or you must resign.

I have written a long letter, but in great haste, and subject to half a dozen interruptions by calls. I have not time to revise or condense it. I can only add that I know you will properly appreciate the friendly motive, which has induced me to write it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU-C. Addressed to Detroit and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy.

DLC-JKP.

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328 Cass's letter not found.



FROM RICHARD M. JOHNSON

Post Office. White Sulphur [Ky.]<sup>329</sup>

December 17. 1848

Dear Sir

I have read your Message. The begining of your administration was good; the Close is still better; you & your Cabinet members will recieve the plaudits of a grateful Country. The election of Genl Taylor will induce the House to postpone the organization of territorial governments in California & New Mexico, that he may select the governor &c. If I am mistaken in this, I am still willing & solicitous to receive the appointment from you, as I wish to tame the comanches. My peculiar situation induces me to say to you, as I did last session, that I will receive from you any other office foreign or domestice; The law for my relief appropriated 10.000\$; but authorises the sec of war to have the buildings furnished by me, at my Cost, for the choctaw academy valued, & pay the valuation—which has been made & returned to him 16.000\$ which gives me a legal Claim upon my Country for 6000\$ over the 10.000\$. I have requested the sec of war to Consult you & if you approve, to recommend to the comtees on Indian affairs or ways & means to appropriate the 6000\$ under that law to enable him to pay me the 6000\$. Such men as J. J. Crittenden give me the opinion, that the 6000\$ is a legal Claim, upon my Country; & if the sec of war would take this Course there would be very little if any difficulty.

My dear friend, this 6000\$ would enable me to pay my remaining liabilities & then I could live only in independant poverty, but I should feel as a man & live in honor. Without this 6000\$ I am totally ruined, & perhaps ruin your good friend Sevier, who is my security, to that amount. I have sacrificed a very large estate & have so reduced my debts that this 6000\$ would pay so that I could save myself. I expect to be in the City during the session. If a few Selfish men of our party had not forced me from runing for Governor of this State, I could have been elected & that would have elected Cass. . . .

Rh M JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “private.” From Polk’s AE: received December 26, 1848.

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Washington City

Decr. 18th 1848

Dear Marshall:

When the official report reached me that you had received 18. Demerit marks for the month of October,<sup>330</sup> I was greatly mortified, but did not write to you, hoping that it had been accidental, and would not occur again. To my surprise and still greater mortification, I received to day, your conduct Report for the month of November,<sup>331</sup> from which it appears, that instead of improving, your conduct has become worse; and that you have received 22. Demerit marks for the latter month. Your whole number of Demerits thus far, it seems is

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329 State identified from Polk’s AE.

330 Report and cover letter, if any, likely from Joseph G. Totten, not found.

331 Report and cover letter, if any, likely from Totten, not found.

60, and at this rate, you will reach before your first year expires, the maximum, for which it will become necessary to dismiss you. You can have no good excuse for such neglect of duty, and I now say to you plainly, that as you make your bed you must lie on it. I have taken great interest in your welfar[e]<sup>332</sup> and will still do so if you prove yourself t[o] be worthy of it. If however you choose to disregard my wishes & admonitions, and to neglect your duty, you must rely upon yourself and not on me, in future life. Yo[u] may think me too strict, but in this you are mistaken. I know it is, in your power by ordinary attention to your duty, to erase the mortifying Reports, of your conduct whi[ch] have been made for October and November. For the future I hope to receive no more such Reports. I have great anxiety to have the result of your examination "in studies" in January. It generally happens that those w[ho] have most Demerit marks, stand the wo[rst] examination. I hope in your case, it may be otherwise. You should devote every moment of your time to your studies to the end that you may pass as reputab[le] an examination as possible. I hope f[or] the best, but a few weeks will determine what your standing in your class is. I write you thus plainly for your good [. . .] hope you may profit by it. Your future standing and reputation will depend upon your own conduct, at the Academy.

I write this letter with pain. It would give me sincere pleasure, if I could write one of a different character commending you for your good conduct. With the Reports for October and November before me, this I cannot do.

Your affectionate Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y. Published in DYF, pp. 66–67.  
TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Washington City

Decr. 19th 1848

Dear Sir:

I wrote to you a day or two ago, requesting you, to act for me in the valuation of my store-house and lot in Columbia, which I had contracted to sell to Mr J. M. Hughes of Nashville.<sup>333</sup> In that letter I neglected to request you, as I intended to have done, to hire out my man Elias from the 1st of January, say to the middle of March next. I will leave here about the 6th March and will want his services on my arrival at home, which will not probably be, before the middle or 20th of March. Mr Thomas informs me that he is hired out until the 1st of January. Your attention to this will oblige me.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

FROM JAMES A. GREGG

City of Manchester N.H.

Decr. 19, 1848

Honored Sir

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332 Text here and below cut off side of page.

333 Polk to Campbell, December 18, 1848.

I have to say that I am a practical Geologist and Mineralogist and pretty well acquainted with the Mural hills am about fifty years of age, a Physician, of a Strong constitution and can endure as much hardship as any other man. I have examined the reports from the Gold region of California and have friends there in the business, and think of taking a trip myself to California. From all I can learn the fountain of the Gold mine has not yet been discovered and according to present operation will not be likely to be discovered except by accident, as the course of the diluvial current has not been noticed and persons not practically acquainted with Ores might pass it without observing, however scientific, from what has been found and the area covered there, must be an immense fountain and it must crop out somewhere. The discovery of the fountains veins ought to be made by Government. I have oportunities to be engaged for private companies, but should prefer operating under the Government of the U.S. and if any one can be appointed for that purpose, should be pleased to receive it, can produce satisfactory recommendations and would confine my operations for the U.S. I shall be prepared to go soon. If my services should be secured for the Government a few hundred Dollars outfit would be necessary and my whole attention Given to the Subject.

JAMES A. GREGG

[P.S.] Refferance Genl J. Wilson at Washington or Mace Moulton, of Manchester<sup>334</sup>

ALS. DNA–RG 107. Probably addressed to Washington City. From E probably in Archibald Campbell's hand: received, probably at the War Department, December 26, 1848.

TO WILLIAM T. SPROLE

Washington City

Decr. 19th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 11th Instant.<sup>335</sup> I remember the conversation which you held with me, in relation to the necessity of an additional apartment, to be used as an office or study in connection with your Quarters at West Point. I will call the attention of the Secretary of War to the subject, and if there be no appropriation applicable to such an object, I will request him to bring it to the notice of the Military committees of Congress.

I was gratified to learn from your letter that [the]<sup>336</sup> young men in the institution at West Point, in whose welfare I take a personal interest were "doing credit to themselves & [their] friends." In the absence of any other information, than the monthly conduct Reports, I feared it might be otherwise with my nephew Cadet Marshall T. Polk . He is a fine boy, and has no vicious habits of which I am aware. He is however fond of gaiety and of amusements, and I apprehended, might not be as attentive to his duties, as he should be. He has recived more Demerit marks for October & November than he should, and I have written him a strong earnest admonitory letter on the subject.<sup>337</sup> He is the only child of my deceased brother, and since he has been at the Point he has lost his mother, who

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334 Gregg wrote his postscript to the left of his signature.

335 Letter not found.

336 Word here and below uncertain, light ink transfer.

337 Polk to Marshall T. Polk, Jr., December 18, 1848.

was a pious & excellent woman. I am his guardian and he has lived with me for the last four years. I take as deep an interest in his welfare as if he were my own son. He has I know great respect for you, (having often heard you preach in this City) and I have no doubt he would receive kindly any advice which you might think proper at any time to give him. May I ask the favour of you, to keep an eye to him, and to exercise a parental care over him, as far as you may think it prudent or proper, and as may be consistent with your official duties? He is without a fortune, and I wish him impressed with the idea, that he is to rely upon his own good conduct and character, and not on me, for his success in future life. Situated as he is, youths of his age, sometimes take up false impressions and conclude that there is no necessity of making personal exertions. I have feared that he may be disposed to fall into this course, and rely more on my support, than upon his own resources. In this I may be mistaken, but I mention it, that you may disabuse his mind on this point, should you deem it necessary. I will esteem it a personal favour, if you will occasionally write to me in regard to him.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Near Nashville

Decr. 20th 1848

Dear Sir

I should have answer'd your letters of Sept. 6th much sooner but for my engagements in the late Canvass & my necessary absence from the State since its termination. I remember the conversation alluded to by Mr. Blair. We had many others previous to that time on the subject of annexation & untill about the time of the publication of Mr. Van Burens letter against it, I knew of no one apparently more ardent in its support than he was. He knew that Genl. Jacksons letter to me had much influence in inducing Mr Tyler to enter upon the accomplishment of that great measure & for weeks if not for months held that letter or a copy of it, in his possession ready for publication whenever it was believed by me that the proper time had arrived. The distinct understanding between us was, that its publication was to be followed up by the ablest editorials in the Globe: & I think if that paper is examined it will be found that Mr. Blair, did write & publish one or more, just before the appearance of Mr Van Buren's letter. That letter & the subsequent course of Mr. Benton, were understood to effect the public course of Mr Blair—but not to change his personal & sincere wish for the success of the measure. This is not strange when it is remembered. that whilst Mr. Benton & Mr. Van Buren were so hostile to annexation, in the form at least then proposed, Genl Jackson towards whom Mr Blair's devotion was well known, was doing all he could by his correspondence with me, with Mr. Blair himself & many others to bring about its accomplishment. I sincerely sympathized with him in the delicacy & embarrassment of his position & felt free to converse with him, as he manifested a desire to do, when we met on the occasion alluded to, on Pennsylvania avenue, he going toward the Capital I returning from it about the hour of adjournment. In that conversation he expressed. his deep regret, at the wide difference of opinion & want of harmony which had sprung up on the question & earnestly put to me the question whether in my opinion, there was no way, by which the party could be united on it. My reply was

prompt & ready. I said Mr. Benton ought to recede from his Bill which stood out in the opinion of nearly every body as hostile & antagonistic to the resolution of the house. That the substance of the provisions of his bill, might be thrown into the form of a resolution & then added as an amendment, not a substitute, to that of the house. This course would require no concession from either branch of the party & ought & would I thought heal up the breach that seemed every day deepening & widening in the democratic party. My reply was the more prompt because I had meditated much on the subject & had days before taken steps as Mr. Jacob Thompson & probably Mr. Senator Sevier would inform you, which I have allways considered as having led to the "Walker amendment" finally adopted & voted for by Mr. Benton & Mr. Tappan themselves.

Mr. Blair asserts, that these votes & others were procured solely by the pledges which he says you gave & yet I apprehend that various senators who attended the Caucus which took into consideration, this mode of passing the measure, can recollect no dissent then given by any of the Senators mentioned by him as having only assented to it on the ground of your pledges, given subsequent to that Caucus if given at all.

I should suppose Mr Senator Walker could inform you who was at that caucus—Was Mr. Benton there & did he signify any opposition to it—Was Mr Tappan there & did he give into it on account of your assurances to Mr Blair or any body else & in fact was any thing said at that meeting about your having given any pledges at all to any body or through any body? If I understand the period when Mr Blair says he consulted you, it must have been after the meeting to which I allude & at which the Walker amendment was agreed upon as one on which the whole party could probably harmonize. I do not pretend to know the particulars of that meeting—who were there &c. as it was one composed only of Senators. I speak of it only as I heard at the time & I feel sure that I never understood that its action was at all influenced by any thing coming from you in the way alleged, & I regarded it at the time as the ripening & consummation of the plan which I had proposed through Mr. Jacob Thompson & Mr Senator Sevier, two warm, energetic & very useful friends in its final accomplishments. I give these details now for the first time in any written communication, because they are well calculated to refute the idea which Mr. Tappan seems to have taken up, that the plan of blending the two propositions originated with you, when I feel very sure that your attention had not been turned with any particularity to the merits of the respective forms of annexation then pending.

Mr Blair speaks of my having desired him to see Mr Benton & the friends of his proposition, submit my plans to them, & then see you on the subject, &c. If he would reflect a little he could readily see why I would hardly ask his agency in submitting any plan of mine (as mine) to the consideration of Mr Benton at that period; but on the suggestion of the doubts which he says he expressd. whether the plan mentiond would be satisfactory, I might well have replied as I think it probable I did, that all parties were present in the city & he on friendly relations to all & he as a democrat & a good friend to annexation ought & could ascertain from them whether such a plan would be satisfactory.

Whether Mr Blair ever had any interviews with you, I never heard from you or him—although intimate with both—nor did I ever hear from him or any body else during my stay at Washington, any complaints of your having violated any pledges or disappointed their expectations in any part of your action on the subject of annexation. I heard it is true in

some quarters complaints of the action of Mr. Tyler as indelicate & precipitate, (which I was far from thinking myself) but none whatsoever of yours.

I have looked over the letters of both these gentlemen & feel at some loss to understand the precise impression intended to be made by them. Was it to shew that the Van Buren or Benton wing of the democratic portion of the Senate, although they voted for annexation ought not to be responsible for the war that followed, because Mr. Bentons form was the pacific one? And how was it more pacific towards Mexico? Both forms were intended to annex Texas to the United States & if that was done, the country would be lost by Mexico, by one mode as much as by the other—both forms then were equally hostile to her & neither could be regarded as pacific. Annexation in any form, was to be the cause of offence to her, not the mode or the terms of it. Mr. Blair states the motive for clinging to Mr Benton's proposition, to be, to render annexation more palatable to Mexico, by giving her a pecuniary consideration, for the territory desired by the U. States & to which Texas could justly assert any title. Now this is very strange language indeed, when it is remembered that the commissioners contemplated in Mr. Benton's resolution, were not to go to Mexico at all—were to have no communications with her & therefore could have no influence by pecuniary considera[tion]<sup>338</sup> or otherwise in reconciling her to annexation. The house resolution left the Western boundary (the only one disputable) subject to negotiation & the general diplomatic powers of the President could have offered (as it subsequently did) any amount of money to render annexation palatable to Mexico. To suppose it proper for the President to have selected Mr. Bentons proposition rather than that of the house, for any of the reasons set forth by Mr. Blair or Mr. Tappan, is therefore evidently absurd & inconsistent with the stubborn facts of the case. Every Member of the house who voted for the resolutions of that body, must feel some degree of reflection cast upon him by those letters; for if it was such an outrageous act in the president (Mr. Tyler [& yourself])<sup>339</sup> to select & submit, these resolutions, leading so directly & inevitably to War as these gentlemen pretend, it must have been highly censurable in them to have voted for them. The Spirit in which Mr. Tappan's was written may be judged of by noticing the paragraph in which, speaking of his vote against the Tyler Treaty, he says "it appeared to me (him) that the whole affair afforded evidence of a daring conspiracy to divide the Union by arraying the free & slave States against each other"—a daring conspiracy—the whole affair of it—to divide the Union!—& yet that Senator knows from various publications which must have met his eye, that Genl Jackson's great name lay at the bottom of this imperfect measure—That Mr. Tyler never ventured upon it, untill he had the assurance that Genl Jackson would stand by him in it. He knows too, that the large majority of his own party (we thought all of them) at the Baltimore convention approved & even demanded the annexation of Texas & yet the whole affair of it, in the summer of 1848, seems to him a daring conspiracy to dissolve the Union!

You must pardon me for making these comments, beyond a simple statements of conversations &c. for I have had to bear the force of these letters in my late canvass of the

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338 Letters cut off side of page.

339 Brown struck out the bracketed text in this sentence.

State, in which they have done some damage to the democratic party & in which I have been compelled to point out their errors & absurdities.

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received December 30, 1848.

FROM JOHN M. PATTON

Richmond [Va.]<sup>340</sup>

25 Decr. 1848

My Dear Sir

I have received and read with great satisfaction, your last message, which you did me the honor to send me a copy of.

It is scarcely necessary for me to repeat how much I approve the principles of your administration as fully reviewed and Vindicated in that message.

Would that we could anticipate or even hope, that they might prevail in the Measures of your successor. Under the auspices with which Genl. Taylor has been brought into power, and from the fatal & mischievous errors which he has Sanctioned by his approval, so far as he has chosen to give any intimation of his opinions on political subjects, we can indulge no expectation, favorable to the sound and constitutional, features of your administration, but can only look for a struggle to erase what has been so well and successfully done. We are, I fear, to have a sort of political unravelling of Penelopes web, for the next four years and a renewal of all those dangerous and unconstitutional measures and systems, which we had supposed the administration of Genl. Jackson and yours had finally overthrown. You at least will have the consolation, in your retirement, of knowing that you have done your duty faithfully and firmly, and your friends the Satisfaction of knowing that you have fulfilled all their hopes and expectations. As one of them I take pleasure in repeating the expression of that satisfaction.

I perceive by the papers that you contemplate, on your return home after the 4th March, taking the Southern route.

The principal object of troubling you with this note, is to request that you and Mrs. Polk would visit us and stay with us while you remain in Richmond. It will give Mrs. Patton and myself great pleasure to have you with us, in a friendly and social way.

Tendering you and your Lady our best regards and highest respect . . . .

JNO. M. PATTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "(unofficial)." From Polk's AE: received December 26, 1848; answered December 27, 1848.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville Tennessee

Decr. 26th 1848

Dear sir

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340 State identified from postmark and Polk's AE.

My departure for the south took place the day before your letter<sup>341</sup> reached here. I was gone a month.

I have this moment bound Mr Hughs in writing to take your house at fifteen hundred dollars 1500.\$ so this matter is settled. Your house is not in as great a s[t]ate<sup>342</sup> of forwardness as I hoped to find it the Plasterer having disappointed him. He has now additional help at it & will he promises me complete the work as quick as posible.

I will see that the paper is not put on too soon for safety & that the boxes of Furnature &c are properly taken care of. Should write more fully but have just returned & have the office perpetually full of people talking of business.

V. K. STEVENSON

[P.S.] Mr H is to send your plan immediately with all receses & projections of each room with its exact dimensions.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 4, 1849; answered January 9, 1849; "Relates to my private business;/Has let Mr Hughes have my store-house & lot in Columbia Tennessee at \$1500."

FROM ASA BIGGS

Williamston N.C.

December 27, 1848

My dear Sir

I am very much honored and obliged by a copy of your Message which you were kind enough to send me and which I received a short time since. I am very much gratified at the forcible manner in which you have reviewed the measures of your administration, the whole of which meets my unqualified approval and I am pleased that I was permitted to have some humble share in promoting the important measures consummated in the first Session of the 29th Congress; and although the misrepresentations in regard to the Mexican War contributed greatly to prevent my re election I am fully compensated for any personal defeat by the inestimable results to the country: the consequences of that War. The valuable acquisition of territory now developed in the gold regions of California alone has demonstrated sooner than was anticipated the wise policy which has characterised your administration and has completely dissipated and falsified the confident assertions of the Whigs made last fall, that the territory was utterly valueless: an assertion that I had to combat in this district as elector without expecting that my positions as to the importance of the acquisition would be so soon verified.

I may be permitted in the utmost sincerity to assure you that in my opinion your administration has more nearly approached the Republican creed (as I understand it) in its practical results than any former administration of our government and therefore I am not surprised at the dissatisfaction produced among the Whigs at your bold and truthful exposure of the tendency of federal measures and the boasted "American System" which I hold with you if carried out in the administration of the Government would change the whole character of our institutions and ultimately subvert Republican liberty here. I regret

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341 Stevenson may refer to Polk's letter of October 24, November 11, or November 12.

342 Letter added to complete probable meaning.



to say however that in North Carolina the Democratic party are under a cloud, & in a minority that I fear will take a long time to change. We however have fought better than could be expected. (without an organization which it has been impossible for us to perfect although I have unremittingly urged it.[])<sup>343</sup>

I have just learned that Mr. Badger after many ballottings is re elected to the Senate and I regret that our friends (although they could not have elected a Democrat) should have cast their votes for Mr. Clingman whom I consider as objectionable if not more so than Mr. Badger. An acknowledgement however has been wrung from Clingman in approbation of the measures of your administration. I have just recd. a letter from a member of the Legislature who states that Clingman pledged himself against a National Bank & the Wilmot proviso and in favor of the Independent Treasury and the Tariff of 1846.

I should be gratified if during the short period of your official term the distracting Slavery question could be settled and therefore I cordially approve your earnest recommendations on that subject, although a consideration of Party policy might desire me to throw it upon the incoming administration: for it cannot be doubted that Genl. Taylor if he vetoes the Wilmot proviso will be guilty of a gross fraud in obtaining Northern votes, and my observation convinces me if the South obtains equality in any portion of the new Territories it can only be expected during your administration. If Genl. Taylor approves the Proviso the larger portion of the Southern Whigs I believe will justify or excuse him. I am satisfied from my canvass this fall that even in eastern North Carolina a large vote could now be obtained for the Proviso if the movement were headed by one influential man.

The result of the Presidential election therefore on this question is to divide the South and unite the North, and what may be the ultimate result time only can determine. Certain I am that the South cannot reasonably calculate upon securing any thing except it is done during your term and that seems improbable from the recent course of the House of Representatives: a course which I predicted would certainly be pursued in the next Congress. I very much fear that the spirit of Abolition is making such rapid progress, that in a few years the Northern slaveholding States will be compelled to surrender the question: if for a few years even we should be spared intense excitement followed by violent outbreaks.

I hope for the best but fear the worst and therefore I repeat my admiration and approval of your course in pressing the question with earnestness before the excitement becomes uncontrollable.

But I did not commence this letter with the intention of trespassing upon your time in speculations upon political subjects but to express my thanks for your recollection of a friend now in private life and to assure you of the warm approval of your message by one who feels a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of the country.

Please present my kindest regards to Mrs. Polk, and beleive me while I have the honor to subscribe myself . . . .

ASA BIGGS

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343 Closing parenthesis missing.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received December 31, 1848. See also ALI, copy. Nc–Ar. Published in ULNCP–Ju, pp. 259–60.

TO JOHN M. PATTON

Washington City

Decr. 27th 1848

My Dear Sir:

I have just received your kind letter of the 25th Instant, and thank you, for the invitation you give to Mrs Polk and myself to visit you, on our return to Tennessee, after the close of my Presidential term. It is our present purpose to take the Southern route, which though longer than that across the mountains, is for the convenience of travel with a heavy baggage, to be preferred. I had not contemplated making any stop at Richmond, but if the arrangements of the public conveyances, in which we will be, shall allow the time, it will give us pleasure to pay our respects to your family at your house. With kind regards to Mrs. Patton : . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Richmond, Va.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

London.

29 December 1848

My dear Sir,

I received an hour ago your message. But I had read it already. It was published more than a week ago in all the English papers, and circulated throughout all this kingdom & the continent. Never has a President had such a story to tell; and, what I think still more to your honor, never has a President presented the unadulterated principles of democracy with more clearness or more fidelity. Here the world is astonished at the extraordinary results of your administration, & only wonder how in America there can be two opinions about it. England acquiesces in all you have done; and had you even purchased Cuba, England would have submitted quietly.

And now I want your advice. Had I better resign on the 4th of March, or wait. It is all a matter of very little importance to me except as I wish to act rightly & to act wisely.

I have recd Johnson's report which is excellent all but close. A Postmaster General removable only by impeachment with postmasters holding office during good behavior, would make the Post Office the most complete whig electioneering machine that can be imagined. That advice of Johnson's is all wrong; how he came to adopt such a thoroughly whig project I cannot imagine. It is diametrically opposed to all our democratic doctrines. But the separation of the Postmaster General from the Cabinet, & his appointment for a term of years not exceeding four, are good practical measures.

You wished a copy of the Mecklenburg Resolves of May 1775.<sup>344</sup> I send you a copy of these today, together with copies of such other papers as show plainly the grave importance attached to those resolves by the Partisans of Great Britain.<sup>345</sup>

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344 Polk to Bancroft, September 15, 1848. See also Polk to Bancroft, October 27, 1848.

345 For this letter's enclosures, see Polk to Charles Manly, February 2, 1849, in which Polk enclosed them.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM TIMOTHY CORBIN

Middletown [N.Y.]<sup>346</sup>

Dec. 30th 1848

Dear Sir

Haveing no doubt but that your mind will meet with Employment arduous Enough in concluding the various duties which must inevitably await you in closeing one of the most Auspicious and Successful Administrations of which it is in the province of the Goverment Justly to Boast although we can boast of many good yet none have been under Such Embarressed circumstances So Successfully carried out with So little Embarrassment to the people; and without wishing to flatter you permit me to say you had my Confidence from the beginning and I hailed your Nomination in, 44, as a harbenger of good to this Country and I warmly Supported you at the Election and I regret that such a Shameful quarrel Exists in this State as has had the Effect to throw the power of the Goverment for the next 4 years into the possession of the Whigs. Nevertheless your retiring from Office will be as Triumphant as your inauguration and it is thought by many that your Country will again Call you to the helm in: 52. I will nevertheless pray for the Best Notwithstanding I should be Truly gratified to see you re Elected in, 1852<sup>347</sup> yet in the intervening Time I Truly hope that the Councils of the Nation may be Such as to favourably promote the advancement and interest of those that are governed and that you in common may rejoice to see the policy of your wise Administration looked to for a precedent for the Succeeding 4 years. I cannot think they will disturb the Tariff or independant Treasury and if not there will be no danger of a National Bank. By, the, By I have a Son Joseph S. that was 17 year Old last Oct. and is pretty large of his age very active and Energetick whose appearance is Somewhat prepossessing and he is anxious to graduate at the Military Academy at West point. Will the Multitude of your business in Concluding your Administration permit your Excellency to compliment So humble an Individual by Aiding in Introducing his Son to that Institution? If not I know that your Other important business in which the Whole people are concerned occupies your Time and therefore your Devotion is more wisely appropriated and all is Submitted by me to your own better Judgement and more provident care. . . .

TIMOTHY CORBIN

P.S.<sup>348</sup> I have also written to Secretary Marcy more particular in relation to my Son Joseph S. Corbin who I should be truly glad to have admitted to the Military Academy at West Point if Consistent with the good feeling of my friends. I have also addressed a line upon this Subject to Senator Dickerson and Hon A Birdsall M.C.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 5, 1849.

FROM JONATHAN B. CORY

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346 State identified from postmark and Polk's AE.

347 New sentence may begin before or after "Notwithstanding . . . 1852."

348 Corbin surrounded "P.S" with the bottom-right half of a box.

Mays Landing N.J.

[December 31, 1848]

It is near the last sunset of 1848. and we are yet one nation. John C. Calhoun the same restless spirit who troubled Andrew Jackson is now troubling you. Mr. President The North will sustain you in any legal method to preserve the Union and the Constitution, whether by veto or by armys. I wrote you in the commencement of the Mexican war to fear not.<sup>349</sup> Again I say fear not. Fear not the political earthquakes of Europe fear not, the pestilence which has just visited our shores; fear not the nullification of John C. Calhoun, fear only God. And God Almighty grant that neither you nor I may ever see The Union dissolved. I am Jonathan Cory. If you wish to know more of me you may ask of Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institute.

J. C.

ALI. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 3, 1849. E possibly in Washington Curran Whitthorne's or Lunsford L. Loving Jr.'s hand: "amusing."  
FROM WILLIAM W. LEA

Trenton [Tenn.]<sup>350</sup>

Jan'y 1st 1849

Dear Sir,

Contrary to my expectation and intention, as expressed to you some two or three years since, that I was not and did not expect to be an applicant for any appointment under your administration,<sup>351</sup> I have been induced by some highly respected friends, to ask of you the office of Commissioner under the treaty to run the line between Mexico and the U States. This is an honorable employment, to which I feel entirely competent; in seeking which I have the additional motive of a desire to make a personal exploration of the route for the contemplated Rail Road to the Pacific. This favor being accorded to the request of myself and friends will be most gratefully received and remembered.

Permit me to congratulate you on the brilliant success of your administration. As a native Tennessean, I feel proud of the honour and glory that have accrued to my native state and to the whole country from the talents, energy and patriotic devotion of the Tennessee Presidents. . . .

WM. W. LEA

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 18, 1849.

FROM ELISHA WHITTLESEY

Washington January 1st 184[9]<sup>352</sup>

April 21st 1848

Sir

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349 Letter not found.

350 State identified from Polk's AE and through content analysis.

351 Letter not found.

352 Whittlesey erroneously wrote "1848." Correct year identified from Polk's AE and through content analysis.

It was with pleasure, I witnessed your prompt and zealous efforts last summer to discountenance, and prevent the re assembling of a mob in this City; and I believe, if it had not been for the measures you adopted, and the advice you gave, that private property would have been destroyed, and the character of the City, seriously affected.

An occurrence of the kind here, and on that occasion, would have caused a deep sensation throughout the nation. The co-operation of the city authorities and prominent citizens to act efficiently in unison, resulted from the order you gave to the Departments, to restrain the Clerks from appearing in any assemblage, that might collect the following night; and from the remark you made "that the peace of the City should be preserved, and if the power of the corporation should not be adequate, that you would exercise every constitutional power applicable to the case, with which the President was cloathe'd."

As a temporary Citizen of the District, and as a citizen of the United States, it has been my desire to bear this testimony to you, which I have on many occasions borne to others.

ELISHA WHITTLESY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received January 2, 1849; "Expresses, his approval of my conduct in contributing to arrest a violent proceeding in this City last summer, upon the occasion of a public excitement, growing out of the arrest of three persons, who had attempted to take off in a vessel 40. or 50. slaves from this City."

FROM WILLIAM T. SPROLE

Examination Hall Military Acad'y

West Point

Jan'y 3rd 1849

My dear Sir,

Your kind letter<sup>353</sup> was duly recd. I feel grateful to you for your continued interest in my welfare and the direction you have given in relation to my personal comfort. As you perceive from the date of this letter, we are now busily engaged in our semi-annual examination. My young friend Cadet Polk was examined yesterday in mathematics and sustained himself remarkably well. He stands well up in the Second section of a talented class, and has the best regards of all his instructors for his success. His demerit marks which have occasioned you some uneasiness arose more from carelessness than any thing else, and I have his promise that the next report will take to Washington a clean sheet. I have felt since he entered the Academy a deep interest in him, and have regretted that the usages & regulations of the Institution are such that I cannot show more concern for him, without leading others to suppose that I inclined to be too partial. I wish you in your next letter to him, to urge his visiting my house more often than he does. Having a room-mate, of course I cannot take as freely to him, as I could in my own house. He has a very good-heart, full of life and I believe now free from vice. The great thing is to keep him so, and of this there is but little doubt, if his associates are pure. In an Institution like this, we must needs have many whose early training has been defective, & their habits bad. Young men whose moral developements are rather the effect of criminal neglect, than vicious principle—whose want of good is more their misfortune than their fault. Some

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353 Polk to Sprole, December 19, 1848.

such grow worse and others improve. Now it is often the case that these are among the most talented, & consequently the most influential & dangerous to the habits of their companions. I regard it as a very favourable circumstance that the most talented in the class of which Cadet Polk is a member, are excellent young men, some of the best in the Institution. Now as there is not much intercourse between the different classes—the intimacy of young men being to some extent restricted to their own class, there is less danger to be apprehended from bad example & association than there might be. Unless some great & unexpected change should take place—and of which I have not the most remote fear, your Nephew will pass through the Academy with very very great credit. If it be not troubling you with too long a letter, allow me to ask if you think there is any probability of an effort being made for my removal after your Successor has entered upon this duties of his office. I have not heard a syllable in relation to any such thing, but it is natural I should be anxious, having a family of little children depending entirely upon my Salary. I would not despair of finding a home in the church even should I be removed, yet to be displaced suddenly would of course subject me to great mental anguish & it might be some domestic distress. I know not that I should trouble you with this matter at all, but I must confess my concern for my family has started some anxiety in my own mind. Please make my kindest regards to your lady and . . .

W. T. SPROLE

[P.S.] I have written this letter in the midst of bustle, thinkig it would be gratifying to hear of the standing of your nephew, though it should put my talent as a Scribe to discount.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 6, 1849.

FROM HENRY HOLLINGSWORTH

Nashville Tennessee,

Jan. 4th 1849

Dear Sir,

I take this method of informing you that in the event of the passage of the California Teritorial Bill, and this request should be consistent with your faithful discharge of Executive duty, I shall be obliged to get a Judicial appointment in said Territory; or such employment in the service of the Government as you knowledge of myself, character, and qualifications may indicate. I shall accompany this with no petition, relying on your own acquaintance with me as a sufficient recommendation, should an opening occur.

H. HOLLINGSWORTH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received January 12, 1849.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Washington City

Jany. 5th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I have received several letters from you, within a few months past,<sup>354</sup> and if I have not answered them, it has been solely because my unceasing public duties, have prevented me from giving the attention, I desired to give, to the correspondence of my friends. From one or two of your letters I have the impression, that you entertained apprehensions, that some one may have communicated information to me, calculated to affect you injuriously.<sup>355</sup> Nothing of the kind has occurred. Neither Mr Bancroft or any one else, has written to me a word to your prejudice. I have known you too long, and too well, to credit idle rumours, and have undiminished confidence in you.

The Presidential election having resulted unfavourably to the Democratic party, it may be that you contemplate resigning your post, in order to avoid a removal, by my successor. If you desire to continue in your consulate, or if it be a matter of indifference to you, whether you do or not, my advice to you is, not to resign, but to hold on for a few months at least. A removal for opinion's sake could not injuriously affect your reputation, but on the contrary, would endear you still more to the Democratic party. The President elect, in one of [his]<sup>356</sup> letters as published, has said, that he was a Whig, but not an ultra Whig. Preceding the election his friends in different quarters of the Union, represented him as a no party man, & by this means he obtained many Democratic votes. That this was a fraud I do not doubt. Indeed I have never known a [public]-man who professed to belong to no party, who was not when he obtained power a proscriptive, if not a vindictive partisan. Your case would test the no party professions of the President elect, and of his leading friends. If [. . .]<sup>357</sup> shall prescribe "for opinion's sake," the early [an]d constant friend of Jackson, one who fell wounded in battle by his side, and who of all the officers, of all grades who had been under his command, was deemed by him most worthy to intrust his war sword, the public will be at no loss to understand and to appreciate the insincerity of the professions of moderation, which were made before the election.

I am surrounded by company and much engaged in my official duties, and have no time to say a word about public affairs. I anticipate with sincere pleasure my retirement from the cares, and responsibilities of public life.

Your son William I learn, has passed his preliminary examination, in the Navy, and is now, in Service. Your daughter Hetty is very well. She spent the 1st of January with us.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Since writing the foregoing letter Majr Graham, has sent me your letter to him of the 16th ultimo. You are mistaken in supposing that the term of Consuls is limited to four years. Like Foreign ministers they hold their Offices during "good behaviour or the pleasure of the President." There is no necessity therefore, as you supposed, to have a re-appointment. I think you are right in your determination to continue in the discharge of the

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354 Armstrong to Polk, May 19, 1848; Armstrong to Polk, September 9, 1848; Armstrong to Polk, September 23, 1848; Armstrong to Polk, October 2, 1848.

355 Polk refers to Armstrong's letters of May 19 and October 2.

356 Word here and below uncertain, light and blurred ink transfer.

357 Word or letters here and below cut off side of page.

duties of your consulate, and let the incoming administration recal you, if they choose to do so.

I have heard a rumour, but cannot vouch for its truth that Ex. Governor Jones of Tennessee wants your place. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Liverpool, England, and marked "(Private)."

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

Jany. 5th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I congratulate you upon your success in the negotiation of the Postal Treaty. I submitted it to the Senate on yesterday, and to day that body advised and consented to its ratification. If it can be prepared in time, at the State Department, the Ratification on My part will be transmitted to you by the Next Steamer. This may be the last of the important measures, consummated, during the term of my eventful administration. Whether it be or not I shall retire with a consciousness, of having with unceasing attention to public affairs and with great labour and anxiety, faithfully discharged my duty, and I shall I hope leave my country prosperous and happy. Some of the leading Whigs say I have had good luck. I care not to what they attribute the success which may have attended the measures of my administration, if that success shall result in the permanent good of the country. Of the effects of my policy, posterity, as well as the present generation must judge. There is but one open question which gives me any serious concern and which I am anxious to settle before I retire, and that is the question of providing Governments, for the inhabitants of the immense territories, acquired by the Treaty with Mexico. In the present temper of Congress, and in view of the great diversity of opinion which prevails, I fear this cannot be done at the present Session. The slavery question constitutes the sole and great obstacle, to an adjustment. With the Wilmot Proviso, incorporated into any Bill, and applied to territory South of 36°. 30"., it cannot become a law; and I fear that no Bill without such provision can pass the Ho. Repts. The only hope as I think is, to admit California into the Union, as a State, as soon as the inhabitants, shall adopt and present a Republican State constitution, without requiring them to pass through the intermediate stage of a Territorial Government under the authority of the U. States. In this form Northern as well as Southern Democrats can vote against any restriction, upon the subject of slavery, as being incompatible with the right of the people interested, to adopt and regulate their own Domestic Institutions. If this plan shall not succeed, (and I entertain great fear it will not) nothing will probably be done at the present Session of Congress. If government could be secured for California, the government of the Province of New Mexico, being interior country, without sea-coast, and with a sparse population, might if necessary be postponed. I hope for the best, but fear the worst. My apprehensions are, that if nothing be done, at the present session, there is imminent danger that California may be lost to the Union. My reasons are, that attracted by the recently discovered mineral wealth, and the vast commercial advantages of that country, the emigration to it will be rapid beyond any former example. I should not be surprised, if before the end of August, there, should be a population of an hundred, perhaps an hundred and fifty thousand souls. This mass of people of every lineage & tongue will be congregated together, without law or



government. They cannot long remain in this condition. Among them will undoubtedly be men of adventure and desperate fortune, men of talents and ambition and men of Capital. They will naturally form a Government for themselves, will establish custom-houses, and may collect a large revenue. They may style themselves the California Republic, or uniting Oregon, the Pacific Republic. In this condition of things, when Congress shall assemble next December, they may be in a quasi State of revolt, declaring their disinclination to be connected with our Union of States. Should this be so, the Federal party, who will be in power, will be ready to give up the country. The instincts of that party have always, been opposed to the extension of our territorial limits. This was manifested in their opposition to the acquisition of Louisiana, of the Floridies and of Texas. Less than a year ago, the same party, in Congress, and out of it, were opposed, to the acquisition of any territory as an indemnity from Mexico. With their opinions they will I apprehend be ready to avail themselves of any plausible pretext to surrender up the territory acquired. They would moreover be able to relieve themselves from embarrassment as a political party by such a course. In the late Presidential election they represented Genl. Taylor to be a Wilmot Proviso man at the North; and a pro slavery man at the South. By giving up the country they would save him from the necessity of acting on the subject. These are my apprehensions. I pray God that they may be without foundation. But I have said much more on this subject than I have intended to do, when I commenced this letter, & will not trouble you further with my speculations.

I suppose you may be preparing to surrender the Mission which you have so ably filled, for I have a strong impression, that the incoming administration, will be more proscriptive than any which has preceded it. It is true that the President elect, in one of his numerous letters as published has said, that he is a Whig, but not an ultra Whig, and it is also true, that he was represented by his friends during the pendency of the Presidential election as a no party man, but notwithstanding all this, those who will be about him will probably require him to proscribe for "opinion's sake," all who hold desirable places under the Government. Indeed I have never known a professed no-party man, who sought and obtained popular favour and power upon that ground, who did not turn out to be a proscriptive, if not a vindictive partisan. All such professions are but frauds practiced on the people. Whatever the course of President Taylor may be in this respect, my advice to you is, not to resign. If you are removed, it can be for no cause other than your political opinions, and could not injuriously affect your reputation. On the contrary your recalculation would endear you still more to the Democratic party. My clear opinion is, that you should hold on to your mission, and throw the responsibility of your recalculation, upon the President elect, if he chooses to take it.

I look forward My Dear Sir, with sincere pleasure to the period, now near at hand, when I shall retire from the cares, and anxieties of my responsible station.

You have not answered my letter written in September last, requesting you to procure & forward to me, copies, all the official papers in the British archives, upon the subject of the Declaration of Independence made by the people of Mecklenburg N. Carolina in May

1775, or which go to establish the authenticity of that event.<sup>358</sup> I take a deep and peculiar interest in this subject, and hope you may have it in your power to procure and forward to me copies of the papers, which in one of your letters, you informed me were preserved in the British archives.<sup>359</sup>

I have written a much longer letter than I had intended. I have written in haste, after the labours of the day, were over and late at night. I have no opportunity to revise it, nor is this necessary. Should you be recalled, Mrs. Polk and myself would be most happy to receive a visit from Mrs. Bancroft and yourself, at our house at Nashville, where my future residence will be. Will you make kind salutations to Mrs. Bancroft, and express to her how much we would be delighted to receive a visit from her and yourself, in the event you are proscribed.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked "(Private & unofficial)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

FROM JOSEPH E. BELL

Greeneville Tennessee

5th January 1849

Dear Sir.

Be so kind as to pardon the liberty I now take, in troubling you with the perusal of a few lines. I have two sons who wish to go to the gold regions of California, early in the spring. The eldest, Joseph W. Bell, is an attorney at law, & resides in Nashville; the younger, Benjamin F. Bell, is a physician & a resident of this County. They are qualified, honest & respectable, but not wealthy. As it is believed that a branch of the mint will be located in California, they wish an Office in that, or something else, that will enable them to support themselves. Hon. John Bell, of the Senate, can inform you of Joseph, and Hon. Andrew Johnson, of the House, can satisfy you, as to Benjamin. My object is to solicit, for my sons aforesaid, your favor, or patronage, in obtaining some civil office, or clerkship in California. Should you feel it consistent with your views of propriety, to favor my sons, you will not be disappointed of your wish to promote the public good. They have no epauletted recommendation—all they can show, is unblemished Character, and qualification equal to the discharge of the duties of any Office, which they may be fortunate enough to occupy. But if you feel unwilling to grant my request, you will still have my warmest friendship, and support at the Ballot box, where you have always had it. May God give you and yours, a high seat in the other world. He has given you, on earth, the highest seat occupied by man; and you have spread glory and honor over regions of darkness, and the gold is rising, as by charm, to enrich the mighty republic over which you preside.

JS. E. BELL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 18, 1849.

FROM GWINN HARRIS HEAP

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358 Polk to Bancroft, September 15, 1848.

359 Bancroft to Polk, August 5, 1848.

[Washington City]

Monday Morning [January 8, 1849]<sup>360</sup>

Sir,

I am directed by my father Dr S. D. Heap, to beg your acceptance of the accompanying table slab, made of marble collected among the ruins of Carthage.<sup>361</sup>

G. H. HEAP

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received January 8, 1849; answered January 19, 1849.

TO APURVA KRISHNA

Washington City

January 8th 1849

Sir:

I have received the two volumes which you have done me the honour to transmit to me, the one entitled "The History of the Conquerors of Hind," and the other "Lives of Maha Raja Apurva Krishna Bahadur,"<sup>362</sup> for which I return to you my thanks. They are rare works in the United States, and cannot fail to excite a lively interest, with the curious and the learned, who may have an opportunity to see them. It will afford me pleasure to give them a place in my library.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Polk to Horatio A. Loomis, January 8, 1849.

TO HORATIO A. LOOMIS

Washington City

Jany. 8th 1849

Dr. Sir

I have received your letter of the 26th ultimo, together with the two Volumes transmitted to me<sup>363</sup> as you state, through the agency of Mrs E. Lock of Calcutta, as "a present from her friend the Raja Apurva Krishna." I request that you will do me the favour to forward the enclosed acknowledgment,<sup>364</sup> of the receipt of the present and of the letter which accompanied it.<sup>365</sup>

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Boston.

TO AARON V. BROWN

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360 Place identified from Polk's AE and through external research; date identified from Polk's AE and Polk's reply.

361 The table that Heap enclosed with this letter is now, in 2016, in the possession of the Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. It is on display at the James K. Polk Home and Museum, 301 West 7th Street.

362 Horatio A. Loomis to Polk, December 26, 1848, and its enclosures not found; see Polk to Loomis, January 8, 1849.

363 Letter and enclosures not found.

364 Polk to Apurva Krishna, January 8, 1849.

365 Letter, whether by Lock or by Apurva Krishna, not found.

Washington City  
January 9th 1849

My Dear Sir:

It is at this moment uncertain, whether Congress will at its present session, provide any Governments for the territories acquired from Mexico by the Treaty of Peace. In the present temper of that body, and especially when the conflict of opinion upon the slave-question which exists between the different sections of the Union, is considered, I regret to say that the probabilities are that Nothing will be done. I have not time now to give you the reasons for these apprehensions. I fear if nothing be done at the present session, that California, may set up an Independent Government & that fine country be lost to the Union. Though the slavery question may prevent Congress from doing their duty in this respect, they will I think create a Board of commissioners, to adjudicate the claims of our citizens against Mexico, which by the terms of the Treaty were assumed by the United States. In that event the appointment of the commissioners will devolve on me, before the expiration of my term. Many persons of high character and distinguished standing in the country have already been presented to me for these appointments. I am under no commitments to any one, but have thought it probable that the Hon. John B. Weller of Ohio, (whom you know) and the Hon. John Anderson of Maine, with whom I served many years in Congress, might be two of them. If such a situation would be agreeable to you, and you will so signify to me, it would give me sincere pleasure to appoint you on the commission with these gentlemen, or any other whom I may finally make up my mind to appoint. The office of commissioner will be one of dignity and high responsibility. It will be such a commission as was filled by White, Tazewell & King, under the Spanish Treaty, by which we acquired the Floridas; and such as was filled by Judge Campbell of Nashville, Saunders of [ . . . ]<sup>366</sup> Kane of Philadelphia, under the French Treaty. Being in the Nature of a Judicial office, I think it probable that the rule of proscription for "opinion's sake," which may be adopted by my successor, would not be applied.

A few weeks ago I nominated to the Senate the late Senator Sevier of Arkansas, to be commissioner to run the boundary line between the U.S. and Mexico, in pursuance of the provisions of the Treaty. The nomination has not yet been acted on, and I understand that doubts have been raised in the Senate, whether as Mr Sevier was a member of the Senate, when the Treaty was ratified, he is eligible to the office under the constitution. Should he be rejected, or should his nomination be withdrawn in consequence of the doubts of his eligibility by Senators, and you would prefer this situation to a place on the commission to adjudicate claims, & you will so inform me, I will send in your name in his stead. Should he be rejected or be withdrawn, I will communicate with you by Telegraph in these words "Sevier has been rejected" [or]<sup>367</sup> "Sevier has been withdrawn" as the case may be. You can respond with "I accept," or "I decline" as you may decide. I mention this

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366 Word or words cut off side of page.

367 Possible underline within quotation marks or punctuation surrounding them cut off bottom of page; word in brackets either absent or cut off bottom of page.

because this office, must be filled by me, whereas the commission to adjudicate claims may possibly not be created, though the strong probabilities<sup>368</sup> are that it will be.

I received your letter last summer,<sup>369</sup> but did not answer it, preferring to see you personally, & make such explanations as I am sure would be satisfactory to you.

I have received your letter of the 20th ultimo, in reply to mine upon another subject written in September last,<sup>370</sup> & thank you for it. There is one point, probably from inadvertence upon which you are silent. It is in relation to any conversation you may have had with me on the subject of annexation, after my arrival in Washington in February 1845. As however it is not now probable that any thing will be done on the subject until after I retire, I will have an opportunity to see you on this point.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(Private).”

TO LEWIS CASS

Washington City

Jany. 9th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I was much gratified to receive your letter of the 27th ultimo.<sup>371</sup> The noble sentiments which you avow, are just such as I expected from you, and you will permit me to say, do you high honour. I wish they could be known to the public, for if they were, they would endear you still more, to all the lovers, of the Union. If you could be returned to the Senate uninstructed upon the Wilmot Proviso or slavery question, you could from your position before the country, do more to adjust that, delicate and most dangerous, sectional controversy than any man now living. Should you be returned to the Senate, and be afterwards instructed, I concur with you in opinion that, you could do much good, in declaring from your position, upon the floor of that dignified body, your views fully, upon the occasion of resigning your seat. One half the country would not only admire you, for your firmness in maintaining sound constitutional principles, but would be enthusiastically attached to you, for your devotion to the Union of the States; whilst in the other half, the sound democracy would stand by you and sustain you. Were you driven to resign your seat, under instructions, it would be a great and a proud occasion, and would give you a fame, as a martyr who had fallen, in a mighty struggle to preserve, the Union of the States. I have reflected much on the subject, and my opinion is, that you should consent to return to the Senate. I should hope that instructions by your Legislature might be prevented by your friends; but if not and instructions should follow you, you could only resign, and in doing so, make a patriotic appeal to the people of all sections, in favour of the preservation of the Union. The State of things in Congress, as I described them to you, have not been materially changed since I wrote you.<sup>372</sup> Were you here I should still hope that suitable

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368 Letters cut off side of page.

369 Brown to Polk, July 12 and c. July 25, 1848.

370 Polk to Brown, September 6, 1848 (both such letters).

371 Letter not found.

372 Polk to Cass, December 15, 1848.

Governments might be provided for the recently acquired Territories, and that in providing them, we might avoid the insuperable embarrassments, which the Wilmot Proviso, would inevitably produce. My language to all the members of Congress with whom I have conversed, is, to urge conciliation & compromise, and to maintain at any hazard, the noble sentiment of Genl. Jackson "Our Federal Union, it must be preserved."

I am much gratified that your son's nomination to Rome was confirmed by the Senate. It met with unexpected and strenuous opposition and at one time I feared the result. His rejection would have been a triumph to the Whigs over you, but a still greater one over me & the Democratic party. I am happy in the belief that I may have contributed, in my intercourse with Senators to prevent such a result. Your Son did not call on me after he was nominated, but I learn, since his confirmation, that he has returned to Michigan. I am heartily rejoiced My Dear Sir: that my term is so near its close. At this late period of my administration my official labours continue to be unceasing, and my responsibilities very great. I am sure I shall enjoy, my retirement as much as any man ever did.

With Respectful salutations to Mrs. Cass . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU-C. Addressed to Detroit and marked "(Private)." From Lewis Cass's AE: received January 22, 1849. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

TO AARON V. BROWN

Washington City

Jany. 10th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I wrote to you last night, and suggested my desire to appoint you as one of the commissioners, to adjudicate claims under the Mexican-Treaty, should Congress at its present session make provision for the appointment of such a Board, as I thought they would. This is a position which I supposed it possible, (but without any knowledge of what your views might be) might be agreeable to you. In the same letter I informed you that I had nominated the late Senator Sevier to the Senate, as commissioner to run the boundary between the U. States and Mexico, as stipulated by the Treaty of Peace, but that as he was a member of the Senate at the time the Treaty was ratified, objections had been made as to his constitutional eligibility to the appointment. I informed you, also, that in the event of Mr Sevier's rejection, or the withdrawal of his nomination, I would send in your name, if you preferred it to a place on the Commission to adjudicate claims. My opinion was, that you would prefer to be at the Head of the Joint commission to adjudicate claims, to be commissioner to run the boundary, if indeed you would accept either. Such is still my opinion. My letter to you was sent to the Post Office last night. This morning a Telegraphic despatch has been received in this City announcing the death of Senator Sevier. Another person should be nominated without delay. If I was certain you would accept, I would at once nominate you. On further reflection I think it extremely improbable that you would accept. The commissioner whoever he may be, must set out in time to be at San-Diego on the Pacific, on or before the 30th of May next, that being the time [lim]ited<sup>373</sup> by the Treaty.

Any Democrat who may be ap[p]ointed, might be recalled by my successor, immediately upon his accession to power, and in that [e]vent you might, be arrested on the journey by a recal, which would be extremely mortifying. I doubt too, when I come to give the subject more reflection, whether you could consent to be absent from your family, for so long a time as it would require to complete the duties, which it is estimated would probably be eighteen months. I have no means of communicating with you except by Telegraph, & to adopt that mode would be to give publicity to the matter, here and elsewhere, and this you might possibly regard as prejudicial to you. Upon a full view of the whole subject I am so well satisfied that you would prefer the commission to adjudicate claims, which will set in Washington, that I think it unnecessary to wait to hear from you in regard to Sevier's place. As I mentioned to you in my letter of last night, the commission to adjudicate claims, will be in the nature of a judicial tribunal, and the persons appointed by me and confirmed by the Senate, would not probably be removed by my successor. Your family too could accompany you, and in the recss of the Sessions of the Board, the commissioners could visit their respective residenc[es]. In all respects it would be a more eligible position for one in your circumstances, than, to be commissioner to run the boundary. In conversation with some members of Congress this morning, they assure me, that there can scarcely be a doubt but that Congress will at the present session, pass a law to create a Board of commissioners under the Treaty. A Bill they inform me has been reported and is now before Congress and no serious opposition to it, if any, is anticipated. I have been called upon by two Senators, since the news of Sevier's death wa[s] received, to urge me to make another nomination without delay, so as to give time for [. . .] person appointed to reach San-Diego within [. . .] time limited in the Treaty. In view of all the circumstances, I shall probably make a nomination to the Senate on tomorrow, for commissioner to run the boundary.

In coming this conclusion, I have consulted Majr. Graham confidentially. He fully concurs with me in the views and opinions here expressed. He thinks that the commission to adjudicate claims, would suit you, while he is decidedly of opinion that the commission to run the boundary would-not, and that you could not & would not accept the latter place. I should add that the salary of the two positions would be the same, while there will be no outfit for either. The commission to adjudicate claims will probably continue from two to three years.

I shall be pleased to hear from you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked "(Private)."

FROM CHARLES HOCHGESANGT

Paris

January 10, 1849

Mr. President.

In the name of the French company, La Californienne, we honorably request from you a mining concession in the gold bearing terrain in California.

We ask, Mr. President, for you to please inform us of the conditions under which one can obtain this concession as well as the formal requirements for doing so.

In the hope that you will kindly process our request, we ask that you receive the assurance of the profound respect with which we have the honor of being, . . . .

Representing the administrators of the

French company La Californienne,

the provisional managing director

CHARLES HOCHGESANGT

Translation, by Margaret Cook Anderson, of ALS in French. DNA–RG 48. Addressed to the U.S. president, who was Polk when Hochgesangt wrote the letter but Zachary Taylor when it reached Washington City. From Es in unknown hand or hands: received (by Taylor) March 11, 1849; “charles Hochgesang in behalf of the French California Company./ Asks for authority to mine & occupy gold Lands in California, wishes to know the conditions &c./Secy. Interior [Thomas Ewing], please answer. april 23”; answered April 26, 1849.

FROM JOHN DUFFY

Dartfield-Loughrea-County. Galway-Ireland—

January 12th 1849

Honourable Sir,

I do believe that it is an uncommon thing for a Man in my humble sphere of life, to presume to address himself from Ireland, to so Exalted a Personage, as the President, of the united States, of America, them Great and Prosperious States, the Lands of Glorious Liberty and fair Play—but the more humble I be, and the Greater the Personage, I address, the better chance I have to obtain the request I crave, when my Prayer, is ardent humble and Sincere.

Honle. Sir, I am a Man of Excellent Character, and Regularly Bred to Agriculture, Gardening, and Botany, &c. after Several years Experience, and much observation, under the auspicious of the Dublin Society, and in other Respectable places, which will appear by the Testimonials, in my possession. I have transacted the Business, of Land Steward, and Gardener, extensively, and has had from 60. to 170. Men daily, to oversee, Reclaming and Cropping Lands Ornamenting Gardens, and Pleasure Grounds, &c. and Keeping accounts correctly. My Family consists of a Wife and two Daughters, I am 50 years of age strong and healthy, my Wife is 46. one of my Daughters is 21. and the other 19 years of age, each of them understands the Dairy, and Landry<sup>374</sup> Business &c. are good plain Cooks, can work well at their Needle and Read and write, modest, Humble, willing and able to earn their Bread, honestly, but there is no earning to be had in Ireland, particularly for the last three years, it is geting worse every day, and is now I believe at the lowest Ebb, of Misery and Woe; I have transacted the business of Steward, and Gardener &c. for Henry Blake, Esqr. of this Place, for the last two years, Faithful, Honest, and Indifatiguably, attentive, he has given me three months notice of not requiring my services, which time will be up on the 16th of March next, and in consequence of my having a Female Family, to support, all the reserve I could make would not support us three months, after I am

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374 Duffy may have meant to write “Laundry” or may have invented an adjective for “land.”



disemployed, for in Ireland, there are four Idle for the one that is employed, and even that one on very low wages,<sup>375</sup>

Honble. Sir, what I most Humbly Crave, is, that you will Condescend, to order some Master, or Captain of an American Vessel, Trading to Ireland, to take me and the three Females to the united States of America, where we would earn a livelihood. We have good wearing apparel, some Feather Beds, and Bedding, with furniture for a Farm house, but not able to pay for our Passage, which I believe would amount to about £16., British Currency or 80 Dollars, American Currency, for the Voyage of four Persons, this we would earn honestly, on landing on moderate terms, and would not draw any wages, until our Expenses would be cleared up, except Barely Subsistence that we could not avoid. Honble. sir, I have read your Message To Congress, last Month, at which I am delighted, and which Emboldens me to address myself to such Noble Principles, in this manner, for which I crave Pardon and do Humbly Crave Honble. Sir, that you will be pleased through your Humanity, and goodness to take my Case into consideration and Grant this my Request, which will be Gratefully acknowledged, in Hope of an answer I remain . . .

JOHN DUFFY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 14, 1849.

FROM JAMES M. HUGHES

Nashville

Jan 13th 1849

Dear Sir

I have the honor to transmit to you herewith the ground plan of your building with the necessary dimentions for the carpets.<sup>376</sup> The marble mantles are not yet up, and therefor I agree with Mrs. Stevenson that it would be better to have the carpets made here and I will have them put down myself. I expect to be in Washington in the course of a few weeks, when I will have the pleasure of paying my respects to you and give all necessary information.

JAMES M. HUGHES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 21, 1849.

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

West Point

Jan 13th 1849

My dear Uncle,

The January examination is past, but I am not satisfied with my standing at all, I really think I should have been higher, and I am sure there are men above me who do not know near so much about the course as I do & they acknowlege it themselves. I stand 28th in Mathematics & 30th in Ethics and I can safely say that I have never neglected one lesson

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375 Because several sentence divisions in this letter are unclear, capital letters and periods have not been supplied.

376 Enclosure not found.

and have always known my tasks before I entered the section room, so you see uncle it was not my fault that I did not stand higher. The box which you and aunt were kind enough to send me has not arrived yet, but I received a letter from Adams & co saying it was at their office in New York and I expect it in a day or two, when it comes I will acknowledge its receipt. I have managed to keep out of debt so far, but I have just received orders for a new coat & a pair of winter pants, which will make me a few dollars in debt. They sell every thing here at past twice its value, and with board & washing \$24 a month is very little. I have delayed writing for some time in hopes that the box would arrive so you will excuse this letter's being late. Give my love to aunt Sallie and tell her that I am very much obliged to her for the trouble she took in procuring my things for me. I am also very much obliged to you for Gov. Marcys permit to receive them, thanks to you I will have no trouble getting them when they come. Remember me to all.

Your affectionate nephew

MARSHALL T. POLK

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 19, 1849; answered January 24, 1849.

FROM JOHN McKEON

New York

Jany. 14, 1849

Dear Sir,

This will be presented to you by my friend Mr Brady of this City. Mr. B is a gentleman who has won for himself a distinguished reputation amongst us for taking daguerotypes. The specimens he has in his possession exhibit the evidence of high artistic talent. He has taken some of our most prominent citizens. I hope you will be able to give him an opportunity of taking a likeness of yourself. He will remain in Washington for the session. Leaving out of consideration his merits as an artist you will find him a gentleman worthy of every kind attention.

JOHN MCKEON

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Delivered by Mathew B. Brady.

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY

Executive Department. Tallahassee, Florida.

January 16. 1849

Sir,

I have this day addressed a communication to the delegation in Congress, from this State, in relation to the Seminole Indians, still remaining within its limits.

I have represented to them, what I believe to be indispensably necessary to the safety of our fellow citizens in the Southern division of the State. That is, the removal of these savages beyond the Mississippi, or confining them within the limits assigned to them by Col. Worth. This may be done by some half dozen military posts, partially across the Peninsula, with a complement of not more than 250 privates under the command of non-commissioned officers and a few others of higher grade. I do most respectfully request that this may be done; and this request is made, from the conviction, that, without some such security, our Southern frontier may again be deluged in blood. Such a result to us is most obvious. These savages are not confined within their limits. They are thieves by

nature. In their Expeditions beyond their limits, they steal the property of the whites. They (the Whites) have hitherto been restrained from inflicting immediate punishment on them, from the hope that the General Government would put a stop to this encroachment on their rights. If these wrongs are not redressed by the Government, they will not hesitate much longer to redress them without the aid of Government. The consequences may be readily anticipated. I do then, in the name and on behalf of my fellow citizens and of humanity itself, most earnestly request that this matter may not be postponed.

[WILLIAM D. MOSELEY]

L likely in Oscar A. Myers's hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 27, 1849; from "Governor of Florida (tho' not signed)." TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

Washington City

Jany. 17th 1849

My public engagements have prevented an earlier reply to your letter of the 18th ultimo. The article to which you refer, which appeared in the "Union" Newspaper, shortly after you resigned your seat in the Senate in the summer of 1846, was the sole act of the Editor, as far as I know, and was certainly published without any agency of mine. I knew nothing of it, until I saw it in that paper. I regretted the publication of the article, and attributed it to the anxiety of Mr Ritchie to save the tariff-bill of 1846, and to the feeling of apprehension which, under the circumstances, he might very naturally entertain, that it might be defeated in consequence of your course. I disapproved its violence, and so express[e]d<sup>377</sup> myself at the time to yourself and others. You speak of the "Union," as, "your (my) official Organ," and say that the article referred to, "unatoned for, and unnoticed by the Editor since, has been erroneously considered by thousands as the approved, (perhaps authorized) condemnation of me and my character by the President himself," and you ask "Are you willing that this shall be the case?" I am not sensible of ever having done you wrong. If I was, no man would be more anxious promptly to repair the injury. For erroneous impressions drawn by others, I am not responsible. Mr Ritchie has long conducted a public journal, is his own judge of what is proper to appear in his paper, and is alone responsible for it. If by the designation "official Organ," which others as well as yourself have chosen to give to the "Union" Newspaper the idea is meant to be conveyed, that I supervise and direct its course, it is as I have often told yourself and others, a mistake. If by that designation, it be meant to convey the idea, that the "Union," has given to the measures and general policy of my administration, an uniform support, it is in that sense true, but this has been done upon the sole judgement and responsibility of the Editor. If because that paper happens to be published at the seat of Government and supports my administration, it is called my organ, or the organ of my administration, [I]<sup>378</sup> am surely not accountable for what appears in its columns. It can hardly be expected that the President shall be required to express his dissent to articles in a newspaper, whi[ch] do not meet his views, whether relating to individuals or to public measures. If it w[ere] so, the President

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377 Letter missing, light ink transfer.

378 Text here and below either absent or cut off side of page.

for his own protection, wou[ld] have to notice in an authorized form, any article which appeared in its columns, in which the facts assumed or the arguments used did not precisely correspond with hi[s] own views. This would make the Presi[dent] virtually the Editor of the paper, a vocati[on] incompatible with his official station, [. . .] which he would have no time to pursue. Where "reason is left free to combat error," as is the case in our country, no permanent injury can result to any citizen, whether in public or private life, from any abuse of the freedom of the press.

I differed widely with you in opinion, as you know, upon the Tariff Bill of 1846. Upon more than one occasion, I gave you my views upon the subject frankly, and without reserve, and you will remember how earnestly I endeavoured to convince you, of the great error, which in my judgement, you would commit, if you seperated yourself from the body of your political friends in Congress, and opposed its becoming a law. I had no agency in causing you to resign your seat in the Senate. On the contrary I endeavoured to prevent it and deeply regretted it. When you did resign I thought you had committed a fatal political error. That the convictions under which you acted were honest, though mistaken, I did not doubt, and this opinion I freely expressed at the time to yourself and several of your friends; indeed to all with whom I conversed on the subject. I had known you from our college days, an[d] at the time of your resignation, and the appearance of the article in the "Union," complained of, I believed you to be my friend an I certainly was yours. Several months after that time, from the correspondence which took place between us, in reference to my contemplated visit to the University of North Carolina,<sup>379</sup> I had a right to believe that these relations remained unchanged. If any thing has occurred to change them, of which you alone must be the judge, it has been by no act of mine.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C.

FROM ETHER SHEPLEY

Portland [Maine]<sup>380</sup>

January 17. 1849

Allow me to introduce to your favourable notice John Neal, Esquire, of Portland, an estimable and highly interesting gentleman in social life; and distinguished as an author, a man of talent, and of taste.

ETHER SHEPLEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by John Neal. From Polk's AE: received January 27, 1849.

FROM HENRY S. WHEATON

Coleman's Hotell Washington D.C.

18th January 1849

Sir

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379 Polk to Haywood, April 20, 1847; Polk to Haywood, April 29, 1847; Haywood to Polk, May 1, 1847; Polk to Haywood, May 1, 1847; Haywood to Polk, May 8, 1847.

380 State identified from Polk's AE.

At the suggestion of our Board of Trustees and also, of several members of the Senate & of the House of Representatives, I have the honour herewith of presenting the claims of our University to the charity of the public. It is our hope that we may receive the aid of the President, the Vice President, the members of the Cabinet & the majority of the representatives of the people, and, that your Excellency will head the list for Washington. We aim in our military studies to be equal to West Point—in our other studies to take the highest rank among the Educational Institutions of our Country—to give our young men such a development of moral, intellectual & physical power as shall enable them to discharge most faithfully all their duties to their Country & the world.

Hoping your Excellency's favorable consideration of the matter herewith submitted . . .

HENRY S. WHEATON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received January 18, 1849.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Near Nashville

Jan'y 19th 1849

Dear Sir

From your letter of the 10th & what I see in the Telegraphic accounts it is now useless to say any thing about the appointment to run the boundary under the Mexican Treaty—as to the adjudication of the claims against Mexico, the Law has not yet passed. & if it is, it will probably be too late in the Session for you to make the appointments without subjecting yourself to the charge of indelicacy, thereby laying a foundation for a plausible pretext for removing the incumbents. If these were prominent politicians hot from the recent canvass like Weller & myself, the guillotine would be almost certain. But if not removed we should stand like post-mortem relics of a past administration, lingering out, with longing anxiety for office their allotted time.

My pride revolts & if I could not serve under & with my party, I would not survive it & hold over if I could under my enemies.

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 27, 1849; "Ansd. Feby. 5th 1849" (Polk refers erroneously to his reply of February 6); "This letter was written in a bad humour &, is in bad taste, for which I had given no cause."

TO GWINN HARRIS HEAP

Washington City

January 19th 1849

Dr. Sir

I received on the 8th Instant, your note of that date, together with "the accompanying table-slab, made of marble collected among the ruins of Carthage," which you inform me your father Dr. P.<sup>381</sup> D. Heap, has requested you to present for my acceptance. The fact stated, that the material of which the slab is composed, was taken from the spot, where once stood the famous City of Carthage; the admirable skill displayed in the workmanship;

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381 Someone, possibly Polk, wrote a mark over "P" after Polk made his press copy. This may have been an attempt to correct Samuel D. Heap's first initial.

and the design of the American Eagle wrought in the centre, encircled by thirty stars, representing the States of our Union, give to it a peculiar interest.

I request that you will return my thanks to Dr. Heap, and assure him, that I will give it a place in my parlour, and carefully preserve it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NN. Probably addressed locally. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

Washington City

Jany. 22nd 1849

My Dear Sir:

Before I received your letter of the 29th ultimo, I had written to you and had anticipated the request you make, that I would give you my advice, whether you had better resign on the 4th of March, or await your recal, should it be the pleasure of the President Elect to recal you.<sup>382</sup> It was, and is, my decided opinion, that you should not voluntarily relinquish your mission. In my letter I assigned the reasons for this opinion. I may add that you have been eminently successful in all the negotiations entrusted to you, and the whole country, of all parties, are abundantly satisfied that an abler and more faithful Representative could not succeed you. Your postal Treaty, and your successful efforts to procure the release of American citizens imprisoned in Ireland, are very popular throughout the country, and your recal could be attributed to no other cause, than that you belong to a different political party, than that of the President elect. That the next Administration will be proscriptive, notwithstanding the protestations to the contrary before the election I do not doubt; still I doubt whether you will be disturbed, at all events during the early part of the next term. Should I be mistaken in this, your recal could do you no possible injury.

I thank you for the Mecklenburg papers which you seent to me.<sup>383</sup> Gov. Swain President of the University of N. Carolina, I see has communicated to the Governor of that state, a letter from you, and a portion, (perhaps all) the papers, which you sent to me. The Governor laid them before the Legislature and your letter to Mr Swain has been published. Your agency in bringing these papers to light has rendered you very popular in N. Carolina and indeed in all the Southern states. The main paper connected with the proceedings of the people of Mecklenburg you have not given. It is the formal Declaration of Independence itself, which was adopted on the 20th May 1775. This paper was forwarded to the General Congress at Philadelphia, by Capt. Jack, a person employed specially to bear it. Governor Martin in his despatch to the Home Government, which you have sent to me refers to it. In his Proclamation issued I believe in the autumn of 1775, when the Governor was on board the ship, to sail for England, denounces it as treasonable. The Resolves which you have sent to me, were passed a few weeks after, the formal Declaration of Independence was made. This Declaration was doubtless transmitted or carried in person to England by Governor Martin. If it is to be found in the Brittish Archives, it will be conclusive evidence of the fact

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382 Polk to Bancroft, January 5, 1849.

383 Polk refers to the enclosures in Bancroft to Polk, December 29, 1848; see Polk to Charles Manly, February 2, 1849, in which Polk enclosed them.

of such Declaration having been made, a fact, which Mr Jefferson more than doubted. I dislike to trouble you further on the subject, but must request that you will cause a further search to be made for the Declaration of May 20<sup>th</sup> 1775, which is the main-paper and the leading proceeding of the patriotic people of Mecklenburg. To aid you in any further researches, you may have it in your power to make, I enclose you extracts of two letters, which I have received on the subject from William H. Winder Esqr. of Philadelphia.<sup>384</sup> Mr Winder is the son of the late Genl. Winder of Baltimore, and that you may understand the reason of the interest he takes in the matter, I inform you that his mother was a Polk descended from the same stock with myself. He is preparing a genealogical Tree of the Polk family, and as several of its members, participated actively in the proceedings in Mecklenburg, he desires to shew their connection with, the interesting events, which took place in Mecklenburg. To me the subject is peculiarly interesting, for though the vile slander which was heaped upon the memory of my Grandfather, in the Presidential canvass of 1844, has been sufficiently refuted by other testimony, yet every thing which establishes the authenticity of the Mecklenburg proceedings, will tend, still more clearly to put to shame the revilers of his memory. I have now in my possession a printed copy of the Journal of "The Provincial Congress" of S.C. of [which]<sup>385</sup> held at Charles-Town in June 1775, of which Ezekiel Polk (my Grandfather) was a member. By that Congress he was appointed a Captain, and I have in my possession his original commission on par[c]hment,<sup>386</sup> under which he served in the Revolutionary War. He represented a District in "The Provincial Congress," of S.C., adjoining Mecklenburg, and was present, at Charlotte, & was among those who adopted "the Declaration of Independance" on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1775. The copy of the Journal which I have, was sent to me by an aged man in N. Carolina since I have been President, who stated to me in a letter which accompanied it, that he had found it among the old papers of his father, who was also a member of the Provincial Congress.<sup>387</sup> He sent it to me as containing a conclusive refutation of the slander, which the recklessness of party had invented against the memory of Ezekiel Polk, for the purpose of injuriously affecting his Grandson, when a candidate for the Presidency. The copy of the Journal which I have, is a small printed pamphlet, & is the only one I have ever heard of. As it is probable that but few copies were printed, it may be the only copy now to be found. It is a curious as well as a valuable document. It may possibly be of use to you, in the further preparation of your history, and if so, I will furnish you with the original or an exact copy of it, should you desire it.

With kind regards to Mrs. Bancroft . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Published in BP, pp. 106–8.

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

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384 Winder to Polk, September 23, 1848; Winder to Polk, January 11, 1849.

385 Polk struck out the bracketed word.

386 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

387 Isaac T. Avery to Polk, January 21, 1846.

Washington City

Jany. 24th 1849

Dear Marshall

I have just examined the Official Report of the Semi-Annual examination of the cadets, of the Military Academy, and find that you stand, in your class No. 28. in Mathematics, No. 3[0].<sup>388</sup> in English Grammar, and No. 26 in "general merit.["]"<sup>389</sup> I deem it proper to say to you, that I consider your standing reputable and I do not complain of it, though I would have been much gratified if it had been better. I hope you will be studious and attentive to all your duties, and thus secure for yourself a higher No. at the next examination. I am satisfied that if you resolve to do so, you can obtain a better standing. The Report of your "conduct," for the month of December which has been made to me by the Engineer Department,<sup>390</sup> represents you to have received 8. Demerit mks. This is a decided improvement over the preceding month. I hope that your "conduct" Report for the future will present that few Demerits, if not a clean sheet. Nothing is easier than to avoid them altogether. This I aver from experience, for during my whole College course I was never charged with the neglect of a single duty. The same thing I believe may be said of your father. It is only necessary that you should come to a fixed determination in your own mind, in order to avoid the Demerits altogether. From the last Report sent to me, your whole number of Demerits since the commencement of the Academic year, 68. Upon the whole I am pretty well dis[sat]isfied<sup>391</sup> with your progress thus far, and the remarks I have made, are made in the hope that you will see the necessity of devoting yourself with increased diligence to your duties.

I have recived your letter of the 13th Instant. When the Box, wich was forwarded to you by Adams & Co's Express, reaches you, you must acknowledge its receipt. You must avoid going in debt and live upon your pay. The regulations of the Academy, which prohibit a Cadet, from receivg money or any other supplies from his parents or from any other person, without special permission, are stringent and very properly so. The articles which were forwarded to you by your aunt, would not have been sent, if it had not been apprehended, that you might not have taken a proper supply with you when you entered the Academy. Hereafter you must took<sup>392</sup> to economy and make your pay support you.

Your Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y. Published in DYF, pp. 67-68.

FROM GEORGE W. THOMPSON

Wheeling Va

Jan 24" 1849

My Dear Sir.

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388 Number may, alternately, be "36."

389 Closing quotation mark missing.

390 Report and cover letter, if any, probably from Joseph G. Totten, not found.

391 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

392 Polk probably meant to write "look."



Some of your goods arrived to day at this place on their way to Nashville, and I regret to inform you that in passing the mountains the waggon containing them upset and broke the boxes so that four of them were open or had to be opened from their damaged condition upon their arrival here. All of the paintings however I am happy to say are said to be entirely uninjured. The frames around your own and Mrs Polk's portraits are very much injured, and from what I could gather may be considered as destroyed. The frame around the battle-piece, supposed to be Chapultepec is also much injured. The engraving of the scene on the cost<sup>393</sup> of Africa has a rent, and some of the glasses covering the pictures are broken. A box of books and papers was also split. I called down at Messers Black & Knox's as soon as I heard of the matter but they had had every thing repacked. I doubt not but that all has been done by them which could be done to protect you and secure the safe transmission of the goods from this point. The damages assessed by the Board of Trade is twenty five dollars.

It is a matter of gratulation that the paintings may all be considered safe, for these if injured or destroyed could not be easily restored, more especially as they may well be supposed to derive peculiar interest from the circumstances of their execution and their connection with your administration—an administration which will have more character in a century than it has to day, the solid renown of which will increase, as the future unfolds the value of the great gifts you have given to our country.

Be pleased to remember me to Mrs Polk, and say to her that her representative was very much admired and more for the character in the likeness than the work of the artist. Those who had never seen Mrs Polk were struck with the qualities of mind and character which the portrait exhibited and I doubt not they would like to have a rival worthy of her at the Mansion.

Permit me to thank you for the copy of your last message. It was suited to the time and occasion. It was a resume of the democratic faith, associated with our past history, connected with the active interests and feelings of the present, and presenting the only code of principles around which any party of republicans can safely unite for the future. When I thank you for that document I but convey to you the universal sentiment of the great mass of the people.

I am devoting what spare time I can seize to the execution of my historical work, but it will require a long time for its completion.

GEO. W. THOMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered January 27, 1849.

FROM ELISHA WHITTLESEY

Washington

January 24th 1849

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393 Thompson probably meant to write "coast."

I will call tomorrow at 12. O.C[lock].M[eridian].<sup>394</sup> and accompany the President to the Washington National Monument. Some other members of the Board of Managers will be there, and if equally agreeable, we will walk.

ELISHA WHITTLESEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received January 24, 1849; "Invites me to visit the Washington Monument."

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

Downing Street.

26 Jan. 1849

My dear Sir,

waiting for Lord P.

Here I am, after a very hard day's work, waiting at the Foreign Office for Lord Palmerston. The Irish business, I thought, well & finally settled; but as Mr Buchanan has reopened it, I most earnestly hope you will be satisfied with my protesting note which is rather a declaration or remonstrance. If you are satisfied, let it appear on the public record in Buchanan's note.

The Mecklenburg papers you will have received.<sup>395</sup> I hope they are what you wanted. And now can you send me an opinion on what I consider by far the most important matter in discussion, the repeal of the Navigation Laws. I have been diligently pursuing the subject, & hope almost to get a treaty into some shape or well under-weigh before the 4th of March.

The ministry are alarmed about the coming debate. They ask me what have you to give for our colonial trade? They state our separate states are as colonies. We ought to allow them to trade from port to port on our shores, if they allow us to trade from Kingdom to their colonies. In a word, as the offer now stands it is abrogation of the Navigation laws with Great Britain for all but the coasting trade, & abrogation of them altogether coasting trade & all for the colonies. This, I think, would do away with the colonial system in toto, & make the colonies virtually independent. It would open to our people all the trade on Lake Ontario, & all the trade down the St. Lawrence. Think of this & write me a letter about it. I meant to have written to Mr Buchanan about it today, but have had no time. And pray say to Mr Johnson I wanted very much to send him a private letter, but I have not had a moment.

This [render]<sup>396</sup> of the Navigation Acts is of the utmost importance; and will be a most creditable thing to us all, to your administration if we can get it into shape during your presidency.

As to resigning I have not decided yet. I have many things which press upon me strongly & require my early return to America.

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394 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

395 Enclosures in Bancroft to Polk, December 29, 1848; see Polk to Charles Manly, February 2, 1849, in which Polk enclosed them.

396 Word uncertain, ink blot.

As to California unless you take some steps, it will be filled with fugitives from Europe. Emigrants are rushing there, not from this island only, but from the continent. It is a bad thing to admit foreigners before our Govt. is established. English capital & English adventurers will bring the gold to England.

Best regards to Mrs. Polk.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

Washington

26 January 1849

Dear Sir/

Colonel Weller informs me that it was your desire not to have the approval of the nominations made by him; but to leave this altogether to him upon his own responsibility. I prepared the instructions upon this point, as I understood, by your express direction. It is not too late yet to change the instructions if you so desire; & I should be glad if you would inform me of your wishes on this subject.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received January 26, 1849; "Relates to the number of employees & the manner of their appointment, to run the Mexican Boundary line./I saw Mr Buchanan & arrested further proceedings, until a further conference can be had with Col. Weller."

FROM DAVID R. MITCHELL

Baggett Navarro County Texas

January 27th 1849

Dr Sir

I drop you a few lines to let you know that I am still allive and well, hoping you are enjoying the same blessing. I have thought for some time that I would address you concerning an appointment or a District to survey in Callifornia. I have served here two years and could give any sort of a recomendation you might ask but as we were raised boyes together and you know me as well as any person dose. Callifornia is a new wild country and a person ought to be paid for going there at this time. I have neaver asked you for any thing before. You could benifit an oald friend. I will wright to my friend Judge Pillsbury on the subject. There is nothing in this state worth your attention. The country is improveing verry fast. The finest land in the world can be bought at one dollar pr acre. It has been verry healthy this year untill recently the colery has broke out at Houston and several other places. Great excitement about the Goald mines in Callifornia and a great many going. The Indians have commenced stealing agane on the frontier. Hoping you are enjoying good health I remain . . . .

D. R. MITCHELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and forwarded to Nashville; marked "Private." Postmarked Baggett, Tex., January 30, and Washington City, March 13.

TO GEORGE W. THOMPSON

Washington City

Jany. 27th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I am greatly obliged to you for your letter of the 24th Instant. The accident which happened to the wagon containing my Boxes, was most unfortunate, and must have been the result of culpable negligence. My greatest solicitude now is, to know, that my manuscript papers, which were distributed in several of the Boxes, and some of which were of a confidential character &, to me most valuable, are safe. You inform me that "a box of books & papers was split." I hope if any of the manuscripts were exposed to view, that they fell into honourable hands, and that they were safely repacked. From the character of Messrs Black & Knox I have no doubt, so far as they are concerned, they were in safe hands. My only apprehension is, that others, who may have been curious, had access to them in their exposed condition. I regret that Messrs. Black & Knox, when they received the goods in their damaged condition, permitted any part of them to be exposed to the public view, but doubtless they saw no impropriety in it. I fear too, that persons may have had access to the contents of the Boxes, at the place where the accident happened to the wagon, and before they came into the possession of Messrs. Black & Knox. My papers were put up rather loosely in the Boxes supposing that they would be perfectly safe, until I opened them myself at Nashville. They were the accumulation of my four years term; were extensive, & too heavy to be carried with my personal baggage on my return to Tennessee. I have heard nothing from Messrs Black & Knox. I beg that you will do me the favour to see them, and ascertain from them, at what place the accident occurred; whose the wagon was, and whether any of the manuscript papers were exposed at the time of the accident, & before he reached Wheeling. Though the Boxes contained other articles, of value, my greatest anxiety is to prove that all my papers are safe.

Thanking you again for your kind letter . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Wheeling, Va., and marked "(Private)."

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department,

January 29th 1849

Sir:

In obedience to your directions,<sup>397</sup> I have the honor to transmit statements, giving the information called for by the Resolution of the House of Representatives of the 20th of December 1848.<sup>398</sup> These statements show the amount of moneys & property received during the late war with the Republic of Mexico, at the different ports of entry, or in any

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397 Polk's letter, if any, not found.

398 Enclosures, not found, consisted of a chart of money collected by U.S. Navy officers at occupied Mexican ports and two charts of that money's disbursement. The first two charts total the money collected at \$131,835.79; the third gives this figure as \$131,835.77 and, near the end, notes an additional \$66,683.55 that navy officers received from the U.S. Army's collectors at Veracruz and Tampico. See the charts in House Executive Document No. 47, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 110–20.

other way within her limits, by Naval Officers; they also show the manner in which the same has been expended, so far as settlements have been made.

Of the contributions collected in the Pacific by Naval officers, no account has yet been received & adjusted. The principal collections were made at Mazatlan, by the Purser of the *Razee*, Independence. His accounts will not be adjusted until the return of that ship to the United States, sometime in the coming Spring. I have no reason to suppose that any other collections of any considerable amount were made by Naval officers in the Pacific.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, in John Etheridge's hand. DNA-RG 45. Published in House Executive Document No. 47, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 109.

FROM HUGH P. NEILSON

Bolivar Hardeman cty. Tennesse

Jany 29th 1849

Dear Sir

A poor boy, one who has accumulated something by unceasing industry and selfdenial addresses you.

An answer to two or three questions which I am about to propose will make or mar (if such an expression may be used) my isolated fortunes.

I have some three hundred dollars, and also, the California mania. Would you go, an answer to this question affirmatively or negatively will be to me; not even my parents are cognizant of this letter, and no one besides myself is going from this place.

To speak candidly, I can't give credence to the "Democratic" papers even, however zealous in procuring the latest official intelligence, however candid the enthusiasm which establishes beyond doubt the fact that a new Golconda and an exploded Eldorado have been discovered in California.

The misfortunes of my Father, the poverty of his family have taught me to "look before I leap." My little all will be at stake if I go to California, consequently I wish to have an assurance from a reliable source that gold in large<sup>399</sup> quantities is found there.

This letter is from an insig[nif]icant<sup>400</sup> person I say myself. I am only 19 years of age am poor and could not injure you if you treated with silent contempt my epistle yet I pray that you may appreciate an intense desire to become rich if nothing else when the affluence and hauteur of relatives have created the desire.

I have energy and a good constitution and can stand the trip if any one else can.

If you answer this please do so at your first leisure. I am anxios to start early if at all.

HUGH P. NEILSON

P.S. Mrs Caldwell is in good health and in Bolivar. James has gone to Arkansas with his negroes. H.P.N

ANS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received February 15, 1849.

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399 Neilson emphasizes "large" with a double underline. In all other instances, italics represent a single underline.

400 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

FROM GEORGE W. THOMPSON

Wheeling Va

Jan 31" 1849

Dear Sir.

In reply to your letter of the 27" inst, I have the pleasure of saying, that from Mr Black I learned that the two boxes containing your books and papers, although split and injured when they arrived here, did not exhibit the slightest evidence of having been opened or that any of the contents had been touched or that any of them could have well escaped from the boxes. The principal box, as I had observed myself, which was said to contain books and papers was considerably split, but Mr Black informs me as the younger Mr Knox did at the time, that every thing was safe in it, and it was made entirely secure for further transportation. Mr Black seems very confident that every thing in that box is entirely safe. The contents were not seen by any one and I think you need not feel any solicitude as to their privacy and safety. From all I can learn you may rest quite satisfied that you will find all right in relation to the books & papers.

The waggoners name is Joseph Sumption. The accident is said to have occurred by the breaking down of the hind wheel of the waggon, which occurred as he stated in the neighborhood of a toll gate, where, I could not learn; that the goods were unloaded, the waggon righted up and re-loaded at the time.

The only boxes exposed to view, as to their contents, were those having the portraits and pictures and these were exposed for the purpose of procuring the assessment of damages, which I doubt not, Messrs Black & Knox felt themselves called upon, professionally, to do, by the condition of the boxes. The gentleman say that nothing else was exposed to view or handled except the box containing the copying press, which was only opened and seemed safe and instantly reclosed. No books or papers were touched and the boxes containing them secured against the injuries incurred, so as to make them safe for the balance of the way. On the 29" inst they were shipped on the Steamer Geneva direct for Nashville.

Should you send any more goods before you leave, if you will inform me of the probable time of their arrival here I will, if possible, see to them.

I fear I shall not be able to see you on your return through this place as I will probably be absent on the circuit in discharge of the duties of my office, as my case will not be reached before that time. Should I be at home I will be pleased to see Mrs Polk & yourself and in my absence Mrs Thompson will be at home.

GEO. W. THOMPSON

[P.S.] Having leisure since writing the foregoing, I have seen Col Knox and the porter who aided in unloading the waggon, and I am still more satisfied in the conclusion, that every thing of the kind you refer to is safe. The box I spoke of split between the ends of the hoops, which did not meet around it; Col Knox opened the box & found the folds of the packing paper undisturbed and reclosed and secured it. This would seem to make the conclusion satisfactory. Geo W. Thompson

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered February 2, 1849.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department,  
February 1st 1849  
Sir:

Agreeably to your direction,<sup>401</sup> I required the Bureau of Construction, Equipment & Repair to collect & communicate the information called for by the Resolution of the Senate of the 15th of January ultimo, in regard to the use of J. B. Emerson's patented spiral propellor on vessels of the United States.

I have the honor to transmit a report from C. H. Haswell, Esq, Engineer in Chief of the Navy, which contains the information asked for in a satisfactory form.<sup>402</sup> I am not aware, that Mr. Emerson's invention has been used in the Navy. No use has been made of a propeller in the Navy, except on the three vessels named in Mr. Haswell's report, and that contemplated on the new Steamer "San Jacinto" yet unfinished.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, in John Etheridge's hand. DNA-RG 45. Published in "Report of Charles H. Haswell, Esq., Engineer-in-Chief, United States Navy, in regard to the use of Mr. J. B. Emerson's Propeller in the service of the Government of the United States," Journal of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts, 3rd ser., 17 (May 1849), p. 291.

TO CHARLES MANLY

Washington City

February 2nd 1849

Mr Bancroft the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to Great Britain, has recently procured and transmitted to me, copies of several documents, found in the British archives, illustrative of the Revolutionary history of North Carolina.<sup>403</sup>

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401 Polk's letter, if any, not found.

402 Enclosure not found.

403 Polk refers to the enclosures, all from 1775, in George Bancroft to Polk, December 29, 1848: James Wright to William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, June 20, in which Georgia's governor enclosed the Mecklenburg Resolves to the British secretary of state for the colonies; those May 31 resolves, as published in the Charles Town South-Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal of June 13; minutes of a June 25 meeting of North Carolina governor Josiah Martin and a royal council about disloyal activities in Wilmington and in Mecklenburg County, N.C. ; Martin to Legge, June 30, offering "to raise a Battalion"; and minutes of a July 18 meeting of Martin and a royal council about disloyal activities in Mecklenburg, Bladen, and other counties. Polk enclosed them herein to Manly bound in a volume dedicated, by Polk, "James K. Polk/from his friend George Bancroft/London 19. December 1848/Presented to the Governor of North Carolina With the Respects of/James K. Polk/Washington February 2nd 1849." Enclosed volume not found. In the copy of the volume that Polk kept, titled Mecklenburg Declaration of Independance, are also bound two printed pamphlets previously acquired by the president: The Declaration of Independence by the Citizens of Mecklenburg County, on the Twentieth Day of May, 1775, with Accompanying Documents, and the Proceedings of the Cumberland Association (Raleigh, N.C. : Lawrence & Lemay, 1831), and Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congress, begun and holden at Charles-Town, in South-Carolina, on Thursday the First Day of June, 1775, and continued,

Shortly after receiving them, I submitted them to the perusal of the Hon. J. R. J Daniel of the House of Representatives. Mr Daniel informs me that he addressed your Excellency on the subject, and learns from your answer, that the documents referred to, are not among your public archives, and that the possession of them would be interesting to the people of the state.<sup>404</sup>

As a native of North Carolina, I take a very natural interest in whatever may add to the just renown of that honour[able]<sup>405</sup> Commonwealth, and it affords me pleas[ure] to present to your Excellency, the accompany[ing] bound Volume containing the manuscript copies received from Mr Bancroft . These official papers as your Excellency will perceive were transmitted to the Brittish Government in June 1775, by the Colonial Governors of Georgia and North Carolina ( Wright and Martin ) and confirm and establish beyond all question, (if indeed there could before have been any doubt) the fact, that the people of the County of Mecklenburg formally and solemnly renounced all allegiance to the Brittish Crown, and established a Provisional Government for themselves in the month of May 1775. These papers establish the further fact, that the same patriotic spirit and love of liberty which prompted the proceedings in Mecklenburg, shortly afterwards animated the people of New Hanover, Bladen and other parts of the colony.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Raleigh, N.C. Published in Raleigh Register, February 10, 1849; Fayetteville Observer, February 13, 1849; Asheville Democrat, May 15, 1890; and other North Carolina newspapers of February 1849 and May 1890.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

[Washington City]<sup>406</sup>

2d Feby. .49

Sir—

A party of Menominees are here, and must, as they say, see their great Father—the President. I have engaged to come over with them at twelve if that is a convenient time for you. Will you send me a reply verbally, by the messenger who bears this to you?

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by courier. From Polk's AE: received February 2, 1849; "Notifies me that a Delegation of the Menomonee Indians will wait on me at 12. O.Clock this day. Saw the Indians at that hour."

TO GEORGE W. THOMPSON

Washington City

Feby. 2nd 1849

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from Day to Day, unto the 22d inclusive [Charles Town?: Peter Timothy?, 1775?]. Ls, copies, possibly in Samuel L. Harris's hand; Ds, copies, possibly in Samuel L. Harris's hand; ADS, copy; and PDs. DLC–JKP.

404 Correspondence between Polk and John R. J. Daniel, if any, not found.

405 Letter or letters here and below cut off page or missing due to a light ink transfer.

406 Place identified through content analysis.



My Dear Sir:

I thank you for your letter of the 31st in answer to mine of the 27th ultimo. I am now perfectly satisfied that my books and papers, which were in the boxes which were injured, by the accident which happened to the wagon containing them are safe. After I wrote to you my Private Secretary (Col. Walker) received a letter from Messrs Black & Knox giving him information of the accident. They inform him that the wagoner (whom they represent to be an honest and very poor man) requested that a part of the damages which had been assessed against him might be remitted and refunded to him. I immediately directed Col. Walker to enclose to Messrs Black & Knox the whole amount of the damages, (\$25.00) and request them to hand it to the wagoner and he did so. The accident may have been unavoidable, and I was unwilling that the poor wagoner should lose his wages in consequence of it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Wheeling, Va .

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Berlin.

Feby. 4h 1849

My dear Sir,

As this is the last packet which will carry a letter from this place, which can reach you before the 4h of March, pardon me for asking a decision upon the application of my son John, who has been so much flattered with the idea of entering the Navy as a Midshipman, by Capt Paulding & other officers, that he is almost crazy about it.

I am sorry that the crisis at Frankfort has not terminated in time for your administration to have the benefit of the Treaty which will follow, if the new German Constitution goes into effect. But affairs there still remain doubtful and perplexing, and the Treaty will probably pass into other hands than mine. I sent Mr. Fay with Com. Parker and he has not yet returned from Frankfort, but the latter returns to America on the 10h inst, with impression which he will communicate to you.

Your letter to the King in behalf of Baron Gerolt<sup>407</sup> is not yet presented: because the Minister of Foreign affaires has not yet answered my application for an audience. I cannot conceive a motive for refusing this audience, but the delay seems to imply that there is some importance attached to the circumstance, which I may not understand. I refer to it that you & Mr. Buchanan may notice more particularly what passes with Baron von Rœ#nne.

Count Badene has the office copy of the letter, and he has intimated that it was not customary as a matter of etiquette, to go through the formality of an audience with the King, on such subjects. I have desired him to say so in writing, and if he does I shall not insist on presenting it in person: but unless he puts the application on this ground I shall be bound to ask further instructions from the Department.

I give you joy that the day is so near when you will be relieved from all such vexations, and when you can look from the bosom of your retirement without solicitude upon the

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407 Letter to Frederick William IV, Prussia's king, not found.

petty formalities of office. May you & Mrs. Polk have a long life of happiness is the sincere prayer of . . .

A J DONELSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From John Miller's AES: received at London February 7, 1849. From Polk's AE: received March 1, 1849.

FROM CHARLES MANLY

Executive Department, N.C., Raleigh,  
February 5, 1849

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 2d inst., transmitting a Volume of Manuscripts, copied from the British Colonial Documents, procured and sent to you by Mr. G. Bancroft, U.S. Minister to Great Britain.<sup>408</sup>

This Book I have deposited in our Public Archives; and on behalf of the People of the State, I take the liberty of presenting their thanks to yourself and to Mr. Bancroft, for these interesting Records, establishing beyond all cavil or doubt, the historical fact, that the People of the County of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, were the first in the United States to declare their Independence of the Crown and Government of Great Britain.

CHAS. MANLY

PL. Published in Raleigh (N.C.) Register, February 10, 1849. Also published in Fayetteville Observer, February 13, 1849; other North Carolina newspapers of February 1849; and Ashville (N.C.) Democrat, May 15, 1890.

TO AARON V. BROWN

Washington City  
Feby. 6th 1849

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 19th ultimo, and now regret that I made to you the suggestion contained in my letters of the 9th and 10th ultimo, for surely nothing was further from my thoughts, than to say or do any thing which could cause your "pride" to "revolt," or to give you either pain or offence. I do not at present reply to some other remarks in your letter, which I am sure, upon further reflection, you must see are unjust towards me, and to the motives of sincere regard which induced me to write to you. Our common friend Majr. Graham, to whom I showed my letter of the 10th, concurred with me in opinion, and approved the suggestion made in that letter. Your letter addressed to me last summer<sup>409</sup> greatly surprised me. That letter reached me near the close of the Session of Congress, when I was much occupied in the performance of my public duties; still I might have answered it, and given a full, and as I think a satisfactory explanation of all the matters referred to in it. This I thought it best to do in person, as I fully intended, when we should meet. For the same reason I postpone for the present a reply to that letter. You and I have been old and constant friends, and I am not conscious of ever having given you just cause

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408 Enclosure in Polk to Manly, February 2, 1849, and, previously, in George Bancroft to Polk, December 29, 1848.

409 Brown to Polk, July 12 and c. July 25, 1848.

of displeasure. I am unwilling to believe it possible that these relations, which have so long existed between us, can now be changed. Certainly they will not be, by any act of mine.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM EZEKIEL P. MCNEAL

Bolivar [Tenn.]<sup>410</sup>

Feby 6, 1849

Dear Sir

I have to your Credit on account of Rents for 1848. & collections made for Land Sold in this County & Madison, about Six hundred & Sixty five Dollars (\$665.80). What disposition do you wish me to make of it. I can send it to Nashville or you can draw on me for that amount. My annual statemnt of receipts & disbursements I will render you when you return to Tennessee.

What time do you expect to reach Nashville or Columbia. Will you visit Your Plantation next Spring. If you do we hope you will take this place in your route and spend a day or to with your frends & relatives, and that you may be accompanied by Mrs. Polk—to whom please present my respects.

E. P. MCNEAL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 19, 1849; answered February 20, 1849.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>411</sup>

Feb 8the 1849

Deare Sir

I nough tak the oppitunity of righting you a few lins concerning your plantation and People. We are all well at this time. Evy has lost hir youngest child by the name of Luchos dyed about 27 of Last month. Barbra has a child Bourned the 21 of Last Month. Hir child gose by the name of Elisy.

Sir we have hade a great del of wet wether and it continues on. The waters corses heare has bin vary high maks somewhat aganst the farmers though we are trying to dough the best we cane. We are clearing & Ploughing fixing for a crope making the somer clothing.

The stock all Lucks well at this time<sup>412</sup> the stocks Hogs Lucks well. I have settled all the debts aganst the Plantation including the taxes.

I saugh Mr J. T. Leigh a few days sinse. He inform me that had got a leter frome the sherrife of carolton stating that he had got Judgment on the act counts<sup>413</sup> Due you thar for haris<sup>414</sup> hire But had not collect enny mony. Yet sir I have collected some of your Blacksmithing act counts Done heare last yeare and have got the Promas of some More

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410 State identified from postmark and Polk's AE.

411 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

412 New sentence may begin before or after "at this time."

413 Here and below, Mairs probably meant to write "accounts."

414 Mairs meant to write "Harry's," referring to Long Harry.

so sone as the People git returns frome Ther coten. GilBert Left heare about the 18 of Last Month. I Exspect he has made way for Tennessee. I have nothing More of intrest only remane . . . .

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 23, 1849; "Relates to my Private business."

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Berlin.

Feby 12h 1849

My dear Sir,

I have stated in my despatch to the Department the substance of my interview with the King when presenting your letter in behalf of Baron Gerolt.<sup>415</sup> It was most gratifying to yourself personally as well as to our Country. No certain promise was given to restore Baron Gerolt to the Diplomatic service, but the King declared that he had a high opinion of his merits, and valued highly the testimonial he possessed from you.

A J DONELSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and forwarded to Nashville; marked "Private" on the cover. From John Miller's AES: received at London February 26, 1849. Postmarked New York City, March 25, and Washington City, March 27. From Polk's AE: received April 6, 1849.

TO JANE KNOX POLK

Washington City

Feby. 14th 1849

Dear Mother:

It has been more than four years since I left Tennessee. They have been years of unceasing labour and anxiety, and of high public responsibility. I am heartily rejoiced that my Presidential term is so near its close. I am sure that I will enjoy the quiet of retirement and the rest which I so much need. I expect to leave Washington for Tennessee on the 6th of March, taking the Southern route, by the way of Charleston and New Orleans, and will probably reach Nashville about the 25th of March. We will make but a very short stop at Nashville, and proceed at once to Columbia, where I hope to find you in the enjoyment of good health. My own health and that of my household continue to be good.

I write simply, to apprise you of my movements at the close of my term.

Your affectionate Son

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn. Published in MSCP, p. 119.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Near Nashville

Feby 15th 1849

Dear Sir

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415 Letter to Frederick William IV not found.

I this morning recd. yours of the 6th Inst. after I had despatched one to Cave Johnson on the subject on which yours is written. It is not possible for you to be more unwilling than I am for any thing to occur calculated to mar that friendship to which you refer as having so long existed between us. To avoid writing any more about it & thereby keep the avenues of friendship the wider open until your return & an opportunity for a fuller understanding of each other's views & feelings, I prefer refering you to that letter, with the assurances that if in aught I have written to him I have done you injustice or wrong of any sort, I shall at all times be more than ready & willing to repair it. I am free to admit that I may not have always been sufficiently aware of the embarrassments which have surrounded you, whilst I think your own candor must also allow that you may not have sufficiently appreciated the trying difficulties & perplexities through which I have had to pass during your absence from the State. I think if you will refer to my letter<sup>416</sup> you will find the words which you have marked as a quotation, used not in reference to the position indicated in your letter—not to the offer of that position, for whilst I felt bound to decline it, I certainly did not intend to take exceptions to the tender. But in giving my reasons for declining it I allude to the probability of removal by the new President—then if I escaped the guillotine, I referred to the odious light in which I might be viewed in the City by the new comers, who would look upon me as a sort of spy, holding me therefore at a distance & making my residence in the city any thing but agreeable either to me or my family. It was in tracing out these disagreeable consequences as reasons for declining your offer that I think I used those expressions—it was certainly only in that way that I intended their application—for I did not suppose you had taken time to trace out these matters or to consider much, if at all, these points of personal sensitiveness to which acceptance might expose me.

Regretting of course that any thing should have occurred to make such a correspondence as this necessary for the first time in our lives. . . .

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 27, 1849.

TO WALTER T. COLQUITT

Washington City

Feb. 17th 1849

My Dear Sir:

When you were here a few weeks ago, you requested me to inform you of the route I would travel, on my return to my residence in Tennessee, after the close of my Presidential term. I expect to leave here on the 6th of March, and have concluded to take the route which you recommended. I will go from Charleston to Savannah and thence to Macon and Barnesville. At the latter place I understand I will have to leave the Georgia Rail Road and travel in a stage coach [conveyance]<sup>417</sup> to the nearest point on the Montgomery Rail Road. It will be desirable to the ladies of my family to avoid night travelling, and with this view I

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416 Brown to Polk, January 19, 1849.

417 Word or words uncertain, light ink transfer.

have spoken to the Post Master General to make an arrangement if practicable, with the rail conductor, to furnish me with an extra coach, to be under my control.

I saw Genl. Haralson this morning, but was not then, prepared to give him a positive answer on the subject in which you take a personal interest. It gives me pleasure now to say to you, that I can gratify your wishes by the appointment of your son as a Cadet, in the Military Academy at West Point. The appointment of Cadets will not take place, until the last week of my term.

I hope to have the pleasure of visiting you as I pass through Georgia.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. In addition to my immediate family, Mr Walk[er]<sup>418</sup> (the Secretary of the Treasury) and two or three other friends will accompany me. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbus, Ga. , and marked “(Private).”

FROM AUGUSTE G. V. DAVEZAC

The Hague,

february, 20th 1849

Respected friend,

Before this letter reaches your hand the memorable administration over which it has been your fortune to preside, will have closed, leaving to the Country, as a perpetual memory of its glorious period, a new empire, larger, richer, more fertile than that which, the Rome of the Consuls, and that of the Casars, conquered during five centuries; An Empire obtained in a just defensive war, which did not last more than one year, and at the expence, only, of a debt not equal to one fifth of the annual peace-budget of France.

In the home to which you will soon return, that where I sat at your hospitable board, you will find, in the proud consciousness of having fulfilled all that the Democracy expected at your hand, when it's delegates, at Baltimore, proclaimed you it's Candidate, and in the gratitude of American Democrates, the only reward you ever sought, or would accept.

Allow me, respected friend, to add to these felicitations on your well earned renown, addressed to the first Magistrate but, which, in all probability, will be read by the private Citizen, my fervent wishes that your future life may be as happy as your public career has been fortunate to our Common Country.

Will you have the goodness, Sir, to present me, most respectfully, to Mrs. Polk, and to receive the assurances of the sincere esteem with which I have the honor to be, . . . .

AUGUSTE DAVEZAC

ALS. DLC–JKP. Marked “Private” on the cover. Postmarked Washington City, March 27; forwarded to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 6, 1849.

TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Washington City

Feby. 20th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 6th Instant, informing me that you have collected for me, for rents and for lands sold, six hundred and sixty five dollars (\$665.00), and enquiring

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418 Letters cut off side of page.

what disposition I desire to have made of it. If you have an opportunity, and can purchase an additional hand and a mule for me, and send them to my plantation in Mississippi it would suit me best. My manager ( Mr John A. Marrs ) informs me that he has near 100. acres of land open, more than his present force can cultivate this year.<sup>419</sup> If you can make the purchase, I desire that it shall be done in time for this year's crop. For the reasons stated in my correspondence with you two or three years ago, it will be unnecessary that you should make it known that you are purchasing for me.<sup>420</sup> You can take the title in your own name and transfer it to me as you did in a former case. I wish the same description of property you then bought; I mean young and effective. If you purchase you can employ some trust-worthy man to take the property down, writing yourself a letter to Mr Marrs . If the price should be either greater or less, than the amount in your hands, we can settle it hereafter.

In answer to the enquiries you make in relation to the time of my return home; whether I will visit my plantation in the Spring &c I have to state, that I expect to leave here on the 6th of March, taking the Southern route, by way Charleston, Mobile & New Orleans. This will of course bring me by the way of Memphis on my way up the river, at which point, if you have any business there, I should be happy to visit you. It is impossible to say, on what day I may pass Memphis, but as I may meet with some detentions on the route, it will probably be about the 22nd or 23rd of March. I cannot tell until I reach home, whether I will visit my plantation in the Spring or not. If I do I will certainly spend a day or two with my relations in Bolivar.

I am sincerely rejoiced as the period approach[es]<sup>421</sup> when I will be relieved, from public cares and responsibilities. I will very soon cease to be a servant and become a sovereign. I am very sure that as a private citizen, exercising a part of the sovereign power of my country, I shall have more contentment and happiness, than in the high position which I at present occupy.

With kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to your wife and daughter; . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn., and marked "(Private)."

FROM JAMES T. MILLER ET AL.<sup>422</sup>

Wilmington [N.C.]<sup>423</sup>

February 20th 1849

Dear Sir

At a recent meeting of the Commissioners of Wilmington, we were appointed a Committee to tender to you the hospitalities of our Town, and to solicit your sojourn among us on your way homewards, as long as you may be able to linger here. We assure you that it affords us pleasure to discharge the duty which as the Organ of the people of Wilmington, has

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419 Polk possibly refers to John A. Mairs to Polk, January 4, 1848.

420 Polk to McNeal, November 8, 1846; Polk to McNeal, December 22, 1846.

421 Letters missing, light ink transfer.

422 Letter written by Joshua G. Wright and signed by Miller, Lewis H. Marsteller, and Wright.

423 State identified from Polk's AE.

been devolved upon us, and we hope that it will in no way conflict with your convenience, to afford our citizens generally, the gratification of your presence.

JAS T MILLER

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received February 22, 1849; answered February 24, 1849. Published in Wilmington Dispatch, September 4, 1909; Wilmington Morning Star, September 5, 1909; and ULNCP–Ju, p. 264.

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

West Point N.Y.

Feb. 21st 1849

My Dear Uncle,

The box which you & aunt were so kind as to send me arrived yesterday and every thing agreed with the memorandum which accompany your letter.<sup>424</sup> The contents of the said box were very welcome, for I never saw such cold weather in my life. I nearly freeze sitting in my room by the fire. The wind comes in at the door & window just as if there was nothing to prevent it. I suppose the next letter I address to you will have to be directed to the ex President; I am glad your term has expired, for I used think you looked troubled with the press of business which was put upon you. All the good democrats say that you have done more good for the country in your term than any Pres. for a long time. I am doing better in my studies now than I did before January but I will stand lower in general merit in June than I do now, & all on account of my demerit. I did hope to send you a blank report this month but I got 8 demerit for allowing visiting whilst I was sentinel. The cadet visited without my knowledge, he was in the room when I was posted & I did not see him, but the Commandant would not accept my excuse, so I had to take the demerit. I will make another trial to get them off by going to the Superintendent. Marshall Walker sends his love to all. Tell aunt Sallie she must write to me before long.

Your aff. nephew

MARSHALL T. POLK

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City.

FROM HENRY W. CONNER

Charleston [S.C.]<sup>425</sup>

Feb. 22, 1849

My Dear Sir

We have learned with great pleasure that you design taking charleston in your way home from Washington & I can say to you in all truth & sincerity that our people will be glad to see you amongst us.

The citizens as well as the city authorities are desirous of giving you a hearty welcome & the object of this is to beg you to inform us when you may be expected to reach the City. Your administration is now at its close & to my mind it has been a glorious one to the country & in every way honourable to yourself while to us of the South & of the true democratic faith it has been every thing that we could desire.

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424 List of items, not found, enclosed in Polk to Marshall T. Polk, Jr., January 1, 1849.

425 State identified from Polk's AE.



I ventured to predict this result when your name first appeared as a candidate for the presidency & it is with infinite gratification that I have found it so fully realised. It is with pride & pleasure that I now say this much to you at the close of your administration.

Pray let me hear from you on receipt of this.

H. W. CONNER

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE, referring to this letter and to Conner's other of the same date: received and answered February 26, 1849.

FROM HENRY W. CONNER

Charleston [S.C.]<sup>426</sup>

Feb. 22—1849

My Dear Sir

Here is one request which I wish to prefer on my own behalf.

Mrs Conner & myself desire the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Polk & yourself & any other friends that may be with you, at Our House the first evening that your public duties will permit after your arrival.

I feel that we have some claim upon you & I prefer it in behalf of our common Mother the glorious old county of Mecklenburgh & I shall flatter myself that the appeal is not in vain.

H. W. CONNER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to "Jas. K. Polk Esqr & Lady/Washington City." See Conner's other letter of February 22, 1849.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

1 Upper Belgrave Street London.

23 Feb. 1849

My dear Sir,

I had intended to have written you a long letter today, but I must delay it to the next Steamer, when I shall have looked once more at the North Carolina papers.

My object in writing today is to enclose to you a translation of an article that appeared in the *Journal des Débats* in Paris during my stay there.<sup>427</sup> Its author is a friend of mine; & its theme is one of the documents published in your administration. A more glowing sketch could never have been drawn of the state of the country at the close of an administration.

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426 State identified from Polk's AE to Conner's other letter of the same date.

427 Enclosure not found. Bancroft most likely refers to an untitled and unsigned article in the *Paris Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* of February 7, 1849. It describes, with both awe and skepticism, reports carried by steamship of the amounts of gold and mercury discovered in California, "le nouvel [the new] Eldorado," and the thousands of people headed there. Lamenting the gold-seekers' abandonment of law and morality, the article quotes a letter, published in New York newspapers, in which Cdre. Thomas ap C. Jones reports his decision not to land at San Francisco to restore order because he believes that men sent ashore would desert. (The article describes the letter as written to the U.S. secretary of war, but it most likely refers to—though misquotes—Jones's letter about the potential for desertion, dated November 2, 1848, to Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason. An extract from that letter appeared in papers including the *New York Herald* of January 23, 1849.)

I pray my best regards to Mrs Polk. I am sure you will find happiness in your own home after all the troubles, perplexities & anxieties of Washington. Your administration will stand out in bold relief, as the most successful of the century. I am only sorry we could not have completed the repeal of the Navigation laws, in time for you to have ratified a convention abolishing them. I enclose a copy of the bill just introduced into the House of Commons<sup>428</sup>; and hope, if occasion offers, you will encourage in the Senate a strong disposition to act reciprocally on the subject.

When at home, you should digest and arrange your papers; put to paper your most important reminiscences; and either write memoirs of your times, or prepare ample materials for them. In this you will serve your own fame & your country.

I do not doubt the administration will be proscriptive. Yet I have adopted your advice,<sup>429</sup> & at present shall not resign. I shall enjoy a little the impatience of those who cannot wait my good time for returning home. Once more. Best regards to Mrs Polk, to whom with yourself I wish from the bottom of my heart all happiness.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. See also ALS, press copy. MHi.  
FROM WALTER T. AND HARRIET MATILDA ROSS COLQUITT

Columbus. Geo.

Feb. 24th 1849

Dear Sir.

I received your letter this morning, giving me information, that you would pass this route on your return home.<sup>430</sup> I am gratified that it will suit your convenience to give us a call at this place. Arrangements will be made to give the citizens an opportunity of seeing you; and to this end, we have concluded to give an old-fashioned, Tennessee, democratic barbacue; thereby affording the hard-fisted democracy a chance. I am gratified, that Secretary Walker, will be with you, for in him likewise the democracy, feel much interest. We will make arrangements, to have a carriage prepared for you, and your family; and the extra-coach, can carry your baggage; servants, and the gentlemen who will be with you. At the distance of fifty two miles from Barnesville, a friend of ours Gen. Lowe resides; and although the day's travel will be rather long, you must make his home, the tarrying place for the night. He will be prepared for you, and your company; and will expect you. From his house to Columbus, is eighteen miles. You and your family must stop at my house; where I need scarcely assure you; you will meet with friends. If you can remain several days with us, we will be pleased. I will probably meet you at Macon; and will certainly do so, if some professional business does not prevent. . . .

WALTER. T. COLQUITT

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428 Enclosure not found. A bill to partly repeal the Navigation Acts was first discussed in the House of Commons on February 14, 1849, and first read two days later. House of Commons, "A Bill to Amend the Laws in force for the Encouragement of British Shipping and Navigation," Sessional Papers, 1848–49, Public Bills, February 16, 1849, vol. 4, pp. 331–44.

429 Polk to Bancroft, January 5, 1849; Polk to Bancroft, January 22, 1849.

430 Polk to Walter T. Colquitt, February 17, 1849.

P.S. I do hope, if the pay department, be so arranged, as to permit you to retain Maj. Ragan in the service; that you will do so. I said to him, I had no doubt you would retain him; from what you said to me; if the bill should pass. W.T.C

Mr. President

Allow me to unite with my Husband, in expressing my gratification, at the prospect of seeing you in Georgia. Tender to Mrs. Polk, and nieces my kind regards, and say to them I shall be more than happy to see them, and shall expect them to spend the time of their stay in Columbus at our house.

H. M. COLQUITT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 2, 1849.

TO JAMES T. MILLER ET AL.<sup>431</sup>

Washington City

Feby. 24th 1849

Gentlemen:

I have received your letter of the 20th Instant, tendering to me, on behalf of a "meeting of the Commissioners of Wilmington the hospitalities" of that town, and inviting me to spend a short time at that place, on my way to my residence in Tennessee. I expect to leave this City on the 6th of March, and if I shall find, on my arrival at Wilmington, that I can do so, without being too much delayed on my journey, it will afford me pleasure to comply with your request.

Thanking you for the invitation with which you have honoured me, . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Wilmington, N.C. Published in Wilmington Dispatch, September 4, 1909, and Wilmington Morning Star, September 5, 1909.

TO HENRY W. CONNER

Washington City

Feby. 26th 1849

Dear Sir

I have received your two letters of the 22nd Instant. I am gratified to learn from you, that you heartily approve the measures and policy of my administration. My term now near its close, has been one, of unceasing labour and anxiety, and of high public responsibility. If my country shall be satisfied with the policy I have thought it my duty to pursue I shall be amply rewarded.

In answer to the enquiries you make, in regard to my return journey to Tennessee, I have to inform you that I will take Charleston in my route, and will be able to remain a day in your City. I have to day, addressed a letter to this effect to your Mayor, in answer to one received from him, inviting me on behalf of the City council, to visit Charleston as the "guest of the City."<sup>432</sup> Having accepted the Mayor's invitation, my movements during my short stay must to some extent, be controlled, by your City authorities. Should it be compatible with their arrangements, it will I assure you give Mrs. Polk and myself, sincere

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431 Letter addressed to Miller, Lewis H. Marsteller, and Joshua G. Wright.

432 Polk to Thomas Leger Hutchinson, February 26, 1849. Hutchinson to Polk, February 21, 1849, not found.

pleasure to visit your house as you kindly request. I will leave this City on the morning of the 6th of March, and after a night's transit in the Rail Road cars, will stop a day at Wilmington, as I have been requested to do, by the corporate authorities of that town.<sup>433</sup>

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Charleston, S.C.

TO WALTER T. COLQUITT ET AL.<sup>434</sup>

Washington City

March 1st 1849

Gentlemen:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd ultimo, inviting me on behalf of the citizens of Columbus, Georgia, to spend a day at that place, on my journey from this City to my residence in Tennessee.<sup>435</sup> I will set out on my journey on the morning of the 6th Instant, but am unable to inform you as you request, on what day, I will probably, pass through Columbus. On my arrival there, it will afford me pleasure to spend a short time with you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbus, Ga .

FROM REVERDY JOHNSON

Senate Chamber

2nd March '49

Sir:

In behalf of the committee of arrangements for the inauguration of the President elect, I enclose you the programme of the ceremony.<sup>436</sup>

REDY JOHNSON

LS possibly in John C. Fitzpatrick's hand. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

FROM MOSES G. LEONARD

Office of the Commissioner of the Alms House Department

New York,

March 2d 1849

Dear Sir.

Having enterred into engagements to go to Calafornia to conduct a Mercantile & Mining establishment in that Country, I am desirous of procuring letters & testimonials to such officers of the Govt. of that territory, as it may serve me to become acquainted with.

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433 James T. Miller et al. to Polk, February 20, 1849.

434 Letter addressed to Colquitt and five others.

435 Letter not found.

436 Enclosure not found. Johnson refers to Arrangements for the Inauguration of the President Elect, on the Fifth of March, 1849 , by Johnson, Jefferson Davis, and John Davis—the Senate Committee of Arrangements—which was published as a pamphlet without any publication information. It also appeared, with slightly varying titles, in the Washington Daily National Intelligencer, March 2, 1849; the Baltimore Sun, March 3, 1849; and the Washington Daily Union, March 3, 1849.

I particularly desire letters to Genl. P. F Smith, Col. Mason, Capt. Marcy, and the Commanding officer of the Squadron at San-Francisco.

I had intended to have called upon your Excellency, before your departure from Washington. But business engagements, will not permmit me to leave so soon.

If the Prest. shall feel at liberty to comply with this request, & will be so kind as to forward to me a letter by Mail directed to either of the above named gentlemen, it will be duly appreciated.

I have no doubt that such a letter will very much facilitate my labours, and prove highly advantageous to me in many particulars.

I regret the necessity of giving this trouble, knowing full well the cares, and labours imposed by the duties of your station.

Please accept of my best wishes for your future health, & happiness. Pardon the liberty I have taken in making this request and . . . .

M. G. LEONARD

Partly printed ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 4, 1849.

FROM NATHANIEL R. SNOWDEN

Philada.

March 2d 49

Hond. & very Dr. Sir,

Permit an humble individual, "V.D.M." the father of Col. James Ross Snowden of ye. U.S. Mint in this city, & ye. father in law to ye. Hon. James Thompson of Pena.: to address a congratulatory letter to you, on the close of your glorious & most triumphant, Administration of 4. years ye. most wonderful, & beneficial ever known in the Annals of our beloved, & highly favoured Republic.

Your administration fell in the most momentous & eventful times. All ye. great objects of your trying, & glorious administration, have been fulfilled. They have been vindicated against the fierce & bitter attacks of enemies, & have more than met the expectations of your numerous friends.

You retire triumphant in your policy, & in the wisdom, and success of it and you leave ye. government most prosperous & millions of people your fellow citizens blessed & happy! What more can I say, for your name will be venerated & held up to ye. admiring gaze of all future ages, as well as the name of your amiable, pious, & talented Lady, who is universally, admired, & acknowledged an Ornament to her sex, & a pattern to all the ladies of our Great Republic. To whom, & yourself our family send our most affectionate respects & love. And fervent prayers for you, both: that your last days may be your best, happy & comfortable, as your wise Administration, has been glorious & triumphant.

NATHL. R. SNOWDEN V.D.M.

P.S. Please give my best respects to ye. Hon. James Buchanan & to ye. Hon. Robert Walker to whom I am personally known.

[P.S.] Hond. Sir, Permit me to add, that I voted for Gen. Washington at his 2d. Election, & ye. first vote I ever gave & I voted for you, & permit me to say I prayed most fervently on the day of your Election, that God wd. not permit ye. Ark of our political Safety to have an unhallowed touch, by the Election of any other candidate but yourself.

I also heard the Bell ring for ye. declaration of our Independance July 4th 76. being six years old. On that bell was cast a text out of Leviticus. Proclaim liberty to this land & to all its inhabitants. How appropriate & prophetic on ye. birth day of our nation, as Genl. Jackson, said to me, when I told him of it at Washington.

Your Uncle Mr. George Pollock was a class mate of mine & graduated with me at Princeton College N.J. 1787. under the Revd. Dr. John Witherspoon one of ye. signers of Independence. I was licensed by the Presby. of Philada. 57. years ago.

My daughter Mrs. Thompson, sends her best thanks, & love to Mrs. Polk for her kind attention to her when in Washington.

All which as you lawyers say, is respectfully submitted, as I cd. not go, as I desired, & wish you, & Mrs P. as I now do an affectionate farewell, & happiness in time and Eternity. N.R.S.

N.B. If ever I go west I will visit you Deo Volente.

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 4, 1849.  
FROM SIMON CAMERON

[Washington City]<sup>437</sup>

March 3. 49

Dr Sir

As the Minesota bill has passed, I again present to you the name of H. B. Wright . He can accept the Governorship, he informs me.

SIMON CAMERON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Navy Department,

March 3d 1849

Sir:

I hereby resign the office of Secretary of the Navy, to which, by & with the advice and consent of the Senate, you did me the honor to appoint me.

Under the circumstances stated in the letter of the Hon. Mr. Buchanan, resigning the office of Secy of State, of this date,<sup>438</sup> I respectfully ask that this act of resignation may be accepted to take effect on and after the 7h day of the present month.

In thus dissolving the official connection which has existed between us, I avail myself of this occasion to express to you my grateful appreciation of your kindness and confidence, during your eventful administration, and my ardent wishes for your health and happiness.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy, in John Etheridge's hand. DNA–RG 45. From Polk's diary: received March 3, 1849.

FROM THOMAS RITCHIE

[Washington City]

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437 Place identified through content analysis.

438 James Buchanan's letter not found.

Saturdy Eving [March 3, 1849]<sup>439</sup>

My Dear Sir/

One suggestion even at this late Hour.

The Minesota bill has, I believe, passed—without the restriction of the Whigs to confine the appointments, to the next Administration.

I have been requested by some of our friends to suggest to you the appointmts—to carry out the wishes of the Democrtic Sentors, and to give us an opportunity of adjusting to rule a liberal Territory. Many of the North Western men a[r]e<sup>440</sup> very anxios for it.

I send you the bill for your Inspection.

T. RITCHIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; probably delivered by courier.

FROM JOSEPH B. TATE

Washington,

March 3. 1849

Sir:

A Military company of this city intend given a ball on Monday night, the 5th inst, at which Gen. Taylor and suite are expected to be present. It would be to the company a great pleasure if you would honor them with your presence as well as those of your suite.

As the ball is given to such military companies as may be present on the 5th of March it would afford them great pleasure to meet you on that occasion.

JOS. B. TATE

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 4, 1849.

FROM AMBROSIO J. GONZALEZ

Irving House,<sup>441</sup>

March 4th 1849

Mr President:

I had the honor of being introduced to you in December last by Gen. Caleb Cushing. The nature of the mission which brought me hither precludes my return to my native island, so long as the present government endures. I have therefore adopted as my own, the country over which you have so gloriously presided for the last four years and in which I have received my education.

I, no doubt, encroach upon your kindness, Sir, by asking you a recommendation for Gen. Taylor or Mr. Clayton, with the object of obtaining the secretaryship of the commission for the adjustment of Mexican claims; for the discharge of which a thorough knowledge of the Spanish language is expressly required: but I trust that if a ray of that partiality which you have always evinced for the general interests of Cuba falls to the lot of one of her sons, you will excuse the liberty of this step. I also feel confident that the circumstance of my being a stranger to party distinctions will enable you to recommend me without that contrainte you might otherwise experience.

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439 Place and date identified through content analysis.

440 Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

441 Reference is to a hotel in Washington City.

Enclosed are two letters which I merely adjoin for the purpose of making myself better known to you.<sup>442</sup> I beg of you, Sir, to return them after their perusal, under cover to me, to the keeper of the Irving House, with such an answer as I may be honoured with. I must apologize, Mr. President, for this intrusion on your precious time and earnestly request your kind indulgence.

AMBROSIO J. GONZALEZ

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “To His Excellency James K. Polk, President of the U.S. of America, at the Irving House, Washington.”

FROM MRS. ROGERS

45 Rivington rear New York

6th March 1849

Mrs Rogers takes leave respectfully to remind the Hon. Polk that she had the honor of forwarding a small Work on Temperance called the “Mirror” on her arrival in this Country in December last from Ireland, but having received any reply although she has written several letters,<sup>443</sup> she now takes this opportunity as Mr Polk will have more leisure time upon his hands, she hopes he will be pleased to send her an answer to her request for which she will feel thankful.

The second number was dedicated to the Hon Washington Hunt. Likewise Governor Fish of the state of N.Y. was kind enough to become subscriber.

[MRS. ROGERS]

AN. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and forwarded to Nashville. Postmarked New York City, March 7, and Washington City, March 8.

FROM THOMAS L. HAMNER

Charleston, S.C.,

March 9, 1849

Dear sir,

It affords me great pleasure to inform you & your excellent Lady of the honor conferred on you by the Sunday School Children of this city. For two or three weeks past I have been holding a series of meetings for their special benefit, & to awaken an interest, in their young minds, in behalf of the thousands of children in our country, who are destitute of all means of instruction, both literary & religious. I am happy to say, my labors have not been altogether in vain—nearly \$150.00 having been voluntarily contributed by my young friends for the establishment of Sunday-schools in the West & south West.

At a large & crowded meeting held yesterday afternoon, at the S[unday].S[chool].<sup>444</sup>

Depository in Chalmer’s st., it was proposed to the little folks as a mark of their respect, to appropriate Sixty Dollars of their contributions towards constituting yourself & Mrs. Polk,

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442 Letters not found.

443 Letters and enclosure not found. No temperance periodical with “Mirror” in its title and established, as this letter implies, in 1848 has been positively identified. Rogers may have sent Polk the Temperance Mirror, whose Mr. Barlow spoke at the Women’s State Temperance Convention in Albany, N.Y., in 1853 but whose founding date is unknown.

444 Letters inserted to complete meaning.



Life Members of the Am. Sunday School Union. This was unanimously agreed to, and could you, Sir, have seen the array of little hands, the bright faces & the sparkling eyes, when it was said "all in favor of this proposition hold up your hands"—you could not have been otherwise than amused & delighted—you would not have considered it by any means the smallest of the honors conferred on you by the citizens of Charleston.

Permit me, sir, to add that this Institution numbers among its officers & Life Members, many of the most distinguished & best men of our country.

In a letter dated April 27, 1829, addressed to the Committee of Publication, Judge Bushrod Washington of Va., uses the following expression, in closing: "That Heaven may prosper the benevolent work in which the Sunday-school Union are engaged, so honorable to them, & so beneficial to our country, & to those particularly who are the objects of their solicitude, is the ardent prayer of their faithful friend & admirer."

In a letter to the Cor. Sec., Chief Justice Marshall says—"No man estimates more highly than I do the real worth of your Society, or the intrinsic value of the objects it pursues. I am much, very much gratified at the success which has thus far attended its philanthropic, meritorious & well-directed labors. I hope & believe that the future will not form a contrast with the past."

It will afford us great pleasure to increase our list, by the addition of your name & that of your Lady.

T. L. HAMNER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed "Present"; probably delivered by hand on March 9, 1849. From Polk's AE: "Recd. Mr Hamner at Charleston S.C., March \_\_\_\_ 1849."

FROM JOHN W. FORNEY

Pennsylvanian office Phila.

March 12, 1849

My Dear Sir,

According to promise you will find enclosed the nine articles on Oregon, which you expressed a desire to have.<sup>445</sup> There was one of the numbers that could only be obtained by being copied from our file; and this was done by a beauteous lady, one of your staunchest friends.

That you may live long and happily, and that you may daily witness new proof of the success of your measures, is the sincere and ardent wish of . . .

JNO W. FORNEY

ANS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville.

FROM PALATIA HARRISON WILSON STEWART

Jones County Clinton [Ga.]

March the 12, 1849

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445 1. Polk's and Forney's letters, if any, not found. Enclosures not found. Forney probably refers to a series of articles, detailing and defending the administration's actions regarding the Oregon Country, that appeared in the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian on October 1, 3, 7, 15, 20, 23, and 28, and November 19 and 26, 1846. Though written by James Buchanan and, in at least two cases, approved by Polk, they were published unsigned and worded as if by the newspaper's editors.

Dear Sir

Having heard that you are to in macon on the 13 instant and wishing to see your honerd self and not being in my to come to macon wishing if you could have it in your power that you would condeseend to stoop so low as to give me a visit or a call as I do wish to see your Excelency praye grant it to me if youcan and Oblige me.

I will say that I am as true a democrat as lives or ever dide and I will now tell you that I am the Mother of nine democrat sons the first one is Thomas Jefferson 2 William Newton and I have G Washington A Jackson and a Jasper too with a Merrion Franklin next Columbus Mc donal this is the yong Scotch Mc that b[r]ave<sup>446</sup> sergent that got yong Selam from the tory the next one is Polk he was born the first day January 1846.<sup>447</sup> I would think that it would be the greatest honor that could be confered on me to have a President to call on me. I take this waye of speakeing to you as I was a fraid that I should not have the hon[or] of seeing you.

I do live 17 miles from Macon 5 from Clinton and if you should be thar then I could see you and have to say that I have seen one Presedent.

P H STEWART

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Macon, Ga. , on folded letter but placed in envelope addressed to Montgomery, Ala., and forwarded to Mobile, Ala. Postmarked Macon, March 16, and Montgomery, March 18.

FROM JOHN DUNCAN

Southern Telegraph

The following communication was received at the Columbus [Ga.]<sup>448</sup> office, at 8 o'clock, 35 min. A.M.

Dated Macon [Ga.] March 15th 1849

Mr. Walker is a great deal better. We will leave this morning & join you at Columbus.

JOHN DUNCAN

Partly printed L, telegram. DLC–JKP.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Washington

17h March 1849

My dear Sir,

You will of course feel some anxiety to know the movements here since your departure & the fate that awaits our friends. The rush for office upon the new secretaries has been so overwhelming that they have scarcely had leisure to look into the applications. The old Genl. himself says that by some accident or mistake you had taken off the Executive Journal & therefore he had been dilatory in presenting his nominations. He could not know what offices he had to fill on that acct. Some of the Senators amuse themselves at such remarks & some of his friends would be rejoiced, if he could not exhibit himself to the public as often as he does. The impression seems to be gaining ground that he is less

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446 Letter or letters inserted here and below to complete probable meanings.

447 Stewart wrote no periods in her letter. Sentence divisions are unclear in this paragraph up to this point.

448 State here and below identified through content analysis.

suited to the office than his friends expected or than the democrats represented. I saw Clayton on yesterday & he took pains to pay a very high compliment to your admn. and to you personally. Tho. he differed upon many questions, yet it had been honestly & fairly conducted & with great ability. That he had known you long in private & public life, he gave you great credit for integrity & ability & for honorable & upright purposes in public & private. I think your popularity is greater at this time than any former period of your life.

I understand the Judge on Thursday with a good deal of form & ceremony, called in the assistants & their clerks, one at a time & introduced them, then took him to the Third story, where the Auditor at my request had them assembled & introduced him to each one. He got through rather awkwardly, as much so as I should have done under similar circumstances. The clerks had for two or three days been frightened at the idea of Ewing coming in & they looked bright & cheerful when I spoke favorably of him, as the best of the Whigs except Whittelsey. He, as well as Clayton, spoke in the strongest terms agt. proscription & invited me to a conference with a relation to the officers. He was determined to retain the good officers, Whig or democrat. Before however we had said much, he was so much pressed by Mr C, that we had to break it off, & he has not invited a renewal of it. They will however be compelled to yield to the importunity of their friends tho. perhaps with more discretion & judgment than in 1841. I have seen none of the others of the Secretaries. You will see that Loyal & Bigger have been re-nominated. Doct. Shelby was to day nominated in the place of Cheatham, & Allen A. Hall appointed in the place of Graham, so I suppose Genl Barrow will be overslaughed. Gentry is hanging on yet it is said for office as well as Barrow. The offer of the P O Dep was probably designed to give him character at home so as to run him for Governor. Rumor has been busy about my 1 & 3' assistants & the 6th Auditor.

Rumor says that Jno C Clark is to succeed Hobbie & Jno S Skinner in the place of Marron. Clayton of Ga son of the Judge succeeds McCalla. The successors of Medill, Young, Burke, Laughlin, Gillet have not yet been designated. Warren, the leader of the Mormons in the last Iowa elections succeeds W. J. Brown. They have done so little yet, that their friends are leaving in bad temper. Evans is in bad temper & declined giving recommendations because he had no influence, & that the Cabinet had not been organized as the Whigs had a right to expect & he will be horribly gauled by the doceur of Commissioner to settle Mexican Claims. The friends of Webster, Clay & Taylor will be seperated and as hostile as the barn burners & old hunkers.

Judge Clayton takes the house & furniture of Mr. B except his carriage & horses which were offered him at \$500. The Judge offered me \$400 this morning for my horses and at dinner again sent down & offered \$450. I declined tho. I believe I will sell if he offers \$500. Knox has not recd an offer of more than \$175 for yours. He thinks he cannot get more than \$200. If I sell he had better take it than pay the expenses of sending them out. Our carriages were to have been shipped to day from Baltimore. I had them boxed here & paid \$30. each to Haslip.

I intended to have been off on the evening of the 15th but my wife was not well enough to travel & is still in bed. Thinks she will be able to start tomorrow but I do not think she will be in three or four days. Marcy is still here. His furniture is advertised for the 22nd, mine for the 20th. Mr B will leave about the 1st of Apl. & I fear is a good deal hurt at the dropping of

Piolet, attributes it to Cameron. There are some bad stories in circulation about R. J. W.'s connection with speculators which I am sure must be untrue. Judge M. has been to Virginia & Toucey left without taking leave of any of us. Perhaps he thought we should have called. A great effort has been made to supersede Mr. R, & put in new men who would be agreeable to the Northern & Southern democracy. Burke & young Tucker of Va (son of the Judge) have been much talked but I think it has all failed & I fear an opposition press will be established. There is no hope of compromise, unless it can be done through Forney & Wm F R, but W. F. R. will not be acceptable to the Calhoun men tho. regarded as a decided friend of Woodbury & taken extreme grounds in behalf of the South. We all acquired much character & the good feeling of the Whigs by our liberality toward the new comers. They too feel it & speak in strong terms of it. Should I remain any time I will write you fully every thing that occurs.

Please make my respects to Mrs. P. & tell her that her popularity with the Whigs would make me doubt her democracy, if I did not know her so well.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 3, 1849.

FROM JOHN DUNCAN

Montgomery, Ala.

March 18, 1849

Dear Sir,

Mr. Walker remained at Columbus, at which place we arrived six hours after your departure, & at his earnest request I consented to leave him there in charge of Mr.

Colquitt, & a number of his friends, & proceed to rejoin you.

Mr. Walker's indisposition proved to be of no serious character, merely an attack of rheumatism wh. does not in the least affect his general health. He however, determined not to proceed farther on his journey South, but would return immediately to Washington, perhaps on a boat leaving Columbus yesterday for Apalachicola, where he wd. take vessel for New York.

I hope to have the pleasure of rejoining you, either at Mobile or New Orleans, where I will communicate more particularly the incidents, occurring since you left us at Macon. I despatch this now, lest I should fail to meet you at Mobile.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mrs Polk & the young ladies of your family.

JNO. DUNCAN

PS I expect to leave on the "Lowndes" this Evg.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Mobile, Ala., and marked, on the cover, "The PostM. at Mobile [Theophilus L. Toulmin] will please send this immediately to Mr. Polk, sh[ould] he not have left the city" (letters in brackets cut off side of envelope).

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Washington

March 18. 1849

Dear Sir.

I suppose by the time this reaches Nashville you will have reached home. I hope you may not be knocked up by the hospitality & attention of the ardent Southerners as Mr Walker seems to have been.

After due consultation with Col Johnson, & after enquiring of many persons here we concluded to have both your carriage and his boxed up here & sent over to Baltimore in the cars which we have done. We had them taken off the running gear and well boxed and the wheels, running gear &c carefully wrapped with two pair of harness & saddle put inside the carriage. I wrote to Marriott to have them insured, yours at \$1000. Henderson wrote me that his vessel would leave about to day. The three boxes left by Bowman I had sent off as soon as the freight trains commenced running. I have not heard from Knox & Black of their arrival at Wheeling. I requested them to attend to them & advise me of their safe arrival &c.

I have been a good deal concerned to know what was best to do with your horses. Col Johnson has been trying to sell his and is trying now. He fixed upon to day to start them off if he did not get \$600 for them. I went down to see him every day & found him falling in price & finally yesterday he got down to \$450 & thought "we had better let them stay another week." In the mean time yours were eating their heads off at a dollar a day & a fraction over. I ascertained it would cost you at least \$90 to take your horses through the country by themselves. Mr Pumphrey told me moreover that he thought it most probable one of them would break down in going out, as he had unquestionably given away in the back & loins. In this condition of things after the last interview I had with Col Johnson, I went & closed the sale of them to a man who had previously offered me \$175, for \$190 cash. I then paid up the bill at Pumphrey for the horses \$15. & which leaves \$175.

I hope this will meet your approbation for though really it is very low, yet under all circumstances I thought it your interest for me to sell. Mr Buchanan has sold his for a little over a hundred, and Gov. Marcy is offering his at almost any price without a purchaser. I have written to Gen Marriott after he has shipped & insured the carriage to send me the amount of bills paid by him. Col Johnson contracted with the Coachmaker for boxing the carriages at \$30 apiece which I thought high, but paid. When I hear from Marriott & pay his bill I will send you a statement enclosing you a draft for the ballance in my hands.

There is small bill of \$5. presented to me for liquers & cordials bought by Bowman of Peters, which I suppose I will pay. I requested him to wait until Bowman returned & if not explained I would pay it. The Intelligencer & Union I have had sent to Nashville, all yr newspapers refused, and directed Col Gardner if any letters came addressed to you in yr individual name to forward them to Nashville.

I believe this is all the business you left me to attend to for you. If at any time you wish any thing attended to, I will be more than pleased to do so for you.

Augusta & the children are all very well & Augusta desires me to present her specially to you & aunt Sally.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 3, 1849; answered April 9, 1849 (reply not found); "Relates to my Private business at Washington."

FROM CHAUNCEY BARNES TO JAMES K. AND SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Mobile [Ala.]

March 19th 1849

Mr Chancy Barnes presents his respectful compliments to Mrs and Mr Jas. K Polk and request the honor of their visit at his Daguerreotype Rooms, No. 48. Dauphin St where Mr Barnes would be happy to present them with Daguerreotype likenesses.

CHANCY BARNES

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “Present”; probably delivered by hand in Mobile.

FROM JOHN W. DODGE TO JAMES K. AND SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

Mobile [Ala.]

March 19th 1849

Dear Sir

Mr J. W. Dodge presents his respectful compliments to Mrs & Mr Polk and requests the Honor of their company together with such friends as they choose to invite at the Alhambra Hall to night at eight oclock to visit Dodges Illuminated Paintings. Mr Dodge has been a resident miniature Painter at Nashville Tenn where he completed his Dioramas after five years labor in connection with distinguished Artists.

Mr Dodge would be hapy to have a carriage in attendance if you would please visit his Exhibition this or tomorow eavning.

J. W. DODGE

PER O. G. MOULTON

N. DLC–JKP. Addressed to “J. K. Polk & company” beneath the letter and to “Hon James K Polk/Present” on the cover; probably delivered by Moulton in Mobile.

FROM JOHN H. C. CAMPBELL

Boston Masstts

March 20th 1849

Dear Sir

Will you have the kindness to favor me with your autograph? By so doing you will oblige me much. With many wishes for your health and happiness . . .

J. H. C CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk’s AE: answered May 29, 1849.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Washington

20h March 1849

Dear Sir

My Wife, yesterday, got up & we were enabled to get without an inconvenience to Mrs. Brawner. She was at breakfast this morning & been up most of the day, so that we hope in a few days to be on our way home.

The Senate is still in session many of them expecting to adjourn tomorrow and a few think not until the close of the week, as Col. Benton is expected to day to give the late administration a kick, by way of currying favor with the incoming admn. which has already appointed his son-in law Jones, the Secretary to the Mexican commissioners. It is said he will to day in secret session make an attack upon the protocol for publication. His effort is looked for with much anxiety but without the least apprehension of harm to any one save himself. The anxiety is felt, to learn how far he will go for the incomers & whether he will be able to save the barn burners. Whitcomb said, he had heard of explosions before and that he expected one would not be less injurious to him than some others. The utter prostration

of Van Buren, and of course his own hopes, has made him frantic. Rumor speaks of his emigration to California and it may be to carry out some such scheme as many attributed to him when Fremont was sent out, with his proclamation. His course of action in the Senate has wholly changed in a few years, his old associations abandoned, new ones formed with the most bitter & malignant of his former assailants. I shall learn what I can of the proceedings of the day in time—<sup>449</sup> I hope to send you a sketch in this letter. Several whig senators board with me & I may perhaps get a hint in the time for the mail of to night. The Senate did a noble act on yesterday in the rejection of McGahey of Indiana, who had been nominated as the Gov. of Minesotta. It was done expressly upon the ground of his opposition to the war, refusing supplies & voting agt. pre-emptions &c. Even Gentry said publicly to day that he did not regret it much. He & Barrow are still here. I know but little of their prospects except from their countenances. Genl Bradford is chagrined at not getting the collectorship at San Francisco & feels it the more on account of the person selected in preference to him, the noted Colyer of Ohio who wished in the Philadelphia convention, the nomination of old whitey for Vice President. Bradford spoke of you & your admn. in terms not less strong than did John M. Clayton without any qualification of his differing with you on some political questions. The noted Penrose you see, is the Assistant Sec. of the Treasury which made it necessary for McClintock Young to resign, or be degraded into a subordinate clerkship. Hannegan will be, probably has been commissioned. The old Genl. I understand says in strong terms that he will not recall Donelson. They did not drop Bigger & Loyal because the Virginia elections were too near & they will be very cautious & liberal in the States where the elections come on this summer. I was somewhat surprized at the appointment of Shelby over cheatham. I suppose Mr. B. felt himself strong enough in the State, but when the people compare Graham & cheatham with their succ[ess]ors<sup>450</sup> they will not be apt to conclude that the country has gained any thing by such changes. I know not a change which is not prejudicial to the best interests of the country when regarded as mere business men. The appointment of Penrose is a disgrace to the State from which he is taken. What a falling off from old Dodge to McGahey! Many suppose that Meredith will lead Ewing & Collamer agt the balance of the cabinet with views beyond the present administration and if so an explosion may be expected before the dog days are over. The former are regarded as thorough Whigs cut throats "died in the wool"; whilst the latter are understood not to favor proscription to any great extent, to abandon old issues under the hope of making new ones, that may be regarded with more favor among the people. I have much faith in the integrity & liberality of Collamer but not the least in the other two. They are thorough Clay men I presume, whilst the balance side with Clayton & Crittenden. My sale is going on to day. Knox sold your horses for \$175 & paid me the \$30 for boxing your carriage. I could not but regret seeing them in the avenue yesterday in a Hack. He could not have done better as your driver had destroyed the character of the smaller horse and I shall probably sell mine. Clayton offered me \$450. Mr. Buchanan sold his for \$150

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449 Johnson may have used this dash as either a comma or a period; others in this letter, whose meanings are clear, have been represented as such.

450 Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

& his carriage for \$350. Reverdy Johnson's son in law (Dangerfield) has rented Gadsbys house & Madam called to see my horses on yesterday. The other Secretaries are not located. Judge Mason has been at his farm and expected to return to day.

C JOHNSON

4 O clock

There has been nothing done in the Senate to day but announce the death of Dickinson of Ohio. He will be buried tomorrow & they talk of adjourning on Monday next.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 6, 1849.

FROM T. CAILLY AND MAURICE STRAKOSCH<sup>451</sup>

New Orleans

St. charles's Hotel

March 21st 1849

Sir

The undersigned would feel deeply honoured by your, and your family's presence at their concert to be given at the Armory Hall on Friday evening next 23d inst., and they hope you will accept this their invitation as a token of their high respect for him who after doing So much to promote the happiness of his country, now humbly retires to his home blessed by his friends and admired by his opponents.

T. CAILLY & STRAKOSH

ANS. DLC-JKP. Addressed "To his Excellency James K. Polk & Family/St Louis Hotel/ New Orleans."

FROM AUGUSTE DE CHÂTILLON

New Orleans

21st march 1849

Sir

Having painted the battle of Resacca de la Palma one of the most brilliant victories achieved in the last war brought to such a glorious end under your administration, I should be highly gratified if you would do me the honor to pay to my picture now exhibited at the St Louis ball Room a visit at any time you may find convenient. I would consider your visit as the best reward for my labor.

A. DE CHATILLON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally or delivered by courier.

FROM WILLIAM O. BUTLER

Carrollton [Ky.]<sup>452</sup>

March 22nd 1849

Sir

I received a few days since by the hand of the Hon. Lynn Boyd the splendid Sword awarded to me by the Congress of the United States, and made under your directions, accompanied by your kind letter of the 2nd instant.<sup>453</sup>

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451 Letter and both signatures probably written by Cailly.

452 State identified through content analysis.

453 Letter not found.



For this high evidence of my Country's approbation I am most grateful. I accept it as an honor conferred equally upon myself and the Officers, and soldiers composing my Gallant Volunteer-Division at Monterey.

One of the great inducements I had in entering the Army was to sustain, and if possible give additional efficiency and importance to that branch of service on which every free Country must mainly depend for the perpetuation of her liberty.

The battle of Monterey however important in its results, derives additional consequence from the fact that it was the first in the Mexican War where a Volunteer force was engaged—that they won on that day, not only a reputation in the eyes of the world, but a confidence in themselves which was nobly sustained and emulated throughout the War. I trust that it will not be infered for a moment from what I have said of Volunteers, that it is my intention to detract in the slightest degree from the merits of the Regular Army. On the contrary I look upon ours as the very best in the world, and deem it of the most vital importance to our success in Arms.

Permit me Sir in conclusion to congratulate you on the successful termination of your most arduous and highly important administration, and to assure you that you will carry with you into private life my warmest wishes for your happiness and prosperity.

W O BUTLER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 6, 1849.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Washington

22nd March 1849<sup>454</sup>

Dearer Sir,

To day is a bright beautiful [day]<sup>455</sup> & my wife so much improved that we shall go to relay house this evening & start for Tenn. in the morning.

The death of Dickenson of Ohio has delayed the action of the Senate for two days and to day Col. B. is expected to make his expose and rumor says it will occupy the Senate two days, that Genl Cass is ready to reply & that Genl. Foote will assail him & his whole life in the bitterest terms. His speech it is understood will be not only an assault upon the protocol but a review of the whole administration. Some of the Senators on both sides entertain the hope, that the debate may be postponed for the want of a quorum. It is understood that he will have no democratic Senator to vote with him. The position of the whigs is such as to render it probable that none of them will go with him. It seems to me that the effect of his speech must be if it can have any to incite Mexico to make new demands upon our Country, or to induce them to declare the treaty void & set up a claim to California & New Mexico. Of course this will be bringing trouble upon the administration. They can not, dare-not take grounds with him for Mexico & will not therefore probably vote with him. Dicks & Niles being now out I hope he will have no one to stand with him. It is generally regarded as a movement into the ranks of the opposition & it is doubtful whether the whigs are more alarmed or the democrats more rejoiced at it. After his speech is made

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454 Concluding section of letter was written on the same date at the Relay House, in Maryland.

455 Johnson struck out the bracketed text.

in secret Session & published as in the case of Kearny, it is said he moves off to Missouri & there will vindicate his course during the next summer. If he fails in justifying himself as he must do, then it is thought he will join his son in law in California for what purpose no one can easily tell, probably not to become a gold digger. The democratic party has nothing further to expect from him.

The appointments get worse & worse. Gov Penington, of "broad seal" notoriety has been nominated as the Gov. of Minesotta, Goodrich of Dover as the chief Justice. These taken with the appointments of Penrose & Warren leave but little hope that even Common honesty will be looked to in his appointments. Instead of honesty, & fidelity to the constitution, the leading politicians are to be secured by filling the offices with their kith & kin, Websters son & brother in law, Ewings son, Bentons son in law, Colliers brother from Ohio etc, etc, and rumor says to day that James Watson Web goes to Spain. Brownlow is here seeking patronage for his paper which goes to Knoxville soon & Mr. Bell sent for me and conversed freely about the patronage of the Post office particularly with a view to the printing & with the view of satisfying Brownlow, talked freely & liberally as to the office holders and agt. removals & professing great confidence in my judgment & integrity.

I have

Several gentlemen calling in delayed the completion of my letter & I now write from the Relay House.

The great speech has been made & finished in a day & answered. Mr. T. informs me there was nothing new in it & nothing calculated to affect the Admn. Foote replied, in a most bitter sarcastic manner & there all has been stopped. Underwood is with me & the Senate will adjourn tomorrow.

We have had a story in circulation intended no doubt to injure the Admn., that J. K. W. had been connected with Corchoran in his stock speculations and had made \$100.000 & hence an inference is attempted to be drawn from it, that he was the medium for securing the Admn. influence to Mr. C. &c. I did not hear it until late yesterday & have since had no opportunity of seeing either him or Mr. C. I learn however the letter contradicts the whole story with warmth, & I presume J. K. W.'s actual condition will confirm it. The whigs will leave no stone unturned to fix upon us some stain upon the late Admn. but it should become too popular when Compared with their own.

We have reached here without any inconvenience to my wife.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 3, 1849.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

Wash.

Mar. 25th 49

My dear Sir:

With this you will receive my reply to yr letter of the 30th of Sept.<sup>456</sup> It is some time since I made a sketch of it & I intended to have made a copy & presented it to you some time ago.

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456 Marcy to Polk, November 20, 1848.

Yr return I am happy to perceive has something of the character of a triumphal progress. There appears to be a disposition everywhere to do us all better justice than heretofore. The new team works rather awkwardly in the harness. Some of them are quite skittish. The struggle is still going on between the proscription and non-proscription policy, but I think the former will ultimately prevail. They will finally pronounce the doctrine—that to the victors belong the spoils—to be orthodox. Col Walker is quietly established with his family in my house. He purchased most of my furniture.

I am now prepared to return to N.Y. (Albany) and shall leave here on Tuesday mornng. Buchanan will go then too. Johnson has already departed. Mason has taken a house in Richmond &, already commenced the practice of the Law. He & his family will leave in the course of the week. Sec. Walker has not yet returned but is expected in a day or two. I have not time to indulge in political speculations.

Present my kindest regards to Mrs Polk together with Mrs M's.

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville.

FROM MARCUS B. WINCHESTER

Memphis

March 27 49

Sir

Allow me to express to you my great regret that I did not reach town in time this morning to unite with my fellow citizens in your reception. My disappointment is however in a great measure relieved, on learning, the good feeling by which your greeted, by men of all parties. You could not have failed to be gratified had you been present, and heard the sentiments which were uttered, at the collation, which took place, at the Gayoso, after your departure; but I fear, that you would not be as much pained, to learn the expressions of dissatisfaction, which will flow from the fair lips, of our lady friends, at the soirée to night, when they find that by your precipitated departure that you have deprived them of the opportunity of doing honor to Mrs Polk.

M. B. WINCHESTER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 6, 1849.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Memphis

Apl. 4th 1849

Dear Sir.

Enclosed I send you bills of sale for three boys & three girls, with statement of cash act.<sup>457</sup> The boy Jacent is 12 instead of 11 years old. I was offered 650\$, or was told I could get

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457 Walker enclosed his other letter of April 4, 1849, which includes the statement, and at least five bills of sale: Adlai O. Harris's of March 20 for the sale of Caroline Harris for \$600, Henry W. Brookes's of March 22 for the sale of Jacent (or Jason) for \$575; James G. Webb and John K. Taylor's of March 22 for the sale of Caroline Davis and Rafanna (or Rosetta) for \$1,200; Joshua S. Curtis, Sr.'s of March 22 for the sale of Anderson for \$450; and Brookes's of March 25 for the sale of Jerry for \$450. ADS. DLC–JKP. Walker's AEsS of March 30 on these bills transfer ownership of the slaves to Polk. He probably

that for him if I would sell him. They are all likely & No. 1. The Young man by whom I sent them to Miss. has not returned. He is looking for a home or a place to settle at Coffeerville or in that neighborhood.

I cant close the act exactly until I have a settlement with him & see whether the 45\$ given him was enough or too much, to pay expences to the plantation & pay him for his services. I would have written you sooner, but heard you were unwell. I hope your health is improved & that you will enjoy the rest which you must need. You will please write to E. P. McNeal to make me a tittle to the Polk & Leach tract of land. I will either pay you the advance you have made & whatever else is right & take the other tract or make any settlement or arrangement you propose. It is important to me to get the tittle soon as convenient, as I cant close a trade I have made until I get it.

SAML P WALKER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Memphis

Apr 4th 1849

Hon J. K. Polk.

To Saml P Walker.

To cash paid for you for 3 girls—	1800.
" " " " 3 boys—	1475.
" " " " 2 Mules—	180.
Wagon Expences &c—	91.25
	\$3546.25.

I dont know the amt of the bal to your credit at New Orleans with Pickett Perkins & Co. You will please advise me of the amt & send me an order to P. P. & Co to place the same to my credit. If you know the amt to your Cr. at New Orleans, you can deduct it from the above statement & either send me the check you spoke of on [Corc]oran<sup>458</sup> & Riggs<sup>459</sup> or place to my Cr. at the Union Bank at Nashville or Columbia & advise me.

SAML P WALKER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Enclosed in Walker's other letter of April 4, 1849.

FROM NATHAN GREEN, JR., AND EDWARD I. GOLLADAY<sup>460</sup>

Lebanon Tennessee

April 12th 1849

Dear Sir

At recent respective meetings of the Amasagassian and Philomathian Societies of Cumberland University, you were unanimously elected to deliver an address before them, the last week of next July, which will be the Commencement of our University.

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also enclosed a receipt of March 29, signed by Joshua S. Curtis, Jr., for \$91.25 for Curtis's bringing the slaves to Polk's Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation. DS in Walker's hand. DLC—JKP.

458 Letters obliterated, hole.

459 Polk to Walker, February 19, 1849.

460 Letter written by Golladay and signed by both.

Nothing would be more delightful to us, or our citizens here; nothing would give us greater character, than that you, should in this particular accede to the unanimous, nay, earnest desire of the community here, of citizens and students.

What could be more patriotic? what more praiseworthy, than for you, having just retired from a brilliant administration justly commanding the love and esteem of your countrymen, and the admiration of the world, now to lend your aid to the cause of learning, which is the cause of our Country?

Our earnest desire that you should come at the time and for the purpose specified, might cause us to urge the matter beyond that which would be proper. We can only hope that you will come. Should you answer favorably we will write again and be more explicit as to the time and circumstances.

N GREEN JR

EDWARD I. GOLLADAY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Columbia, Tenn. Postmarked Lebanon, Tenn., April 11, and Nashville, April 13. From Polk's AE: received April 1849; "Invitation to Deliver a Literary address, before the Societies of Cumberland University at Lebanon Tennessee."

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar [Tenn.]<sup>461</sup>

April 17 1849

Dear Sir

Your Letter of 20th Feby was duly received requesting the funds in my hands appropriated in a certain way. I have not been able to make the arrangement you desired advantageously, therefore have done nothing in the matter.

I have money in the Branch of the Union Bank of Tennessee at Memphis and if you desire it can send you my check for the amnt due you, which the parent Bank at Nashville will cash for you.

We had a killing frost night before last destroying all the fruit & materially injuring the wheat crop. The Cotten was not sufficiently up to be injured. I fear it may have been up a little further south & may have suffered.

E P McNEAL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Murfreesboro, Tenn. Postmarked Bolivar, April 18, and Nashville, April 22. From Polk's AE: received April 23, 1849; answered April 25, 1849 (reply not found); "Relates to my Private business."

FROM GEORGE PAYN QUACKENBOS

Literary American Office, New York,

April 18, 1849

Sir,

A correspondent of the Literary American having described your passage Southward in successive numbers of that paper, under the impression that you might like to preserve a history of that memorable journey, I have taken the liberty of transmitting to your address

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461 State identified from postmark.

such numbers as contained the letters in question.<sup>462</sup> Will you have the kindness to accept them, and, along with them, my sincere prayer that your private life may be as happy, as your public career has been successful and honorable.

GEO. PAYN QUACKENBOS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 26, 1849; answered May 1, 1849.

FROM JOSEPH TROTTER

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>463</sup>

April 18/49

Dear Friend

My son is about leaveing for Calafornia via Vera-Cruz, The City of Mexico & Mazatlan. Will you do me the great kindness, to give him some letters of Introduction—one to the resident Minister or agent of our Government in Mexico, and others to some Officers or acquaintances in Calafornia. It may be a fathers blind partiality that, prompts me to say, that a favour of this kind could not be more worthily bestowed. It will at least do an old friend, the greatest posable kindness.

My son is now in readiness to leave, and awaits only the receipt, of the letters desired of you, please forward them to Messrs. Shepherd & Duncan Nashville who will again forward them to meet him at New Orleans. I hope it will suit your convenience to send them Immediately.

JOSEPH TROTTER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesboro, Tenn.; marked "For Silas F. Trotter" beneath the letter. From Polk's AE: received April 22, 1849; "Addressed letters to Mr Clifford U.S. Minister to Mexico, and to Genl. Persifor F. Smith U.S. army, commanding in California; April 24th 1849" (letters not found).

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>464</sup>

April 19the 1849

Dear Sir

I have Receved a leter From you dayted 12the of this month.<sup>465</sup> I was sory to Hear your helth was not good. I am in hops thes lins will find you well. Sir youre People has bin well this winter untwil heare lately. I think we have the scarlet feavor. Some of the nabers has had it so cold But Dr willburn ses it is a bad cold quins sy.<sup>466</sup> It seems to be going thoug

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462 The newspapers that Quackenbos sent have not been found. A correspondent wrote these letters chronicling Polk's journey from Washington City toward Nashville under the pseudonym "Estrangero." That dated March 7, 1849, appeared in the March 24 issue of the *Literary American*; those of March 9, 11, and 12, in the March 31 issue; that of March 21, in the April 14 issue; those of March 22 and 24, in the April 21 issue; and that of March 29, in the May 12 issue.

463 State identified from postmark.

464 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

465 Letter not found.

466 Mairs probably meant to write "quinsy."

the family. We have had some 20 cas is in about 12 days. The git over it in 3 or 4 days. Daphny child dyed the 12 of this month By the name of charity. Eavy lost wone in Febuary by the Name of Luchos dyed.

The woman by the name of marier davis Fonsers wife has a child cald by the Name of John Born 16the Febuary 1849. I think I rought you about Barbra had a child Born 24th of January 1849 cold by the Name of Elisa<sup>467</sup> William Nivels wife.

Sir Mr Samuel P Walker of memphis has sent 6 hands 2 muls & a small wagon & 2 par harnis. I did not right to Mr Samuel P walker as I make a bad out at it. I thought it Best I asked Mr. J. T Leigh to Right him a Leter. I saugh him a few days ago. He sayed he faleed to Right. He thourt it not worth while.

Thes hand arrived heare 31the of March—3 gurls & 3 boys won by the Nam of Jasaph & Jurry Anderson 1 gurl by the nam Rosyan & 2 by the name of Carline.

No other Person has sent enny more hands as yet.

Sir 16the of this month we hade a ciling<sup>468</sup> frost. I hade 80 acrs of the Preetis<sup>469</sup> corn I have eve had at this time of year all worked out nise. I think it cild or somuch damaged I cant De pend on it. I have planted in the middle of the rough so As to take chois. The balans of the cane<sup>470</sup> crop is not as forward and I think it will dough.

I have all sough planted 30 acros of the coten over. I thought it A bad chanse. At Lest I thought a risk to rane and it not yet to Late.

Thar is a greate many on a stand. The chanse is bad on forward corn. I was over to day At Mr J. T. Leigh. Dr Towns started this morning to plant over. I think he will have some of his coten to plant over. Mr william Tons has planted over 50 acrs of coten. The wether is a litle warmer. It has bin dry & windy And a litle fros for 3 mornings. If we could git a warm Rane and then Turn warm I think we col get a good stand of coten.

I think I have cleared 125 acres & in cultivation. I have 25 acros mor grubeed. We have had some win<sup>471</sup> a great deal of Laying.<sup>472</sup> We have all the Land that is cleared in cultivation say 25 a in small grane 150 in corn 330 in coten 3 or 4 for swet potaters. I have manoured a good deal of the thinist spots.

The bill of artickls I Receved from your committiant murchent Picket Perkins & Company 5 bars square iron

75 slat iron

13 slb iron

I have receved only 72 so 3 bars misin. T W Beal sed if I could find out what sort of bars was misin he would mak the capttain of the Bought pay for it so this bill dount say hough many pounds of iron only so many pecis. I pade Beal for 6000 thousand pouns frate 40 ct

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467 Mairs to Polk, February 8, 1849.

468 Mairs probably meant to write "chilling" here and "chilled" later in this paragraph.

469 Mairs probably meant to write "prettiest."

470 Mairs may have meant to write "corn."

471 Mairs may have meant to write "some wind" or "somewhen."

472 Mairs may mean "Laying fallow," or word may, alternately, be "Loging."

pur hundred. I have wade the Iron and it only wais 4680. I would like to nough the wats in as much as thar ar 3 peces misin and it seams as I have paid too much for it.

11 coils Rope                      9 Pecis baging                      1 Bunch Twine                      1 Bx shoes

10 sacks solt—the solt dyed not come to hand. The solt is misin & 3 pecis of iron.

If enny error in mine and Mr J. T. Leigh settlement that you think is not Right I am willing to currect It. You can if a safe oppitunity admits send the mony Due me or settle it whene you come Don. I am collecting som of the black smithing actcounts. Mr Leigh has inform you he has not collected none of the mony Due you in carolton and thinks it a bad chanse a

bout collecting won of the nots Due you.<sup>473</sup> I have a fine Bunch of stock hogs 70 or 80 head of cattle 95 or 100 head of sheap. All Lucks As well as could be exspected.

The Negrose ar behaving well at this time. I have A plenty of hands & muls to tend the crp at eas at this time. The crop coms nough all at wons. I cant get out of work dicing an clearing to Doug. I shal go agreeable to your orders with Harry or enny thing els.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received April 26, 1849; answered April 27, 1849 (reply not found); "Relates to my Private Business."

FROM ARCHIBALD CARMICHAEL ET AL.<sup>474</sup>

Rogersville [Tenn.]<sup>475</sup>

25th April 1849

Dear Sir

The Order of Odd Fellows at this place, and many of the friends of education are engaged in building an institution of learning at our village for the education of females. The design is to erect large and commodious buildings and to furnish them with suitable libraries and apparatus so as to ensure a thorough knowledge of the branches that are taught. The funds that we have raised by subscriptions (which for our part of the country are liberal) are not sufficient for our purpose.

We as a committee appointed by our Lodge for the purpose of corresponding and procuring subscriptions, address you on the subject, and from your character and known solicitude for the cause of education, we confidently rely on receiving aid from you.

A CARMICHAEL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received May 1849.

FROM HENRY W. ELLSWORTH

United States Legation

Stockholm

April 26th 1849

Dear Sir

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473 John T. Leigh's letter not found.

474 Letter written by Carmichael and signed by him and nine others.

475 State identified from Polk's AE.



I have taken the liberty to forward the enclosed Statement, and accompanying documents,<sup>476</sup> for your perusal. They contain unanswerable proof of the utter falsity of certain insinuations, made recently against my character, through the malice of an enemy. Connected, as I am, with, some of the most distinguished families in the Union, and, occupying an important situation abroad, I cannot suffer such slanderous imputations to remain unanswered for a moment.

Allow me to solicit your kind services, as occasion may present, in enabling me to silence this base attempt upon the character of an absent public Servant, who desires nothing more than justice, and shrinks not from the most critical examination of his Conduct.

H W. ELLSWORTH

LS partly in author's but mostly in an unknown hand. DLC–JKP. On reverse is first page of Ellsworth to Polk, May 7, 1849. Probably addressed to Nashville.

FROM BENJAMIN P. JOHNSON

State Agricultural Rooms,

Albany [N.Y.]<sup>477</sup>

April 26th 1849

You are most respectfully invited to attend the Annual Show and Exhibition of the New-York State Agricultural Society, on the 11th, 12th and 13th days of September next, in the city of Syracuse. The preparation for this Annual Show of the Society, promises to render it one of the most extensive that has ever been held, and gentlemen who may favor us with their attendance, will be gratified with the exhibition made by the farmers of New-York. Should your inclination and convenience permit you to visit us, the Society will deem itself honored by your presence.

On your arrival at Syracuse, you are desired to report yourself to the Hon. JOHN A. KING , President of the Society, or to the Secretary, at the Rooms of the Society, at Rust's Hotel, (formerly Empire House) who will take great pleasure in welcoming you to the attentions of the Society.

B. P. JOHNSON

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476 Of the enclosed eight-page statement by Ellsworth, written between April 23 and 26, 1849, only the last four pages have been found. These pages include copies of five (out of seven) notarized copies or translations of documents in Ellsworth's possession: Baron Gustaf Nils Algernon Adolf Stierneld to Ellsworth, April 16, 1849; a partial translation of Carl A. Bodman and A. J. Lagerlöf's statement of April 18, 1849; Christofer Rutger Ludvig Manderström's statement of April 19, 1849; Joachim Franck to Ellsworth, January 3, 1849; and Franck to Ellsworth, February 17, 1849. These relate to Franck's shipment to U.S. chargé d'affaires Ellsworth on the schooner Friheten, from Lübeck, of items that Ellsworth had not requested. Their arrival in December 1848 provoked accusations against Ellsworth. He asserts in his statement that Sweden's government regards the accusations "with indignation and contempt." The documents by Minister of Foreign Affairs Stierneld, Chief Inspector of the Customs Bodman, Second Inspector of the Customs Lagerlöf, and Chief Secretary of the Department for Foreign Affairs Manderström support this assertion. ADS, fragment, with quoted documents in an unknown hand. DLC–JKP.

477 State identified from letterhead.

[P.S.] An answer desired

Partly printed ACS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville. On letterhead featuring a woman holding a wreath and a cornucopia, symbolizing abundance, surrounded by a farmhouse, agricultural implements, and livestock, titled "NEW-YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY." From Polk's AE: received May 1849; answered May 28th, 1849.

FROM MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

West Point [N.Y.]<sup>478</sup>

May 1st 1849

Dear uncle,

I received your letter<sup>479</sup> day before yesterday & I am very glad that you have entirely recovered from your sickness. I was afraid you would get sick when you left Washington, for I knew you would be surrounded by a crowd of friend (political ones) from the time you left, until you reached Nashville. I saw more flattering accounts of your receptions than I did of Gen Taylor's & I think it is a sure sign that you were as popular when you vacated the Presidential chair as you were when you assumed it. I hope that aunt Sallie was not inconvenienced by the journey, but I know she would not allow herself to be troubled. I received a letter from aunt Marry Wilson yesterday. She says all my brother's & sisters were well when she heard from them. She was out to see old Mrs. Smart who lives near Charlotte. The old lady is 87 years of age, knew you when you were a little boy & still insists upon calling you little Jimmy Polk. Please tell me where cousin Jenny Hays is when you write again. I never wished to be any where so much as I wish to be in Tennessee. I want to see Grandma aunt Sallie & yourself. I am not tired of West Point, I like it more than ever, but I want to get away for a short time. We have commenced general review & the examination will commence in a month. After it is over we will go into camp. Then is the hardest time of all, it threw me up last time & I expect the next will be worse. Marshall Walker sends his love to you & aunt Sallie. I am well & do not fear the examination. About demerit I will say nothing, as I have already forfeited your good opinion on account of the number I have now. I may have been careless about them uncle, but I assure I hate them as bad as you do. Remember me to all Aunt Sallie especially.

Your affectionate nephew

MARSHALL T. POLK

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received May 1849; answered May 25, 1849.

TO GEORGE PAYN QUACKENBOS

Nashville Tennessee

May 1st 1849

Dear Sir

Dr Sir:

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478 State identified through content analysis.

479 Letter not found.

I have received your kind letter of the 18th ultimo, together with the accompanying numbers of the "Literary American," which you forwarded to my address. I had not before seen the letters of your correspondent from the South, nor had I any knowledge that such letters were written. I will preserve them, as containing a historical notice of some of the incidents of my return journey from the seat of Government to my residence in Tennessee. I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for them, and also for the friendly interest you have been pleased to express in my personal welfare.

Desiring to become a subscriber to your valuable paper, I request that you will cause it to be sent to me at this place. I observe from a publicatio[n]<sup>480</sup> notice in the paper, that you have an agent in this City. As soon as I can see him, I will pay the subscription for one year.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to New York City. Published in New York Literary American, September 1, 1849.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Washington

May 1. 1849

My dear Sir.

During my absence in New York, your letter of the 9th ult, enclosing one from Aunt Sally, ordering additional pieces of paper for your house<sup>481</sup> was received & opened by Augusta. She filled the order, and as she informs me advised Aunt Sally. Herewith I send you the amount of the bill &c. as directed<sup>482</sup>—you can remit check.

I hand you herewith a note addressed to me from Georgetown enclosing ballance of acct of \$11.25, which explains itself.<sup>483</sup> I have not paid it, but await yr direction.

They do not wish Bowman at the President's House as I learn.

On my recent visit North, every one was speaking of the remarkable & unusual demonstration of public respect & honors given to you on your return home. It was most gratifying to your friends every where, & especially so while smarting under the first practical fruits of a proscriptive, no-party administration. Already too comparisons are beginning to be drawn between the past & the present; The Poetry & romance of Rough & Ready has all vanished amid the bitter & indiscriminate scramble for office, and the hero of Buena Vista has subsided into the inefficiency & ignorant head of a great government. His individuality is no where felt in the administration, & hence with the incongruous &

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480 Letter cut off side of page.

481 Neither Polk's letter to Joseph Knox Walker nor Sarah Childress Polk's enclosed letter to him or Augusta Adams Tabb Walker has been found.

482 Stephen P. Franklin to Augusta Adams Tabb Walker, April 22, 1849, tallies the charge for wallpaper at \$29.50. ALS. DLC-JKP. Franklin also enclosed a receipt from Adams & Co. for its shipment to Wheeling, Va., which Joseph Knox Walker apparently did not enclose to Polk and which has not been found.

483 Philip T. Berry to Joseph Knox Walker, March 27, 1849, tallies the balance due for oats, coffee, and cod purchased by steward Henry Bowman for Polk in January and February 1849 at \$11.23 (not \$11.25). ALS. DLC-JKP.

uncertain materials composing his Cabinet, it is every day matter of doubt what cause will be pursued or what political interest & faction has control. The Cabinet (with little ability at best) are understood here to be most inharmonious & afflicted with jealousies & dislikes, particularly the two most prominent, Clayton & Rev. Johnson.

In the meantime, Connecticut on the North & Virginia in the South are going in an avalanche against them, and they are at a loss to know whether it is that they proscribe too much or don't proscribe enough, & hence halt & hesitate again. It is felt here & among our friends North that the hand-writing is on the wall, & that the administration is already doomed—doomed because of its own inefficiency & because of the standard they have to work up to, for every where now your most bitter opponents even, admit that circumstances made your administration a most brilliant & successful one.

As might be expected the quid nunc's are already casting about & discussing the succession, especially the Democrats who regard success next time as beyond peradventure.

Buchanan is no where. Dallas is much talked of, but evidently thrown out by the initiate as a feeler for another & stronger man and you may remember if you choose the prediction I now make, that the Democratic party three years hence, will be divided in sentiment between bringing you from your retirement to lead the party, and taking up that member of your administration who has impressed himself most, on the startling events of your time, Mr Walker. He does not mean to live in the District the entire three years, but evidently has it in view quietly to settle down in Pittsburg or may be even in New York, and thinks Washington a most convenient mode of changing his domiciliation, without attracting public attention to his ulterior purpose.

I throw these out for your reflection. I wish no reply.

My own business prospects are very encouraging, & I shall have a full good business.

Love to Aunt Sally. Hal very often speaks of you & wants to know how long before you are coming back to the White House.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>484</sup>

May 5th 1849

Dear sir

I nough right you a few lins concerning youre Plantation and People. Sir youre People helth is Much beter. The have all got though withe the fevor. Some people cald it mumps others cald it carlot fevor.<sup>485</sup> The casis has bin in ginerly Light Not Lay oup mor than 3 or fore days.

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484 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

485 Mairs probably meant to write "scarlet fever."

Sir sins I rought you last<sup>486</sup> the wether has Moderrated and is nough fine groing wether. I have A good stand of corn & coten. The 30 acros I planted over on the 17 is oup an Lucks as well as eny. The young corn is oup and Lucks well.

I hade the crop in a good conditon befor the frost but nough it all coms on at wons but if we have helth and good seasons I still think we can mannage it.

I am in hops you got the Last Leter I rought you As the salt dyed Not come to hand & 3 peces of Iron mising. The bill frome your commistion merchant dyed not state hough many pounds of Iron only the number of peces. I cant come at the peces. I pade frate for 6000 pounds. Thar is not that much Iron. I wade it. I have pade tough much frate.

And if you payed In New or leans for 6000 thousand pounds thar must be a mis stake in it. I have got Mr J. T. Leigh to right to your commistion Merchant of New orleans. As I want to Nough somthing About the salt. The water cosis<sup>487</sup> will sown be Lough.

Sir I am in hops thes lins will find you and family well. I exspected you to visit your Plantation this spring untwil I got your Leter.<sup>488</sup>

JOHN A. MAIRS

[P.S.] Sir I have Receved 6 hands 2 muls & a litle carol<sup>489</sup> wagon frome Mr Samuel P Walker of memphis.

No person els has sent enny to your Plantation But Mr Samuel P walker. John A. Mairs ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk’s AE, the month erroneous: “Recd. April \_\_\_\_ 1849;/Relates to my private business.”

FROM HENRY W. ELLSWORTH

United States Legation Stockholm

May 7. 1849

Dear Sir,

I hasten to forward you the proof of the utter falsity and maliciousness of certain charges lately circulated against my character in the United States. There is nothing even resembling truth in these base accusations.

The author of these charges, I am sorry to say is Mr Silas E Barrows , well known for his eccentricities. He asserts that he received his information from an “official” source connected with the American Government in this city. The source referred to however attempts to deny that he has given any full statements as warrant these base charges. One of the malignant methods resorted to by Mr. Barrows for the aspersion of my character was the circulation of an Article from the low and scurrilous “Sondag Hadet” or Sunday Journal printed in this city, a print notorious for its weekly attacks, on the King, the Royal Family, and all persons of character or repectability.

The most conclusive proof has been forwarded to Mr Clayton and Gen Taylor, and it now remains to be seen what an administration which has hastened on no proof, to disgrace a public servant, will do when its action is proved to have been erroneous.

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486 Mairs probably meant to write “cases.”

487 Mairs to Polk, April 19, 1849.

488 Letter not found.

489 Mairs probably meant to write “carriole.”

Armed as I am with proof, at all points, to shew this base conspiracy, I fear not the result. It will result in my great political advantage.

It may be proper to add that the hostility of the consul here, who furnished Mr Barrows with the rumors alluded to, was aroused by the fact that I peremptorily refused to get in free of duty certain articles he had the impudence to send to my adress during his late visit to the United States!!!

I have felt it my duty to communicate the matter at once for your perusal. It will shew that a public officer, who had the honor of serving under your Administration, has been hastily and basely traduced, without the slightest reason.

With constant wishes for your continued happiness, and that of your family, . . . .

H W. ELLSWORTH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Begins on reverse of Ellsworth to Polk, April 26, 1849. Probably addressed to Nashville.

TO JOHN W. FORNEY

Nashville Tennessee

May 9th 1849

My Dear Sir:

On my arrival at my residence early in the last month, I received your note of the 12th of March, enclosing to me, as I had requested you to do,<sup>490</sup> the nine articles on the Oregon question, which originally appeared in the columns of the Pennsylvanian. I thank you for them, and beg through you to make my acknowledgements, to the beautiful lady, by whom you inform me, one of them was copied from your files. As you inform me, she is one of my best friends, I will be careful, to preserve the copy.

Now, that I am a private citizen, relieved from all public responsibilities, I am quietly at home enjoying the repose which I so much needed. I was seriously indisposed during the latter part of my return journey from Washington, but my health is now entirely restored. I desire that you will consider me a subscriber to the Pennsylvanian, and have the paper forwarded to me.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. CBevSMF. Addressed to Philadelphia. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Published in TR , pp. 652–53.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Nashville Tennessee

May 9th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I received early in the last month your esteemed letter of the 25th of March, with the one enclosed.<sup>491</sup> The letter is what I had no doubt it would be, and is entirely satisfactory. The time at which the publication I had contemplated may be made, will depend on circumstances, and the seeming propriety or necessity of making it. The subject seems, to have passed out of the public mind, and indeed at no time to have produced much

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490 Polk's letter, if any, not found.

491 Marcy to Polk, November 20, 1848.

impression. It may however be hereafter revived, in the public press, and in that event, I am fully prepared not only to vindicate my own course, but to expose the authors of the charge, and the unworthy motives which induced them to make it.

I have been much engaged since my return home, in seeing my friends, in becoming settled at our new residence in this City, and in attending to my private affairs, which had been long neglected. I am now quietly at home, enjoying the rest which I so much needed. My return journey homeward, was marked by a succession of public receptions, and was exceedingly fatiguing, and during the latter part of it, my health suffered severely, but is now entirely restored. The manifestations of the public respect, to which you allude in your letter,<sup>492</sup> with which I was every-where, received, without distinction of political party, were as unexpected, as they could not fail to be gratifying. It is the highest and most cherished reward, which a retiring public servant could receive. I hope you may be right in the opinion you express, now that we are out of power, that there is "a disposition everywhere to do us better justice than heretofore." We had four years of unceasing labour, care and anxiety, and of high public responsibility. You My Dear Sir: had your full part in the administration, and dispassionate men of all parties, must award to you, the high merit of having most faithfully, and with distinguished ability, conducted the Department over which you presided. Our acts are now a part of the public history, and I am content, that an impartial public judgment shall pass upon them.

I think you are right in the opinion you express, that the new administration, will be highly proscriptive, and whether they avow it or not, that they will act upon the doctrine, that "to the victors belong the spoils.["]"<sup>493</sup> I never doubted that it would be so, and from the moment of Genl. Taylor's election, often so expressed myself, and I think to yourself among others. Indeed I never knew a professed no-party, party before an election, or a party professing great liberality and moderation towards their political opponents, who did not, if they obtained power, become proscriptive, if not vindictive. As far as developements have yet been made, the new administration would seem to be devoting a very large portion of their time and attention to the disposition of the public patronage, among the hords, of hungry political partisans who seek place. Until the meeting of Congress, it is not probable that their measures of policy will be developed in a tangible and distinct form. It is not difficult however to foresee, that they will, upon some subjects, widely depart from the Republican policy, and that to that extent, the administration must be unsuccessful, if not disastrous, to those who conduct it, and to the party in power. But I will not indulge in further speculations. When a few months more shall have elapsed, as Mr Ritchie would say, nous verrons.

I believe I once suggested to you the great importance, of having presented to the country, a truthful and reliable history of the remarkable events, which were croweded into my Presidential term, and especially of the war, and intimated to you, a desire that you should undertake the work.<sup>494</sup> Bancroft could do it well, and I had thought of writing to him, and

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492 In this and the next paragraph, Polk discusses Marcy to Polk, March 25, 1849.

493 Closing quotation mark missing.

494 Letter, if any, not found.

calling his attention to the subject. Your knowledge of facts, and the considerations, upon which we acted, especially after Mr. B. retired from the Cabinet, and more particularly as relates to the war, would be more extensive and minute than his could be. Have you given any thought to the suggestion I made to you on the subject?

Mrs. Polk unites with me in requesting to be kindly presented to Mrs. Marcy. Nothing could give us more pleasure, than to have Mrs. Marcy and yourself visit us at our house.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–WLM. Addressed to Albany, N.Y. , and marked “(Private).” See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

TO ROBERT J. WALKER

Nashville Tennessee

May 9th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I regretted exceedingly your resolve to return to Washington from Columbus Georgia, and still more that the State of your health, rendered it, in your judgement necessary that you should do so. When I left you at Macon I had the impression that your indisposition was not serious, and confidently calculated, as was your purpose, that you join me again at Columbus. The weather was unfavourable, or I still think you would have done so. Learning at Columbus, that preparations had been made at Montgomery to receive us, at a particular day, on which we were expected to arrive at that place,<sup>495</sup> I reluctantly proceeded on my journey, leaving you still behind, but hoping that you would overtake me at Montgomery. In this I was disappointed. At Opelika I met on the day I left Columbus, a committee from Montgomery, with a special train of cars, in waiting to receive us. They expressed great regret that you were not with me. After spending a day and night at Montgomery, I proceeded to Mobile, and it was not until Mr Duncan overtook me at New Orleans, that I learned that you had resolved to proceed no further on the journey. This I regretted, though you avoided great danger, from exposure to the cholera which was prevailing with great mortality at New-Orleans. There were a few cases at Mobile, and I was advised by medical gentlemen not to tarry in New Orleans. On reaching the latter City, I was unwell, and desired to pass immediately through it. I was met however at the Lakeshore, by some of the public authorities of the City, and was assured by the Mayor and others, that there was not the slightest danger of cholera. They informed me that extensive preparations had been made to give you and myself a public reception, a public dinner &c, and I found that I would be compelled to yield to their wishes or seem to act rudely. Your friends in New Orleans expressed great regret at your absence. I remained two days and one night in New Orleans, and proceeded up the River, but was far from being well. Though I had been assured that there was no danger from cholera, I learned afterwards, that during the week I was in New Orleans, there were 266. deaths from cholera in the Hospitals alone. This did not include those who had friends in condition to nurse them, without sending them to the hospital. Many of these doubtless fell victims to the disease. I met Genl. Hugh Dunlap whom you knew, apparently in fine health. He was attacked

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495 Letter, if any, not found.



of cholera & died in less than a week afterwards. I continued so unwell on the Boat, that I was unable to go on shore, or to receive the civilities tendered, above Baton Rouge. At Natchez & Vicksburg I was compelled to decline. At Memphis being the first point I touched in my own State, I was forced much against my will to go on shore for a short time & suffered severely in consequence of it. Several persons died of cholera on Board the Boat, and our servant girl had an attack of it, but my disease was fortunately of a bilious type. I became so ill, that under medical advice I stopped at Smithland four days, and arrived at this place very feeble. Rest has restored me, and I am now in my usual health. We are quietly settled in our new residence, and I am enjoying the repose which I so much needed. Nothing would have given me more pleasure, than to have had you accompany me through the tour to Mississippi, and after spending a short time with your friends there, to have paid me a visit at this place. The Democracy here would have given you a cordial and warm reception. I hope you may have it in your power to pay me a visit next autumn. You ought to visit your old constituents in Mississippi & this will be directly in your way. I expect to visit my plantation in Yalobusha about the middle of October. If you could be here at that time, I would be delighted to have your company down. At that time too, you would find our Legislature and Supreme Court in Session, and would meet many of your acquaintances and friends.

I have written so long a letter, that I must postpone saying many things, I would be pleased to say, on public affairs, and more especially in relation to the progress, which our successors in the administration seem to be making, and the embarrassments which they are manifestly encountering. Any thing I could say however, would be from a view of things at a distance, and would be mere speculation possibly with out much value. As you are located at the seat of Government, I should rather ask information from you, than attempt to impart any to you. Will you at your leisure give me any information you may have, as well as your views of the State of things as they exist.

With the kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Walker: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NHi. Addressed to Washington City and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

FROM GEORGE B. AUGUSTUS

Noxubee County Miss.

10th May 1849

Dear Sir

Inclosed is a copy of a Resolution adopted by the Democratic association of this County approving to the fullest extent your course of conduct as the chief magistrate of this nation.<sup>496</sup> I take great pleasure in being the medium through which such a tribute is directed to pass. . . .

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496 The enclosed resolutions, proposed by Joseph Koger and passed by the Democratic Association of Noxubee County, Miss., were written by Secretary Elisha Dismukes, who signed association president Augustus's name and his own. Motivated by the "crisis" of Polk's being "In danger of being charged with a policy that has been frequently repudiated," the Democrats unanimously "reaffirm" resolutions

GEO B. AUGUSTUS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received May 25, 1849; "Ansd. May 26th 1849; (see Letter Book)" (reply not found; relevant pages missing from Polk's press-copy book).

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Nashville

May 16th 1849

Dear Sir:

I transmit to you herewith a letter with its enclosures, which relates exclusively to your own affairs.<sup>497</sup> The letter to you was sent under cover to me,<sup>498</sup> because as you will perceive, the Secretary of State ( Mr Clayton ) was not informed of your place of residence. I have heard you speak of your indebtedness for house rent at Naples, and had the impression that you had made arrangements for its payment. You certainly ought to have done so, for you could not neglect this, without seriously suffering in your reputation as a public man. It is due to your own honour, that you should give prompt attention to the matter, now that the formal interposition of your Government has been involved, and it has in a formal manner been brought to your notice. If you do not, you may expect soon to see it the subject of public discussion not only in the newspapers, but in Congress next winter. The party politically opposed to me, and now in power would delight in the opportunity to assail you, and through you the administration by whom you were appointed. You should without delay answer Mr Clayton's letter, and state the reasons, why the debt has not been paid, if you have any which are satisfactory. Whether you have any satisfactory reasons for neglecting it, or not, you should inform him, that you have made arrangements for its immediate payment. You should without a moment's delay, make provision for its payment, and write to your brother-in-law Mr Corse in New York, to make the remittance to Mr Rowan with instructions to make the payment. I beseech you to do this. If you do not, it will turn out to be a more serious injury to your reputation than you are aware of. I wish you to return to me, the letter from Samuel P. Walker , which I enclosed to you a few days ago.<sup>499</sup> You can retain a copy of that part of it which relates to your own business. I have as yet found no saddle-horse which suits me. I am strongly inclined to believe that yours will. If you have not sold him, and shall meet with an opportunity, send him in to me that I may try him. If I do not keep him I will pay all expenses of sending him here and returning him; though I think it almost certain I would keep him. If you send him, let me

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they passed November 8, 1848, approving his administration. They declare it "the first in the Annals of America" and praise Polk "for faithfully carrying into effect all the pledges which he made when he accepted the nomination of the Office of President." They then direct Augustus to send Polk a copy of the new resolutions. ADS, copy. DLC–JKP.

497 Polk enclosed John M. Clayton to William H. Polk, May 8, 1849, in which was enclosed, in turn, a copy of a letter from Angelo Conci, dated March 13, 1849, stating the amount due him from William. The enclosed versions have not been found, but, for Clayton's letter, see L, copy. DNA–RG 59.

498 Clayton to James K. Polk, May 8, 1849.

499 Walker's letter, not found, was enclosed in Polk to William H. Polk, May 11, 1849.

know the price. I have not purchased carriage horses as yet. There are none in this market that suit me.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

FROM WILLIAM C. DIBRELL

Nashville,

May 17 1849

Sir:

Allow me to notify you of your election as an honorary member of capitol hill fire co. no. 4.

You will please inform the Company of your acceptance.

W. C. DIBRELL

Partly printed AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed "Present"; probably delivered by hand or courier.

From Polk's AE: received May 1849; answered May 28, 1849.

TO JOHN Y. MASON

Nashville Tennessee

May 17th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I have not heard from you, since I took leave of you at Washington on the evening of the 5th of March. I should have written to you earlier, but on my arrival at home I was in feeble health, and have been since, much occupied in becoming settled at my new residence in this City, seeing my old friends, and in giving some attention to my private affairs, which had been long neglected. In a letter received from Gov. Marcy early in April, he mentions incidentally, that you had resolved to settle in Richmond and resume the practice of your profession. In this I think you were right. Richmond is a much more eligible residence for you, than either South-hampton or Washington. A native of Virginia, and identified with her people and her political principles from your youth up, you are now at the Capitol of that noble Old Commonweath, and should you desire again to engage in public life, you are located at the very place you should be. I calculate that your withdrawal from public life, will be but temporary, and that you cannot long remain a private citizen. Whatever your wishes may be in this respect, you have my hearty good wishes for your success.

I congratulate you upon the glorious triumph achieved by the Democracy of Virginia in the late election. No man in the Union can be more gratified at the result than I am. It is but the beginning of the counter revolution in the popular sentiment, which, must, end in the restoration of Democratic principles, & measures, four years hence. Our successors in the Federal administration, have probably learned by this time, that it is one thing to be the Outs with the privilege of fault-finding, and quite a different thing to be the Ins, charged with the conduct of public affairs. Their public policy, (if they can unite upon any common-platform) will not probably be fully developed before the meeting of Congress. It is not however, difficult to foreseee, that upon some measures at least, it will be in conflict, with the policy of my administration. The new administration, seem to have devoted their time and energies thus far, chiefly, to the distribution of the public patronage, among the hords of their partisans who throng Washington seeking officcial place. The proscriptive policy, which they are pursuing, does not surprise me. From the moment of Genl. Taylor's election, I expressed the opinion, and I believe to yourself among others,

that if Genl. T. could be controlled by the leading members of the Whig party (and I never doubted that he would be) his administration would be the most proscriptive, if not vindictive towards its political opponents, that had ever existed. Indeed I never knew a professed no-party-party, or a party who professed great moderation before an election, who did not, if they succeeded to power, become proscriptive and intollerant, towards their political opponents. But I will indulge in no further speculations in reference to these things. My heath, which suffered severely, on my return journey homeward, is intirely restored, and I am enjoying at my quiet home, in this delightful city, the rest which I so much needed. I realize that I am relieved from an immense public responsibility, and that I am now as free a citizen, as any in the Union, responsible only to myself, and to the laws of my country.

I have postponed a visit to my plantation in Mississippi, until October. I hope you will carry out your purpose to visit your plantation at that time, and that you will take Nashville in your route. If you will do so I will take you down, as far as my place (passing Mr James Brown's residence on the route) in my carriage. You would pass, near your brother's and through a delightful region of country, in which you would meet many old Virginia friends. I think you would find a visit to Nashville agreeable. You would be warmly received by our whole democracy, and indeed I think by our whole people, without distinction of party. Our Legislature will be in Session on the 1st Monday of October. The Supreme Court will meet at the same time. The College commencement, the annual Meeting of the Masonic fraternity, and a horse-race, will all take place on the same week, so that as I once jestingly remarked to you, you could have a selection of the entertainment which might be most agreeable to you. Mrs. Polk joins me in requesting that you will bring your daughter (Betty) with you, and leave her at our house, while we are gone to the South. I will desire to leave for the plantation about the 15th or 20th of October, so that if you pay us the visit, you should make your arrangements to reach here a few days before that time.

With the kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Mason, and your whole household: . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. While on a visit with Mrs. Polk to her relations in Rutherford a few days ago, I saw your old acquaintance Allen James, who charged me, if you came to Nashville to let him know, and he would visit you. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Richmond, Va., and marked "(Private)."

TO ISAAC TOUCEY

Nashville Tennessee

May 17th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I have not heard from you since I took leave of you at Washington on the 5th of March. I saw from the newspapers however, that you were at home in time, to contribute (as I have no doubt you did largely), to the gratifying success of the Democracy in your State election. Had the gallant Seymour been chosen Governor, your triumph would have been complete. More recently, the Virginia election has taken place, and the result has been overwhelming to our political opponents. These elections (in Connecticut &

Virginia ), are but the commencement of a counter-revolution of the public sentiment, which must end in the restoration of the Democratic party to power, four years hence. From all the indications, as seen at this distance, I would judge that our successors in the administration at Washington, have already serious embarrassments and difficulties to encounter. They have, by this time, learned, that it is one thing to be out of power, with the privilege of fault-finding, and quite a different thing to be in power, charged with the conduct of public affairs. They seem thus far, to be devoting their time & energies almost exclusively, to the distribution of the public patronage, among their political partisans who clamour for official place. And after all, they cannot probably satisfy a tithe of the petitioners for the "spoils." Their proscriptive policy does not surprise me. On the contrary, from the moment of Genl. Taylor 's election, I predicted it. I had no confidence that the no-party pledges, and professions of moderation and liberality towards political opponents, would be kept in good faith. Indeed I never knew a professed no party-party or one professing, before an election, to disregard party distinctions, who did not, if they succeeded to power, become proscriptive, if not vindictive towards their political opponents. The system of public policy of the administration, (if indeed their party can unite on any system) will not probably be fully developed, until after the meeting of Congress. It is not difficult however to foresee, that upon some vital measures, at least, it will be in conflict with the policy of my administration.

My health suffered severely, during the latter part of my return journey home. It is now entirely restored, and I am, at my quiet home in this City, enjoying the rest which I so much needed. I have been very kindly and cordially received by my friends, while no asperity of feeling has been manifested among my political opponents, and I am sure that I am [a]<sup>500</sup> happier man, now that I am a private citizen, than I was when I held power.

I need scarcely, My Dear Sir: assure you of what, I do not doubt you are already satisfied, & that is, that my official & personal intercourse with you, during the period you were connected with my administration, was of the most satisfactory and agreeable character. I shall ever take a lively interest in your prosperity and success in future life. Cannot Mrs. Toucey and yourself, pay us a visit, next autumn? Mrs. Polk and myself would be delighted to see you at our house. You would meet with a warm reception from our whole Democracy. The first of October, is always an interesting period here. Our Legislature & Supreme Court meet at that time. The college commencement, takes place the same week, so that if you could time your visit to be here at that period, you would have an opportunity, of meeting, most of the principal men of our state. You have never visited this part of the Union, and I am sure Mrs. T. and yourself would be gratified to see it. Will you make my respects to your father-in-law Mr Nichols ?

With kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Toucey , . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Hartford, Conn., and marked "(Private)."

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

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500 Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

Clarksville [Tenn.]<sup>501</sup>

May 23rd 1849

Dear Sir,

I recd a letter from Capt. Weems of Hickman reminding me of my promise for us to visit Hickman during this summer and wishing to know the time that will suit our convenience and earnestly urging a performance of the promise. If you think it would be proper for you to pay the visit in the midst of an electioneering campaign, I will be ready to accompany you at any time after the second week in June & shall be most happy to do so. From what Weems writes me, I fear that Thomas is in some danger & on that account I feel most anxious that we should go, if we can avoid the appearance of interfering. If you conclude to go, please fix the day & inform me.

I heard the candidates for Gov. at Springfield and was much disappointed in Brown. His assault upon the late Admn. was most puerile & contemptible, if unanswered could have done no injury to any one. Trousdale made a sensible speech but was not well informed on the various points & rather exceded public expectation. I have never before witnessed so much coolness & indifference on elections. The subject is rarely mentioned by either party. We know several whigs that will vote for Trousdale in this place & in Robertson. Would it not be advisable to make the old issues, the Bank & the Tariff and opposition to the Mexican War more prominent than is done in our papers? I do not see that so much is to be made out of Browns position on the Proviso as our friends seem to expect. We learn that there is much excitement in the adjoining counties of Kentucky on the question of emancipation. The emancipationists will be defeated south of the Green River it is thought but doubts are entertained as to the result in the northern parts of the State.

I have noticed lately the publication of Genl. Houstons letter agt. the course of the Admn. in the annexation of Texas addressed to Donelson, which I do not remember to have before seen. The practical comments of the Intelligencer induces me to mention it, lest it should also have escaped your attention. In any future discussion of that question, the letter may be deemed of some importance.

I intended to have visited Nashville before now but have been so much occupied in preparations to live that I have only left the town once since my return.

My wife desires to be presented to yourself & Mrs. P.

C JOHNSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. From Polk's AE: received May 26, 1849; answered May 28, 1849.

TO MARSHALL T. POLK, JR.

Nashville Tennessee

May 25th 1849

Dear Marshall:

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501 State identified from postmark.

I have received your letter of the 1st Instant, in reply to mine written at Columbia.<sup>502</sup>

I am glad to learn that your health is good, and that you do not fear the result of the approaching examination.

As soon as you have been examined, you can form a pretty good judgement of your own standing in "studies," in your class, and you must write to me. From what you say, of your dislike of Demerit marks, I hope, now that you have had twelve months experience in the Academy, that you will have many fewer of them for the next year, than you have had for the present. You speak of going into camp, after the examination as the hardest part of your service, but add that you are "not tired of West Point, but like it more than ever." You have "put your hands to the plough and must not look back." A good soldier never falters or hesitates in the performance of any duty assigned him, however perilous or severe it may be. At the end of another year, you will be entitled to a leave of absence, during the summer vacation, and can visit your relations and friends in Tennessee and North Carolina. You will enjoy a visit at that time, much more than you could at the end of the present year. You should not ask for leave of absence, until by the regulations you are entitled to it. In answer to your enquiry, I inform you that your cousin Jenny Hays, returned from Washington with me, and is now at her father's in Columbia. Your Grand mother, and all your relations are in good health, and continue to take an interest in your welfare. Tell Marshall Walker that his father was here on yesterday, and that the family are all well. Tell Marshall he must write to me. We are quietly settled in our new home in this City, and I am enjoying the repose and rest, which I so much needed.

Your Uncle

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y.

TO WILLIAM T. SPROLE

Nashville Tennessee

May 25th 1849

My Dear Sir:

The interest which I take in the welfare of my nephew and ward, Cadet Marshall T. Polk, must be my apology, for requesting that you will do me the favour, to give me early information of his standing in his class, as this shall be ascertained, at the approaching examination. He writes to me occasionally, and I hope he is doing well. He assures me that his demerit marks, for the next year, shall be fewer than they have been for the present.<sup>503</sup> As he was entirely inexperienced when he joined the Academy, and was somewhat listless, though not vicious in his habits, I have confidence as he advances in age, he will become more steady, and that he will redeem his pledge. I will thank you to write me, concerning his general deportment and bearing, in the Institution. He of course will not know, that I have made these enquiries.

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502 Polk's letter, written during his visit to Columbia, Tenn., of April 4–16, 1849, not found.

503 No such letter has been found. Polk here may be interpreting comments in Marshall T. Polk, Jr.'s letter of February 21 or of May 1, 1849.

I am quietly settled at my home in this City, and am enjoying the rest which I so much needed. I am sure that I am a happier man, than when I held power.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to West Point, N.Y.

TO JOSEPH G. TOTTEN

Nashville Tennessee

May 25th 1849

D. Sir:

My nephew and ward Marshall T. Polk is a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point, and I request that you will cause to be forwarded to me, the monthly Reports, of the “conduct Roll” in his case, and also his standing in “studies” in his class. His father and mother are both dead, and taking a deep interest in his welfare, I desire to obtain the information requested. The “conduct Report,” up to the month of February last, I received before I left Washington.<sup>504</sup>

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

TO WILLIAM C. DIBRELL

Nashville

May 28th 1849

Sir:

I have received your note of the 17th Instant, notifying me that I had been “elected as an honorary member of Capitol Hill Fire Co. No. 4,” of this City. Having recently become a citizen of that part of the City in which your company is organized, it gives me pleasure to accept the honour conferred; and should the occasion for it occur, it will give me equal pleasure to be a working, as well as an honorary member of the company.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Current location of sold letter unknown. Addressed to Nashville. See also ALS, microfilm, MnHi–AKF, and ALS, press copy, DLC–JKP.

TO BENJAMIN P. JOHNSON

Nashville Tennessee

May 28th 1849

Dear Sir:

I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 26th ultimo, inviting me “to attend the Annual Show and Exhibition of the New-York State Agricultural Society, on the 11th 12th and 13th days of September next, in the City of Syracuse.” Taking a deep interest in the progressive improvement in cultivation, and in the success, and prosperity, of the great Agricultural pursuits of our country, in which a majority of our people, of all our states, are employed, it would afford me sincere pleasure, to be present on the occasion to which you invite me, and to witness the “Annual Show and Exhibition” of the farmers of New

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504 None of the monthly reports has been found. Only one cover letter, for the July 1848 report, has been: Totten to Polk, September 12, 1848.



York; and I have to regret that the distance of my residence from Syracuse, and necessary engagements must deprive me of this pleasure.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Albany, N.Y.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Nashville

May 28th 1849

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 23rd Instant. I doubt the propriety of my accepting the invitation to visit Hickman, pending the election. I have witnessed so much of the arts and tricks of political demagogues, that I am sure they would attempt to misrepresent the object of my visit, & to turn it to political account. I would like much, to see my old friends in Hickman, and think I may visit Capt. Weems, and the Beaver Dam Springs (to which I am also invited)<sup>505</sup> after the election is over. You are differently situated from me. Hickman is in your old Congressional District, and has been uniformly steadfast in your support. It would be most natural for you to visit your old constituents, and no political capital could be made out of it, by our political opponents. I advise you therefore to go as you propose. I cannot believe that Mr Thomas can be in any danger. After the 1st of August I will, if you desire it, accompany you to Beaver Dam, Weems &c.

I think with you, that the old issues of Bank, tariff &c. should be revived in the discussions before our people. We have abundant evidence, that the leading men of the Whig party throughout the Union, will revive and carry out their old doctrines in relation to them, the moment they can command majorities, in the two Houses of Congress, and can obtain the sanction of the President. Being perfectly satisfied of this, it is legitimate on our part, if not our duty to require our opponents, to avow their purpose, by meeting these old issues before the people.

I have not yet read the letter of Genl. Houston, to Mr Donelson, on the subject of the annexation of Texas, published in the Intelligencer, to which you call my attention. I file the Intelligencer & will search for it.

Our successors, seem thus far, to be devoting, their whole time and energies, to the distribution, of the public offices, among the hordes of their partisan seekers after place. This must truly be regarded as a dignified employment, inasmuch as it seems to engross the whole, attention of the Executive Government. They seem to have made but few developments of their public policy, and probably will not before the meeting of Congress. It is however certain that their system of policy, if indeed it shall be possible for them to unite upon any common-system, must be in conflict in many important respects, with the policy of my administration. I think, the new administration have learned by this time, that it is one thing to be out of power with the privilege of fault finding, and quite another thing to be in power, charged with the conduct of public affairs. Their proscriptive policy, notwithstanding their solemn pledges before the election, does not surprise me. I predicted it to yourself & others, soon after Genl. Taylor's election was ascertained.

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505 Letter not found.

Capt. Hickman informed me two three weeks ago, that you would visit Nashville soon, and I have been expecting to see you. We shall be most happy to have a visit from Mrs. Johnson & yourself at our House. We are now settled in our new-home, and will be most happy to see our friends, and none of them I assure you, with more pleasure than Mrs. J. and yourself.

There have been a few cases of cholera here within the last week, which have produced some excitement among the inhabitants. It is not considered epidemic & I have heard of no case, for a day or two past.

With the kind respects of Mrs. P. & myself to Mrs. J. . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Clarksville, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

TO JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Nashville Tennessee

May 28th 1849

My Dear Sir:

The enclosed letter to Judge Young is in answer to one received from him.<sup>506</sup> I send it, under cover of an envelope to you, to avoid the possibility of its being opened as a business letter, by any of his clerks and request that you will hand it to him. It would do no great harm, if it were to fall into other hands, but I prefer that he should [receive]<sup>507</sup> & open it, himself.

The Box containing the wall-paper for my house came safely to hand. I enclosed to you some weeks ago a check for \$50. to pay for it, and to discharge some small accounts,<sup>508</sup> of which you had notified me.<sup>509</sup> Did you receive it? Your father was here three or four days ago; all well at Columbia. There have been a few cases of cholera here, within the last week, some of which have terminated fatally. There is some alarm in the community in consequence of its appearance, though it is not considered as epidemic. We are quietly settled in our new house, and are pleased with it. I have settled my law-suit, with Mr Bass, obtaining substantially all I claimed, to wit, the legal title, to the Avenue of 50. feet, granting to him, the right of way.

Say to Mr Ritchie, that he is doing his duty to Republican party nobly, and that I would be pleased to hear from him.

Give me any political news you may have.

With kind regards to Augusta and the children: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private).”

TO JOHN H. C. CAMPBELL

Nashville Tennessee

May 29th 1849

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506 Polk to Richard M. Young, May 28, 1849; Young to Polk, April 24, 1849.

507 Word uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

508 Polk enclosed the check, not found, in Polk to Walker, May 8, 1849.

509 Walker to Polk, May 1, 1849.

D Sir:

In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 20th of March last, I take pleasure in furnishing you with my autograph.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MH-H-A. Addressed to Boston.

FROM HOWELL COBB

Athens Ga.

2nd June 1849

Dear Sir

When we parted in Charleston, you promised to write me on your arrival at Nashville, on the subject of the "Southern Addresses." It has escaped your recollection, & as you may not have read mine, I enclose you a copy,<sup>510</sup> with the request that you will give me your views on the subject. You are aware of the object I have in view, & therefore I need not repeat to you the purposes to which I wish to appropriate your letter. Whilst I would prefer to receive such a letter as you would be willing I should publish yet I will, take it under such restrictions as you see proper to impose upon it, and assure you in advance they shall be scrupulously complied with.

The effort of the Calhoun clique to put down those of us, who would not follow their utopian leader, ought to be met, promptly and energetically, & shall be, so far as I am concerned. If in this purpose I can be sustained by the leading & reliable men of the party, I have no fear of the result. The people of this section of the country are with me, and I desire to built them up in the faith, by exhibiting to them the evidence, of my course being sustained by those, who have their confidences to the unlimited extent, which it is your good fortune to possess it. The preservation of the democratic party of the Union, is not only the safety of the Union itself, but also the surest safeguard for the rights of the south. If so; it is a work which should command the best efforts of our best men.

Mrs Cobb unites with me in the kindest remembrance to Mrs Polk & yourself. I trust that Mrs P. found the people of Georgia all I had represented them, and though she did not pass through that portion of the state, where the "elect" reside, yet she saw enough to know, how she would have been gratified if her journey had been through the "Sixth District."

Excuse me for urging you for a speedy reply.

HOWELL COBB

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JOHN C. DARBY

Lexington Ky.

2d June 1849

Dear Sir

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510 Enclosure not found.

Allow me to request that you will deliberately examine the enclosed article on the subject of slavery & abolition, of which I am the author.<sup>511</sup>

I can not omit this opportunity as an American citizen to express to you the great obligations I feel under to you for the services which you so wisely & so nobly rendered our country during the four years that it pleased the Ruler of the Universe, in mercy, to make you the President of the United States. It is no flattery now to say that my deliberate opinion is that the names of Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, & Polk are to go down to future generations as the greatest & the best Presidents of the United States up to the middle of the 19th century.

JNO C DARBY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]<sup>512</sup>

June 4th 1849

Dear Sir

Receved youre Leter of 29th of April.<sup>513</sup>

Deare sir we are all well Except Betsia. She is trubleed with Pils but is giting well.

Sir we have a good stand of coten & corn. Sir I nough think we cane mage<sup>514</sup> the crop if nothing hapens mor than we exspect at presents. Sir I dough not nough at this tim to what Extent the frost has damageed as it noug depends All to Gether on the season. The crop is late but if the season shold be a favorabl won we may make a good crop. I heare a good deal of complaint a bout the bugs or lise on the coten. We have some but not much damaged. Sir the Negrose has all worked finely.

The stock all Lucks well at Present.

Clora is giting old & hir helth is not good. I was thinking she could help sara Atend to the children & dough some soing. What ever you say. Sir you sad you could give me a check to memphis. It will sute me vary well.

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511 Enclosure not found. Darby probably enclosed one or more of the six articles and one letter that he had written, under the pseudonym "Moses," for the Louisville (Ky.) Examiner, December 2, 16, and 30, 1848, and January 6, 20, and 27 and February 24, 1849. That newspaper's editors opposed slavery, and after the Kentucky legislature in January 1849 called for a constitutional convention to meet in October, abolition there seemed possible. Darby argues that God created racial differences and decreed Africans' enslavement by North American whites to bring them civilization and Christianity and thus to enable them to enter heaven. Using biblical and scientific evidence, he maintains slavery's necessity for years or centuries to come. Abolition in Kentucky now, he asserts, would harm blacks by triggering their sale to harsher masters farther south and "would . . . lead to a civil war and a dissolution of the Union" (January 27), a consequence he blames on Northern extremists. He condemns, however, the legislature's February 1849 decision to reverse an 1833 ban on the importation of slaves, describing blacks' presence (but not their enslavement) as "the evil" (February 24).

512 Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

513 Letter not found.

514 Mairs may have meant to write "manage."

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>515</sup>

June 5, 1849

Dear Sir/

Your mother is quite sick. She has been complaining for several days of Cholic—Yesterday she had a chill & very high fever, & is threatened with a severe spell. Jennie Pickett also, has been very ill for several days—worms we suppose. She has violent & alarming spasms & requires almost constantly the attention of her Grandmother, as Mary is in a condition & becomes so much excited when she has a spasm that she cannot do what is necessary. This renders it out of Maria's power to pay that particular attention to her mother which she needs.

If your mother should get worse I will Telegraph you to-day or at any time that she may become so. If better I will write you again to-morrow.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia [Tenn.]<sup>516</sup>

June 7, 1849

Dear Sir/

I tried to send a dispatch to Dr. Hays yesterday, but the Telegraph wires broke & it could not be sent. I hope they are repaired by this time & shall as soon as I finish this letter go down & try again.

Your mother is much better, indeed I may say except debility she is well. She has had no fever since Dr. Hays left—has got out of bed, can take her Coffee & smoke her pipe. We were very uneasy about Jennie Pickett yesterday morning—she had a severe spasm with much pain, she has had none since—her medicine has worked kindly & she is this morning very decidedly better. There is nothing in her case, or your mothers, that requires Dr. Hays's attention & we think he had better stay with you until you recover.

I have made some discoveries worth a few hundred dollars to Marshall Polk. I will explain to you, when you get well enough to attend to it. I mention it now that you may call my attention to it.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

FROM JAMES HARRIS

Philad

8th June 1849

Hon J. K Polk,

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515 State identified from postmark.

516 State identified from postmark.

I have taken the Liberty of sending you by mail to day our paper the Pennsylvanian for your perusal; in it, are remarks that would do no harm to be copyd into your papers, as your election I find is coming on.<sup>517</sup> We wish our congressional was to take place at the same time, as I assure you from present prospects, we would elect every man. The present course of Taylor, is of vast advantage to the Democracy of this, and I think every state in the Union; The peoples eyes are certainly opened, and I venture to predict, that the Ballot Box will tell the tale. I rejoice to find from the Nashville paper that your health has greatly improved, since your retirement from the Peoples gift.<sup>518</sup>

And have no doubt, you are glad to settle down in that sweet calm piece, that allways follows from discharging our duties. I have never had the pleasure of knowing you personally, allthoug frequently shaking hands. I never applied for any office, and never wished any; I am therefore perfectly free in my political sentiments; my first vote was for James Monroe, and my last was for Lewis Cass, and in the convention that nominated J K Polk; I was among the first, that said Amen. I had seen you in the speakers chair; and saw the immortal Hickory; flash from your Eyes. And when the time came, I marched to the Poles with my sons and deposited our votes for your Excellency.

Which we all have never regretted, but would have done so again if you had been the Democratic nominee.

I really look round with grate, and gratefull emotions of Joy, to see how handsomely you have conducted the ship of state, and the delightfull ground in which you left her riding anchor. It is impossible to move her therefrom; providence, and the God of providence protects her with his smiles of approbation (therefore, she cant be moved).

If ever I come to Nashville where we sell goods to merchants; I intend to give you a call, and look at the place where Old Hicory lies.

Wishing from my hart a continuance of good health to you and yours; with a long life if providence permits . . . .

JAMES HARRIS

NB Any of your friends coming on to our City, I should be pleased to hear from you by letter, or otherwise at

Smith Murphy & Co

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517 The newspaper that Harris sent Polk has not been found. If he sent the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian of June 8, 1849, he most likely refers to an editorial titled "Political Coalitions." It forecasts, "In a few short months, this agitation about slavery will settle itself; and we perceive that the people of California have already moved . . . to dispose of the question in their own way. The result of their action in the premises, cannot fail to extinguish all the excitement which has grown out of the subject." The Democratic paper accuses Whigs of hypocrisy for criticizing, in the Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, a proposed alliance in Vermont between the Democratic and Free Soil parties, but running a gubernatorial candidate in Alabama, James E. Belser, with Democratic political positions—an alliance, like that in Vermont, to win "the spoils of office."

518 Despite his reference to "the Nashville paper," Harris may refer to a short item in the Pennsylvanian of June 8, "Hon. James K. Polk," which summarizes the second half of Polk to John W. Forney, May 9, 1849.

97 Market St

Philad

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Nashville.